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Ways of Being, Seen and Unseen: Concepts, Practices, and the Emergence of Trans Ways of Life

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WAYS OF BEING, SEEN AND UNSEEN: CONCEPTS, PRACTICES AND THE
EMERGENCE OF TRANS WAYS OF LIFE

by

James Edward Zubko, Jr.

A Dissertation

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DEDICATION

For my parents and grandparents, who taught me how to speak and how to write.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A complete accounting for all of the things and of all the support from others that has contributed to making it possible for me to write this dissertation could be its own dissertation-length work. Even if I were to write such a thing, it is likely that a true account of this would prove impossible. Here I'll try to provide an adequate, if incomplete, account in order to express my gratitude; without the support of many people, I would very likely have given up writing this dissertation.

Thank you to my parents, Jim Zubko, Sr. and Trudy Kluth, who have been ever supportive of my intellectual endeavors and of my development as a human being: I'm proud to say you are my first intellectual traveling companions. Thank you to my grandmother, Donna Kluth, who has always been very supportive of, and taken a keen interest in, my intellectual development. I am always grateful to Andrea Zubko, who taught me optimism and self-compassion. I am grateful to Marissa Johnson and Pam Weir for their friendship, and, in particular, the space they created for reflection and healing during the difficult years that lead to me attending graduate school. My partner Meg Nelson has borne the ups and downs of graduate school with me with incredible resilience, humor and honesty and I am very thankful that she chose and continues to do so. Thank you to Catherine Dodson, who I have been able to count on over the years not only for her stalwart friendship, but also for provocative and incisive intellectual exchanges.

The department at the University of Memphis has had an incredible impact on my development as a practitioner of philosophy. The graduate student community, in particular, has been so important to me over the past few years. I would be forever out to

ABSTRACT

The dissertation presents a philosophical analysis of social possibilities in connection with gender. Specifically, the dissertation concerns how people take up social possibilities for different ways of living gender and how these possibilities emerge. The goal of the dissertation is to construct a philosophical framework that can be used to analyze social possibility in connection with trans (transsexual, transgender and gender non-conforming) existence. The dissertation argues that it is salutary to analyze the how concepts, practices and embodiment affect access to gendered social possibilities. The dissertation draws first on Heidegger in order to develop an ontological account of possibility as a feature of human beings, along with an account of how people access gendered social possibilities through everyday and theoretical understandings of the world and through practices. Next, the dissertation draws on Foucault in order to analyze how power affects people's access to social possibilities through its operations in the social field. The dissertation then turns to an analysis of medical and psychological knowledge production practices in connection with transsexuality in the mid-20th century in the United States with a view to how these knowledge production practices conceptualized trans existence. Lastly, the dissertation turns to trans theory in order to analyze conceptual developments in that field that can serve as alternatives to the earlier medicalized conceptualizations of trans life. The dissertation argues that while some social possibilities are made apparent or disclosed in the social world in ways that make these possibilities seem obvious, other possibilities remain concealed or not obvious. Alternative, non-obvious possibilities for living gender, possibilities that trans people

take up, fall into the category of these non-obvious possibilities. Thus intersubjective relations, or solicitude in Heideggerian terms, become an important way in which trans individuals are able to identify and take up non-obvious ways of living gender. The dissertation also argues that power relations condition the (1) disclosure of possibilities and (2) the formation and maintenance of social possibilities through their operation. Finally, the dissertation argues that attending to these considerations can serve as the basis for developing a rubric for analyzing specific theoretical developments in connection with trans existence.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations of Works by Martin Heidegger

BT   *Being and Time*. translated by John Macquarrie and Edward
            Robinson. New York: Harper Perennial, 2008. Translation of *Sein und
            Zeit*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlang, 2006.

FCM   *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*: *World, Finitude, Solitude*.
            Translated by William McNeill and Nicholas Walker. Bloomington:
            Indiana University Press (1995). Translation of *Die Grundbegriffe der
            Metaphysik: Welt, Endlichkeit, Einsamkeit* (GA 29/30). Frankfurt am
            Main: Vittorio Klostermann (1983).

HF   *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*. Translated by John van Buren.
            Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999. Translation of *Ontologie
            (Hermeneutik der Faktizität)* (GA 63). Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio
            Klostermann (1988).

MFL   *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. Translated by Michael Heim.
            Bloomington: Indiana University Press (1984). Translation of
            Metaphysische Anfangsgrüde der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz (GA 26).
            Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann (1978).

PIA   *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation into
            Phenomenological Research*. Translated by Richard Rojcewicz.
            Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Translation of
            *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles: Einführung in die
            Phänomenologische Forschung* (GA 61). Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio
            Klostermann (1985)

PRL   *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*. Translated by Matthias Fritsch and
            Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
            Translation of *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens* (GA 60). Frankfurt
            am Main: Vittorio Klostermann (1995).

Abbreviations of Works by Michel Foucault

AB   *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France 1974–1975*. Edited by
            Valerio Marchetti and Antonella Salomoni. Translated by Graham
            Burchell. New York: Picador, 2003.

AK   *The Archeology of Knowledge*. Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith. New
            York: Vintage Books, 2010.

BBP	*The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979*. Translated by Michel Senellart. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.
DP	*Discipline and Punish : the Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
HS1	*The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.
LWK	*Lectures on the Will to Know: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1970-1971*. Translated by Daniel Defert. London: Palgrave macmillan, 2013.
OT	*The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.
PK	*Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. Edited by Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977.
PP	*Psychiatric power : lectures at the Collège de France, 1973-74*. Translated by Jacques Lagrange. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
SMD	*"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*. Translated by David Macey. New York: Picador, 2003.
STP	*Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*. Translated by Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Abbreviations of Other Works

GO	Kate Bornstein, *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us.* New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
HSC	Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.
RSO	Ladelle McWhorter. *Racism and Sexual Oppression in Anglo-America: A Genealogy.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009.
SG	Robert Stoller, *Sex and Gender: The Development of Masculinity and Femininity.* London: Karnac Books, 1968.
TSP	Harry Benjamin, *The Transsexual Phenomenon.* New York: Warner Books, 1966.

WG   Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity,* 2nd ed. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2016.

Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the relationship between gender and social possibility. Specifically, the goal of the dissertation is to provide a framework for thinking about the ways in which people have access to possibilities in a social world, on the one hand, and how social possibilities emerge under specific historical conditions. A social possibility is not a mere modal possibility, nor is it something that an individual does alone. Rather it is, in my view, either a possibility for living a certain kind of life that is already available in the social world (for instance, an occupation) or a potential for action, activity or relation to others (including ways of living) that may be actualized by people in a given social milieu. Thus, there is a question about how it is that we end up pursuing certain social possibilities when they are obvious, and how we have access to them when they are not obvious or have not been actualized or rendered stable yet. How do we end up living a certain way without really reflecting on it? How do we deliberately choose to live a certain way? What role do others play in making us aware of how we can live and live differently? What role do power relations play in making certain possibilities available? Making us aware of them? Preventing us from taking them up? These are all questions the dissertation aims to answer.

The reason the project concerns the relationship between gender and social possibilities is that the central consideration of this dissertation is, specifically, how social possibilities for trans (transsexual, transgender and non-binary) people emerge and become stable. I have chosen to use the terminology of trans ways of life in this connection, for reasons that become clear in chapter 1. What, however, are "trans ways of life"? Before turning to this question, however, first it is necessary to note the way in

which I am using "we" in this dissertation. Throughout this dissertation, I sometimes use the pronoun "we". This "we" is meant to refer to you, the reader, and myself, the author. This is because when I am writing I assume a reader who can agree or disagree with me, and attempt to write in such a way that my position becomes clear enough so as to be obvious to my reader. Since I am using "we" in this manner, I use the pronoun "they" to refer to trans people as a group, even though I could include myself, since I am a trans person, and therefore could use "we" in a more conventional manner.

Trans Ways of Life

By framing the question in terms of "trans ways of life", I refer to ways of living gender that contravene, transgress or upset our current everyday or common sense understandings of gender. By "our common sense understandings of gender" I mean to refer to a set of background assumptions about the relationship between the sex one has been assigned and their gender (including their comportment, ways of relating to other people, their masculinity and/or femininity, interests and social roles) in the contemporary U.S. The "common sense" understanding of gender I describe here is significantly informed by Harold Garfinkel's description of our everyday understanding of sex status, in his 1967 book, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, in a case study from the chapter, "Passing and the Managed Achievement of Sex Status in an "Intersexed" Person, Part 1."[1] He also calls our everyday understanding of gender a "'commonsense'

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[1] Harold Garfinkel. *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967), 121. Importantly, Garfinkel does not use the concept *gender* in his case study and analysis of a person who sought what we would retroactively call "sex reassignment" or "gender confirmation surgery". While Garfinkel describes the case in terms of sex status, or being "normally sexed", his analysis lends itself well to a process that we would currently describe using terms like "gender." Kessler and McKenna, for instance, describe a similar process in terms of "gender attribution," which they analyze extensively in "Toward a Theory of Gender," in *The Transgender Studies Reader,* Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle,

understanding."[2] Garfinkel elaborates ten aspects of the "common sense" understanding held "natural, normally sexed persons" or "normals", the most important of which is the assumption that there are "two sexes and only two sexes, 'male' and 'female'".[3] Importantly for Garfinkel, the attribution of sex has a moral valence and individuals that contravene the common sense understanding of the putatively natural order of sex are regarded as abnormal. Garfinkel writes that

> For such members [i.e. "normals"] perceived environments of sexed persons are populated with natural males, natural females, and persons who stand in moral contrast with them *i.e., incompetent, criminal, sick, and sinful. Agnes* [the subject of the case study] *agreed with normals in her subscription to this definition of a real world of sexed persons, and treated it, as do they, as a matter of objective, institutionalized facts, i.e.* moral facts.[4]

Several of the ten aspects or dimensions of the common sense understanding of sex Garfinkel lists have a normative valence.[5] He describes this normativity, specifically, in

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eds. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 165–182. While characterizing Garfinkel as describing a "natural attitude" about gender potentially occludes the historical specificity of the formation of the concept of gender (for instance, Bettcher 2007, 48), the usefulness of his characterization of what we might now think of as gender attribution outweighs is issue.

[2] Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, 121.

[3] Ibid., 122. The ten aspects of the "common sense" understanding are listed in footnote 6 below.

[4] Ibid., 122, (Garfinkel's emphasis.

[5] Garfinkel provides the following characterization of the perception that "normals" have of the social world, dichotomized naturally and morally by sexual difference. Here, I have tried to briefly summarize what is salient in each aspect or "property" to use his term (122). In certain instances, however, Garfinkel's description is much longer. Garfinkel writes that these aspects can be preceded by the phrase "from the standpoint of an adult member of our society": 1) there are "two sexes and only two sexes, 'male' and 'female'" (122); 2) the sexually dichotomized population is also a "morally dichotomized" one; this dichotomy is not decided on any particular scientific fact (Garfinkel gives the examples facts of psychology, urology, sociology, psychiatry, biology) (122); 3) people count themselves as a member of either sex because it is "a condition whereby the exercise of his rights to live without excessive risk and interference from others are routinely enforceable" (122); 4) members of the normal population are "bona fide" members, i.e. they have been the same sex since birth and are "either "male" or "female"" (122); 5) certain "insignia" identify members of the sexes, vaginas and penises are the "essential insignia" of femaleness and maleness, respectively (122-123); 6) the recognition of the membership of an individual in either of the two sex categories extends beyond the life of the individual, and their sex applies to them both before birth and after death (123, reiterated again on 124); 7) The presence of "sexed objects" in the social world has the character of being a "natural matter of fact"; this "natural matter of fact" has the sense of

terms of morality: not only is a person's sex and their membership in the categories "male" and "female" a natural fact, it is a moral one as well. Garfinkel also notes that this understanding is operative in both specialist and lay contexts; that is, it is an understanding held not only by those unfamiliar with the sciences of sex at the time, but it was an understanding held by psychiatrists as well.[6]

For my purposes, an adoption of Garfinkel's notion of the common sense understanding of gender is only helpful up to a point. We should keep in mind that Garfinkel was writing about the common sense understanding in the 60s, and we can assume that our understandings of gender, as well as how gender functions to organize the social world, have changed, perhaps significantly so. Indeed, even our terminology has changed: Garfinkel described the attitude associated with particular kinds of social phenomena in terms of 'sex,' while we typically describe the same or similar phenomena in terms of 'gender'. Despite this terminological difference, Garfinkel's description of a common sense understanding of the world as being divided into two binary, putatively natural sexes, male and female, is not so distant from our context so as to be unintelligible to us. Further, it is not the case that there is no normative dimension to our typical understanding of gender in the social world; however, for the purposes of this analysis, I do not assume any particular kind of normativity at the outset.

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being right or correct (123-4); 8) There is a prohibition on traveling from one "sex status" to the other (125). Exceptions to the prohibition are perceived to be temporally limited (e.g. in cases of play acting, spying, etc.). Interestingly, Garfinkel describes this in terms there being a perception on the part of "normals" that the *population* of sexed persons does not change; 9) males have penises and females have vaginas and all members of the society are classifiable into one category or the other, in principle (126); 10) one's genitals are one's "legitimate possession"; the factor that makes one's genitals a "legitimate possession", according to Garfinkel is either that one has them, or that one ought to have them (127). This allows "normals" to make sense of cases where an individual wants different genitals than the ones they have (as Agnes does in the case study, according to Garfinkel) or one's genitals are damaged or lost (127).

[6] Ibid., 124.

Since Garfinkel wrote his description of a common sense understanding of an individual's sex, the concept of gender has become central to our understandings of the relationship between an individual's biological sex and their[7] appearance in the social world through different available subject positions thought to be based on their biological sex. Typically, we think of social roles based on biological sex in terms of 'gender'. We can thus arrive at a rough sketch of our typical or common sense understandings of the relationship between sex and gender that allows us to make sense of why trans ways of life show up as problems for or problematizations of the gender order.

Informed by Garfinkel's description of the "common sense" understanding of gender, I propose the following, broad criteria we deploy, in an everyday way, when understanding gender. According to our common sense conception, one's gender 1) is one of two binary genders, 'man' and 'woman', 2) corresponds to one's biological sex (also typically understood as dimorphic), 3) is diachronically stable (i.e. it is the same from birth until death, perhaps even extending to a time before birth and after death[8] and that one does not move between genders[9]) and 4) is synchronically stable (i.e. the perception of an individual's gender doesn't shift in the same setting and will be

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[7] Throughout the dissertation, I use the pronoun "they" and the possessive "their" when referring to a generic individual or individuals. When referring to specific individuals whose pronoun preference is known or can be readily assumed, I use the pronouns and possessives she/hers and he/his to refer to these individuals.

[8] This is informed by Garfinkel's sixth property, which can be summarized as the assumption that someone is a member of the same gender, and that this extends before birth and after death (Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, 123). See also footnote 5 above.

[9] This is informed by Garfinkel's eighth property, that there is a prohibition from traveling between "sex statuses" or genders (Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, 125).

consistent across observations made by different observers).[10] When these assumptions are called into question by someone's gender presentation or by details about someone's biography, for instance, confusion often results.[11]

This is not to say that everyone in our current context will understand gender in a way that deploys all four criteria in every case. However, it appears to be the case, *prima facie*, that an understanding of gender based on these criteria is operative in the social world, such that it structures and places putative limits on the ways in which one can conceivably live gender in a particular way. While it is possible to elaborate on what each of the concepts 'man' and 'woman' contain, as well as those features that influence the attribution of one or both genders to an individual, for simplicity's sake, it is enough to characterize the common sense understanding in this skeletal fashion.[12]

Note on Terminology

In talking about trans experience in terms of ways of life, my aim is to use a term that is maximally inclusive. In what follows, I consider how my terminology is intended to differ from some existing terms and definitions while articulating my reasons for this

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[10] I should note that all of these criteria are potentially unstable; that is, they are open to question and admit of obvious counterexamples. However, they are stabilized by the way in which individuals that contravene one or more of them are understood to be abnormal, pathological, aberrational, etc.

[11] I'll use myself as an example to illustrate how this happens. I think, based on my interactions with others, that I am fairly gender non-conforming and/or gender ambiguous, so I often have interactions were my gender is not synchronically stable. In cases where a stranger has gendered me male (indicated by them calling me "sir", for instance) and I do something that causes them to call this initial attribution into question and re-gender me female, this generally causes them some confusion or hesitation. This indicates that, phenomenologically, gender is assumed to be synchronic in a given interaction: we expect to make an attribution and for that attribution to remain "true" over the course of the interaction. In instances like these, both genders may be attributed to the same person, though in my experience, people usually "settle" on a gender attribution and stick to it. For a more thorough discussion of the phenomenology of "gender attribution," see Kessler and McKenna, "Toward a Theory of Gender," 2006.

[12] See Jacob Hale, "Are Lesbians Women?" *Hypatia,* 11, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 94–121.

difference. First, I'll consider a very useful way of defining "transgender"

philosophically. Talia Bettcher, in the terminology section of "Evil Deceivers and Make

Believers: Transphobic Violence and the Politics of Illusion", defines transgender in the

following way:

> *Transgender* may be used to refer to people who do not appear to conform to traditional gender norms by presenting and living genders that were not assigned to them at birth or by presenting and living genders in ways that may not be readily intelligible in terms of more traditional conceptions. The term may or may not be used to include transsexual. Transgender also has a political connotation: it flags a political stance, mainly in the Anglo United States, which generally resists medical pathologization. This places it in prima facie opposition to the notion of transsexual (at least in the more traditional sense of that word).[13]

Bettcher's definition is helpful for my purposes insofar as it includes some features I

include in my own concept of trans ways of life, though this term, i.e. "of trans ways of

life," is not limited to these features. I had thought, originally, that the most adequate

term to use in this dissertation would be "transgender ways of life". In the process of

writing, however, I realized this term ought to include both transgender and transsexual

ways of life in it, that is, that it ought not to connote the kind of opposition between

'transgender' and 'transsexual' that the term 'transgender' can sometime connote,

according to Bettcher. I thus settled on the more inclusive term "trans" which can include

'transgender' and 'transsexual'. I have decided against using the term trans*, though this

is another umbrella term that is sometimes used. The addition of the asterisk to the

umbrella term "trans" is intended to further expand the range of possible meanings of the

term; it is derived from the structure of internet search engines, where it functions as a

command to search for the characters entered into the search plus any additional

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[13] Talia Mae Bettcher, "Evil Deceivers and Make Believers: Transphobic Violence and the Politics of Illusion", *Hypatia* 22: no. 3 (Summer 2007): 46.

characters.[14] I forego the use of the asterisk because the term "trans" is already an umbrella term, and one that responds to concerns about the previous umbrella term, "transgender." It is important to critically evaluate the connotations that specific terms acquire, especially in cases where these connotations are negative and to be aware of the fact that terms may outlive their usefulness or new, better terms may emerge that are better suited to the pursuit of theoretical or political goals. However, discourses, philosophical discourses included, also require some terminological constancy for their coherence. So, it seems reasonable to settle, at least for a period of time, on certain terms without engaging in ongoing discussions about their adequacy if it appears that there are current terms that are theoretically adequate. The term "trans ways of life", therefore, includes transsexual and transgender ways of life, though terminological distinctions can be made, if necessary.[15] Although these ways of life may be gender non-conforming, they are not necessarily.

We should also note that although it may be a feature of trans ways of life that they "do not appear to conform to traditional gender norms", it need not be a necessary feature in all cases. Indeed, it is helpful to remain open to the possibility that trans ways of life may be "imperceptible", or that these ways of living gender may not be readily visible or apparent to observers. It is helpful to keep this in mind because trans people are

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[14] Avery Tompkins, "Asterisk," *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 1, nos. 1–2 (May 2014): 26.

[15] By this, I mean that, if necessary, I'll use the term "transsexual ways of life" or "transgender ways of life" in order to indicate certain features that are specific to that way of life. For instance, in chapter 3, I use the term "transsexual ways of life" to indicate 1) that that was the terminology people often used to describe themselves at the time and 2) that I'm referring to a way of life that includes medical transition, specifically undergoing hormone replacement therapy and surgeries to change one's morphological sex. This is an example of a context in which it is prudent to be more specific about which trans ways of life I'm talking about. The same would hold true if I were discussing people who identify as 'transgender' as, in part, a political identity meant to be opposed to 'transsexual', as Bettcher mentions. In that context, I would refer to "transgender ways of life." However, unless specificity is required, I will use the term "trans ways of life" by default.

not always gender non-conforming prior to transition (though this is a common assumption, I think); therefore, being able to think about imperceptible forms of sex and gender difference could help to expand possibilities for how we think about trans ways of life. Lucas Crawford argues for this theorization of transgender in "Transgender Without Organs? Mobilizing a Geo-Affective Theory of Gender Modification".[16] Crawford borrows the concept of imperceptibility I refer to here from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to explore the ways in which rural trans lives require theorizations that are not explicable through the dominant theoretical tropes of passing,[17] urbanity and medicalized transition. His use of the concept of imperceptibility is somewhat unclear in this article, however. Deleuze and Guattari refer to imperceptibility, along with "indiscernibility" (which Crawford also mentions) and impersonality (which he does not) as "the three virtues" in *A Thousand Plateaus*.[18] While Crawford does mention that there is an "equation of imperceptibility and becoming", it is not clear from his analysis how imperceptibility allows for becoming in ways that more molar, visible modes of being foreclose.[19] While I think that Crawford's attention to Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of "the three virtues" in connection with their notion of becoming and the attempted application of their views to trans is promising, further exploration of this connection is needed. Specifically, how imperceptibility fits into the context of Deleuze and Guattari's

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[16] Lucas Crawford. "Transgender Without Organs? Mobilizing a Geo-Affective Theory of Gender Modification," *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 36: nos. 3 & 4 (Fall/Winter 2008): 140-141.

[17] "Passing" is a term used to designate forms of gender and expression and comportment that do not contravene the common sense understanding of gender when a "discrepancy" between one's sex and gender threatens to emerge and call one's gender into question, according this understanding.

[18] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 280.

[19] Crawford, "Transgender Without Organs?" 141.

ontological project in *A Thousand Plateaus* needs to be explicated if this concept is to be effectively applied to trans ontology. In remaining open to the possibility of imperceptibility, however, I do not mean to downplay the importance of the perceptions of others when it comes to considerations of trans ways of life. For certain issues, such as the issue of transphobic violence that Bettcher analyzes in the abovementioned article, including the appearance of gender non-conformity is an unproblematic criterion.

Bettcher's attention to the issue of intelligibility is also helpful for my purposes. As she notes, trans people's ways of living or presenting gender are often not readily intelligible to others who are have assumed the common sense understanding of gender (as most people do, given that it is part of the phenomenological background of everyday experience). Although one's way of living gender may be more readily intelligible in some contexts (in certain subcultures, in one's intimate relationships, etc.), it is safe to assume that it is a feature of the social world in the contemporary United States that those who live gender in non-normative ways live gender in a way that is relatively less intelligible than those ways of living gender that are normative. That is, when people live gender in such a way so as to be interpretable through the four abovementioned criteria, their gender is made readily intelligible. Ways of living gender that problematize or upset these criteria, thereby destabilizing them to a greater or lesser extent, appear less intelligible or intelligible as aberrations or abnormalities.

As I conceive of trans ways of life, the political connotation of resistance to medical pathologization that Bettcher mentions may or may not be a feature of them. Further, the term need not entail that a person has any particular political commitments, although the term 'transgender' was popularized by activists working for specific

political goals.[20] However, I do not want to include a specific stance-taking regarding pathologization as a necessary feature of trans ways of life either currently or historically. This is due, in part, to the fact that for my purposes it is necessary to have a concept that can include those ways of living gender that did not or do not avowedly resist medical pathologization. By extension, the term 'trans ways of life' may be taken to include those described as transsexual as well, and should not necessarily be taken to oppose this term.

Another possible way of talking about transgender and transsexual existence is in terms of identity. However, this way of talking about, defining or characterizing transgender has potential pitfalls. In settings where certain understandings of gender as being flexible and as not being determined by biological sex prevail, it is not uncommon to hear questions such as: "how do you identify?" meaning "What is your gender identity?" or "With what sex or gender do you identify." This may be followed by the question "What is your preferred pronoun?" Or, we may say, "I don't know how X identifies" or "X identifies as genderqueer." While the language of identification is practically useful in many contexts, in matters of ontology, it is potentially troublesome. For one thing, it is unclear what kind of identity or identification one may be referring to in a given instance, unless someone has an explicit interpretation of what identity or identification means.

While this list is likely not exhaustive, we can see that any number of notions of identity may be operating in a given case. Further, if someone has an explicit

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[20] See Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Berkeley, CA: Seal Studies, 2008), 123. Stryker locates the origin of the term in the 60's among male cross-dresser and transvestite communities. The term came into wider use in the 90's with the publication of Holly Boswell's article "The Transgender Alternative", in which Boswell used the term 'transgender' as an umbrella term, and Leslie Feinberg's pamphlet, *Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time has Come*, in which Feinberg gave the term an explicitly political valence. Holly Boswell and Leslie Feinberg were both trans activists, Stryker notes.

interpretation of their identity that suggests that it falls into one or more categories, this does not mean that someone similarly situated will utilize the same notion of identity. In addition the fact that identities can be avowed, ascribed or both lends an added wrinkle to using the language of identity to theorize gender. In the examples of ways of talking about identity mentioned above, if it is clear that identity in these cases is avowed identity, then we may be able to determine which kind of identity one is referring to. Both avowed and ascribed identity are relevant when theorizing about trans lives, as gender ascription plays no small part in the daily lives of many trans people. The phenomenon of gender passing usually hinges on the gender ascribed to a person, and such passing may be achieved independently of one's avowed identity. Avowed identity is of course relevant in instances where one identifies in a particular way for political or theoretical reasons, or in cases where one's gender is not readily intelligible to others.

While all of these kinds of identity are relevant and useful for theorizing about transgender issues, no single one of them ought to be used as a term meant to capture the varied experiences of individual trans lives. Since it is far from clear, at the moment, which of these identities one may be referring to in a given instance, for my purposes here, it is best to eschew the term "identity" altogether, so as not to introduce potential problems into this project at the outset.[21]

We tend to think of gender as being some state of affairs (whether it be the social overlay of a biological reality or a purely social construction) and one that is explicable

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[21] It is not my intent, however, to elide the significance that identity, as a concept, has for some trans people. Further, it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to address the question of whether or not there is a particular notion of identity that we should deploy in theorizing about transgender philosophically in general, or in theorizing about a specific subset of trans issues. For an example of theorizing about a concept of identity adequate for and germane to theorizing about a particular subset of trans issues in philosophy, see Bettcher's discussion of metaphysical and existential identity in "Trans Identities and First-Person Authority" in *You've Changed: Sex Reassignment and Personal Identity,* Laurie Shrage, ed., 98–120 (NP: Oxford University Press, 2009).

using categories. The question then becomes how these categories are established, and whether or not they are legitimate. Do they carve nature at its joints? Do they mystify us, so as to become tools of oppression and the exercise of domination? Or, even, how can they be changed or modified, subverted or made to undergo mutation, such that their porous borders expand to include those who have been excluded, ejected or abjected from the social world?[22] In all of these instances, the issue is how we can insure our categories reflect some real or ideal social world, and, if we find them deficient, the question then becomes how they ought to be modified, or perhaps abolished.[23]

In this dissertation, I use the term "trans ways of life" in order to indicate the fact that gender can be thought of as a way of being connected to certain possibilities for living in a determinate manner. In chapter 1, I explain how I arrived at this formulation in detail. Briefly, I turned to Heidegger's method of formal indication, a method developed in order to arrive at concepts adequate for his ontological analysis of Dasein, in order to avoid the potential pitfalls of using concepts with specific connotations, as I discuss above.

Thinking of 'gender' in terms of 'ways of living gender,' and 'trans existence' in terms of trans ways of life, specifically, is salutary, in my view. By framing my analysis in terms of trans ways of life, I hope to underscore the fact that gender is something lived. As a social, lived phenomenon, it is relational, dynamic and potentially fluid, even if we

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[22] See Patricia Elliott, *Debates in Transgender, Queer and Feminist Theory: Contested Sites*, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010): 61-84.

[23] For a discussion of the potential of modifying the terms relevant for discussing race and gender, see Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?", *Nous* 34, no.1 (March 2000): 31–55.

typically find more static instances of it.[24] The conditions that enable gender to be static

or more fluid, and what these modes of gender mean for the social world, are a central

concern of this dissertation. We should not be misled, however, by the way in which the

notion of fluidity strongly suggests an affinity with a "way of life" while the notion of

stasis suggests, perhaps, a fixed ontological property or category. Rather, both static and

fluid gender comportments are ways of living gender, as are trans and non-trans

comportments. While fluidity and stasis do not always track trans and cis ways of living

gender, respectively, they are concepts that can help us understand how ways of living

gender may differ.

 In this dissertation, I have chosen to use the term "non-trans" rather than

"cisgender" and "cissexual", though I use these terms occasionally when discussing

others' work in for the sake of consistency. In the entry for "cisgender" in *Transgender

Studies Quarterly*'s lexicon issue, B. Aultman defines 'cisgender' in the following way:

> The term *cisgender* (from the Latin *cis-* meaning "on the same side as") can be
> used to describe individuals who possess, from birth and into adulthood, the male
> or female reproductive organs (sex) typical of the social category of man or
> woman (gender) to which that individual was assigned at birth. Hence a cisgender
> person's gender is on the same side as their birth-assigned sex, in contrast to
> which a transgender person's gender is on the other side (trans-) of their birth
> assigned sex.[25]

According to A. Finn Enke, since the term was first introduced into scholarly and activist

discourses by Dana Leland Defosse in 1994, the term has proved useful for theorists and

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[24] For a discussion of the relational aspects of gendered life, see Alexis Shotwell and Trevor Sangrey, "Resisting Definition: Gendering through Interaction and Relational Self-hood," *Hypatia* 24, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 56–76. Shotwell and Sangrey argue, specifically, that gender is relationally constituted and that liberal-individualist models of selfhood are inadequate for analyzing gender for this reason (Shotwell and Sangrey 2009, 57).

[25] B. Aultman, "Cisgender," *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 1, nos. 1–2 (May 2014): 62.

activists, though it is not without its problems.[26] Enke points out at multiple issues with the term that pose potential theoretical problems and I will briefly discuss two of these issues in this connection. The first is that the juxtaposition of "cis-" and "trans-" sets up a binary that can obscure the ways in which cis status is contingent on a number of factors such as race, class, and ability.[27] This is because 'cisgender privilege', a concept that circulates both in academic discourses on trans issues and in activist contexts, according to Enke, is something that tends to be something achieved or conferred when individuals are normatively aligned with respect to other social categories like race, class and dis/ability. Further, an individual's non-trans status is more easily called into question depending on one's race and class, given the organization of gender norms around whiteness and middle to upper class status. Second, "cis-" can be read as positing a particular temporality, one that presupposes that if someone is trans, they were never cis; this is conceptually necessary in order for cis to effectively mean non-trans.[28] For these reasons, I have chosen to use the term "non-trans" in this dissertation, even though cisgender and non-trans often appear *prima facie* to be conceptually equivalent.

For example, in our current U.S. context, the gender "woman" has a set of recognizable features, some of which are embodied, some of which are performed actions or mannerisms and some of which pertain to how one is expected to interact with others. In addition to these features, there are everyday understandings of what these features mean that attend to each of them. This understanding enables them to be assimilated into

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[26] A. Finn Enke, "The Education of Little Cis: Cisgender and the Discipline of Opposing Bodies," in *The Transgender Studies Reader 2*, ed. Susan Stryker and Aren Aizura (New York: Routledge, 2013), 234.
[27] Ibid., 240.

[28] Ibid., 242: "To preserve the stasis of cis as non-trans, trans must never have been or become cis but instead be consistently trans across all time and in all spaces."

an individual's self-understanding or others' understandings of whether or not one "lives

up to" being a woman or not.[29] The constellation of features thought to characterize

women lends this gender a kind of stability that renders it intelligible, readily

understandable and therefore readily reproducible. Such a conception of the gender

"woman" and ways of living this gender that are relatively stable can be characterized as

static ways of living gender.

Trans ways of living gender will often show up as more fluid in comparison to

non-trans ways of living gender, but may attain more stability and thereby show up as

genders that lend themselves to categorization. However, it is better not to make the

mistake of taking this stability to mean that the best analytic course of action is to create

categories that have corollary concepts with necessary and sufficient conditions. In their

piece, "Trans-, Trans, or Transgender?" Susan Styker, Paisley Currah and Lisa Jean

Moore argue against this methodological move, one that is intuitive for some

philosophers:

> Rather than seeing genders as classes or categories that by definition contain only
> one kind of thing (which raises unavoidable questions about the masked rules and
> normativities that constitute qualifications for categorical membership), we

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[29] See Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. See also C. Jacob Hale's article "Are Lesbians Women?".
Here Hale discusses the "natural attitude" about gender, which he attributes to Garfinkel via Kate
Bornstein's *Gender Outlaw*, in connection with his taxonomy of the components that make up our
culturally dominant concept of "woman" (Hale 1996, 103). Hale notes that the "natural attitude" is
resistant to contestation, when held both by specialists and non-specialists:

> While "normals" who hold the "natural attitude" must continually adjust their attitude to claims
> about gender which appear to contradict their attitude, or ignore these claims, or explain or laugh
> or ridicule or beat them away, specialized discourses about gender are by no means immune from
> the influence of the "natural attitude" either (Hale 1996, 103).

We can gather from these discussions of the "natural attitude" that not only are there certain things thought
to be true of gender, but our understanding of gender often works selectively in order to foreclose the
potential destabilization of gender categories that instances of gender non-conformity could occasion.
Further, this stabilization procedure not only shores up an understanding of what is taken to be
descriptively true about the social world, but also allows for the continuation of a certain understanding of
what is moral (i.e. normative).

understand genders as potentially porous and permeable spatial territories (arguabl[y] numbering more than two), each capable of supporting rich and rapidly proliferating ecologies of embodied difference.[30]

Stryker, Currah and Moore suggest the term "transing" be used to describe the movement in and between these "permeable spatial territories".[31] This term suggests a lack of stability is true both of established binary genders and of genders that in some sense move between these binary genders, and it consequently has some affinities with the sense of stability and fluidity I wish to capture with "trans ways of life". Although my description of trans ways of live bears some resemblances to the term "transing", I have chosen to forgo using this term given that I do not know, at the outset, whether or not my own ontological analysis of trans ways of life will be compatible with the ontological picture of gender that is implied by the use of the term "transing".[32]

I do agree with Stryker et al., however, that establishing categories in order to conduct an analysis of trans ways of life is both misleading and methodologically and philosophically problematic. That is, if we attempt to establish categories at the outset (e.g. cis man, cis woman, trans man, trans woman, non-binary person, etc.) we run the risk of building in ontological or normative assumptions that establish the boundaries of category membership. As Colin Koopman argues, we can differentiate between concepts and categories by attending to their functional role in an analysis; categories, when applied at the outset of an analysis, channel the inquiry of that analysis while concepts,

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[30] Susan Stryker, et al. "Introduction: Trans-, Trans or Transgender", *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 36: nos. 3 & 4 (Fall/Winter 2008): 12-13.

[31] Ibid., 13. They define "transing" in the following way: "'Transing'" in short, is a practice that takes place within, as well as across or between, gendered spaces. It is a practice that assembles gender into contingent structures of association with other attributes of bodily being, and that allows for their reassembly."
[32] Specifically, the term appears to have a particularly Deleuzian valence, although discussion of Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology* and Foucault's notion of biopower are also discussed in this connection.

on the other hand, can emerge as a result of inquiries employing certain methods.[33]

Deploying gender categories at the outset, including a category of "transgender," could

potentially hamstring the kind of analysis required to analyze social possibility in

connection with gender, by calling to mind a set of certain possible ways of life (i.e.

seeking out/not seeking out medical interventions in order to transition, being gender

non-conforming, etc.). My concern is that having a kind of categorical definition or

notion of "trans" will entail certain relationships to social possibilities (e.g. transgression,

conformity or non-conformity with gender norms). By contrast, we can think of "trans

ways of life" as functioning—at least potentially or ideally—as a concept that expresses

the way in which certain ways of life show up against a backdrop of everyday,

naturalized understandings of gender. It could also be the case that "trans ways of life" is

a kind of placeholder that circumscribes a place where concepts will emerge after further

analysis, concepts that better capture or describe the ways of living gender at issue.

In short, my use of "trans ways of life" as a term for a concept in this analysis is

intended to obviate potential theoretical problems that categories may entail. In so doing,

I hope to avoid potential unnecessary problems by eschewing categories that are

subtended by a particular picture of the ontology of gender. As I have attempted to show,

there are problems with attempting to nail down a philosophical definition of gender, and

even definitions we should consider among the successful, such as that offered by

Bettcher, may still be too restrictive for our purposes here.

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[33] Colin Koopman. "Two Uses of Michel Foucault in Political Theory: Concepts and Methods in Giorgio Agamben and Ian Hacking." *Constellations* 22, no.4 (2015): 571–585. Koopman describes the distinction in the following way:

> This distinction [between functional roles] can be cast as one between two different types of ideas or contents: *categories* are ideas assumed at the outset of inquiry that help channel inquiry, and *concepts* are ideas produced through the work of inquiry that are not all available in advance of the inquiry itself (576, my emphasis).

Conditions for the Possibility of Trans Ways of Life

Theorists have already given accounts of the ways in which trans ways of life become possible. A survey of these views provides us with a starting point for thinking about how trans ways of life become possible, but they do not settle the matter entirely. They provide a snapshot of the kinds of factors that may make up the conditions for the possibility of ways of living gender that do not readily show up in the social world, given our collective investment in the existence of two static, putatively natural genders. In what follows, I will discuss three relevant accounts of the conditions for the possibility of different trans ways of life, those of Sandy Stone, Susan Stryker and C. Jacob Hale, with a view to elucidating some of the relevant factors others have identified. By surveying these positions, my goal is to situate my own position on social possibilities and trans ways of life that I will be developing in this dissertation.[34]

In her landmark essay, "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto", Sandy Stone calls into question and contests the way in which different possibilities have been foreclosed by the way in which transsexuality has been constructed medically and discursively. She argues for deconstructing this discursive construction.[35] Historically, Stone notes, transsexuals were "programmed to disappear", something that involved the "construct[ion] of a plausible history", one in which one was *not* transsexual and

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[34] This comment is meant to indicate the methodological role that these pieces played at the beginning of my project, namely, to orient myself within the problematic of gender and possibility that these three authors indicate. That is to say, my survey of the trans studies literature has not been exhaustive; rather, in conducting my research for this dissertation, I attempted to identify pieces that would be helpful in thinking about social possibility and trans ways of life. At the same time, given that my views about social possibility developed through working through Heidegger and Foucault on this connection, I have not made all of the hermeneutic moves that I think are necessary for situating my work with respect to trans studies as a whole.

[35] Sandy Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto," in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, Stryker and Whittle, eds. (New York: Routledge 2006): 230.

passing.[36] The combination of the creation of plausible histories and passing created

conditions in which transsexuals were invisible and illegible as trans. This, according to

Stone, foreclosed several different, but interrelated, possibilities. First, since passing

necessarily includes the effacement of the transsexual body as one characterized by

"mixture", this denies the "*intertexual* possibilities of the transsexual body", by which

Stone means the possibilities that transsexual bodies have for disrupting dominant

understandings and schemas of gender.[37] The second is that framing transsexual lives in

terms of the "wrong body" paradigm (i.e. the idea that transsexuality is defined by a

misalignment between one's sexed body, one's sense of ones' body and/or one's gender)

has foreclosed the possibility of analyzing the complexities of trans experience.[38] Lastly,

passing and plausible histories foreclose the possibility of "authentic relationships"

because, in Stone's view, these constitute lies.[39]

In order to resist these foreclosures of possibilities, Stone argues that we ought to

think of "transsexuals" as a genre, rather than a class or third gender: "I suggest

constituting transsexuals not as a class or problematic "third gender", but rather as a

genre—a set of embodied texts whose potential for *productive* disruption of structured

sexualities and spectra of desire has yet to be explored."[40] She locates this "potential for

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., 231 (emphasis original).

[38] Ibid. For a discussion of the "wrong-body model" in connection with trans theory, see Talia Bettcher, "Trapped in the Wrong Theory: Rethinking Trans Oppression and Resistance," *Signs* 39: no. 2 (2014): 383–406. In this article, Bettcher discusses Jay Prosser's position on the wrong body model and trans embodiment in the book *Second Skins* (Bettcher 2014 a, 400–403). While a discussion of Prosser's book would certainly be germane to the topic of this dissertation, time constraints meant that I was unable to consult this book for this dissertation and include a discussion of it here.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., (emphasis original).

productive disruption" in the visibility of trans subjects who refuse to pass, thereby

challenging or upsetting the logic underpinning the medicalization and pathologization of

trans people something that, in turn, bolsters gender essentialism. For Stone, the ontology

that subtends these medical endeavors, and the understandings they give rise to (such as

the "wrong body" explanation of trans people's desire for medical interventions),

forecloses the possibility of developing more adequate ways of understanding trans

experience. These understandings were badly needed, on her view, because the extant

ways of understanding trans experience failed to capture their variety

In this argument, Stone claims that visibility, coupled with a proliferation of

discourses about trans ways of life will contest and possibly change the conditions that

foreclose alternate understandings of what it means to live a trans life. The proliferation

of discourses, too, will presumably change the conditions that affect whether or not one is

able to live a trans life per se, on my reading of Stone's position. Thus, Stone foregrounds

discourse and visibility, or showing up in the social world, as important factors for

creating the possibility of new understandings and, perhaps, new ways of living.

Susan Stryker, in her essay, "My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village

of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage", draws attention to the role affect plays in

resisting stigmatization produced by the equation of transsexuality with monstrosity.[41]

She suggests that rage is an affective response to "being compelled to transgress" gender

norms in ways that society construes as monstrous.[42] She draws on personal experience to

argue that a specific affect, rage, is produced by the social situation of transsexual and

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[41] Susan Stryker, "My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage", in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle eds. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 245–246.

[42] Ibid., 253.

transgender people in a social field that is inimical to their survival.[43] This rage has the

potential to push trans subjects to establish new modes of being that enable them to resist

the constraints these norms impose on their bodies and on their livability:

> Transgender rage is a queer fury, an emotional response to conditions in which it becomes imperative to take up, for the sake of one's own continued survival as a subject, a set of practices that precipitates one's exclusion from a naturalized order of existence that seeks to maintain itself as the only possible basis for being a subject. However, by mobilizing gendered identities and rendering them provisional, open to strategic development and occupation, this rage enables the establishment of subjects in new modes, regulated by different codes of intelligibility. Transgender rage furnishes a means for disidentification with compulsorily assigned subject positions. It makes the transition from one gendered subject position to another possible by using the impossibility of complete subjective foreclosure to organize an outside force as an inside drive, and vice versa. Through the operation of rage, the stigma itself becomes the source of transformative power.[44]

Stryker suggests that rage can be the impetus to establish new ways of living gender,

which will have their own, different "codes of intelligibility". She notes that the

"naturalized order of existence" that governs possibilities of living gender is self-

maintaining and has a kind of stability and inertia, such that it has the capacity to exclude

those who do not conform to the kinds of conducts it circumscribes. This passage

suggests that the mobilization of gendered identities is what renders them provisional in

the face of forces that have a tendency to render these identities static and natural. She

suggests, that the strategic taking up of those practices that "precipitates one's exclusion

from a naturalized order of existence" is part of this mobilization, too. Thus, for Stryker,

affect coupled with a certain kind of strategic relationship to gender that is taken up

through gender practices can contest and destabilize those conditions that would typically

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[43] Ibid., 249. She writes that of this rage that, "[i]t is a rage bred by the necessity of existing in external circumstances that work against my survival."

[44] Ibid., 253.

render trans ways of life impossible or unintelligible. Stryker suggests in this piece that it is although scientific discourses of transsexuality along with medical practices like sex reassignment through hormone replacement and surgery attempted to stabilize gendered subjectivity, it is through them that trans subject can not only survive, but develop strategies for contesting the naturalness or compulsoriness of these gendered ways of life.[45]

Both Stryker and Stone were reacting to, and seeking to deconstruct, pathological, medicalized models of transsexuality that were developed in psycho-medical[46] power

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[45] Ibid., 248. Stryker writes of these medical discourses and practices that, "[t]he agenda that produced hormonal and surgical sex reassignment techniques is no less pretentious, and no more noble, than Frankenstein's. Heroic doctors still endeavor to triumph over nature. The scientific discourse that produced sex reassignment techniques is inseparable from the pursuit of immortality through the perfection of the body, the fantasy of total mastery through the transcendence of an absolute limit, and the hubristic desire to create life itself. Its genealogy emerges from a metaphysical quest older than modern science, and its cultural politics are aligned with a deeply conservative attempt to stabilize gendered identity in service of the naturalized heterosexual order."

[46] Throughout the dissertation, I use the term "psycho-medical" as an adjective modifying the terms "understanding", "concept", etc. in order to indicate the context in which sex, gender, sexuality, intersexuality and transsexuality were constituted as objects of scientific study by clinicians from various disciplinary backgrounds, including psychology, endocrinology, surgical medicine and sexology (which, as a discipline, can include individuals with different disciplinary training: Benjamin was an endocrinologist while Money was a psychologist by training, for example). I don't mean it as a technical term or concept; it's merely a descriptive shorthand, and I am not the only one to use it. For instance, Katrina Roen uses the term "psycho-medical in the articles "Of Right Bodies and Wrong Bodies: Forging the Corpus Transsexualis through Discursive Manoever and Surgical Manipulation," *International Journal of Clinical Psychology* 3 (2001): 98–121 and "Technologies of Trans-sexing Discursive Tension and Resistance within Psycho-Medical and Transgendered Theorizing of Transsexual Bodies" in *Theoretical Issues in Psychology*, J Morss, N Stephenson, and HV Rappard, eds. (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 33–45.. In these articles, Roen, who is working in psychology, does not give a specific definition of the terms, but uses them to refer to clinicians involved in granting trans people access to sex reassignment surgeries. See also Jason Cromwell's article "Fearful Others: Medico-Psychological Constructions of Female-to-Male Transgenderism", in *Current Concepts in Transgender Identity*, Dallas Denny, ed., Garland Gay and Lesbian Studies vol. 11. (New York: Routledge, 1998), 117–144, in which Cromwell uses the term "medico-psychological" to refer to discourses that pathologized female-to-male trans people by deploying a medical/mental illness model (Cromwell 1998, 118). In both cases, I understand the authors to be using the term in a descriptive sense, as I am doing here, to refer to a context where clinicians working in medicine and psychology created and maintained the conditions that determine who is able to medically transition. This context includes a number of knowledge production practices, including medical and psychological studies that were meant to elucidate the normal and the abnormal with respect to sex and, later, gender. Sexology, the study of human sexuality, which draws on a number of disciplines and consists of practitioners from different disciplinary backgrounds, is central to this context. However, I chose to refrain from referring to this context as sexological for the following reason. I want to avoid suggesting that

structures and knowledge production practices. They severely limited the kind of agency those who desired to live gender in non-normative ways could have by imposing barriers to access to treatment through the establishment of specific medical protocols (something usually referred to as medical gatekeeping") and by requiring people to construct plausible histories and pass as conditions as part of their treatment.[47] Thus, both theorists are concerned with thinking through how it is possible to develop new understandings and new ways of living gender that will support a wider range of embodiments and ways of life. Stone suggests that change to discourses and discursive production is one way in which social change in this connection may be achieved. In another foundational text of the discipline of trans studies, "My Words to Victor Frankenstein", Stryker suggests that it is through practices, and specifically those practices through which normative and putatively natural gendered ways of life are reproduced, that new possibilities for gendered ways of life will come about. So, after examining these two accounts, we can gather that both discourse and practices are key considerations when it comes to thinking about possibilities for living gender.

In "Tracing a Ghostly Memory in My Throat: Reflections on Ftm Feminist Voice and Agency", C. Jacob Hale draws on his own experiences of exclusion from feminist discussions about transsexuality, and his own negotiations with medical and psychiatric regulatory practices, to describe trans existence as a "flitting" between ontological

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sexologists were the only ones involved in these knowledge production practices. That is, I want to include, surgeons, endocrinologists and other medical clinicians as well as psychologists.

[47] Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity* (Berkeley: Seal Press 2016), 118–126.

categories—a kind of movement "proper to ghosts".[48] Excluded from the categories that

constitute social ontology, trans people search for homes where none are readily offered

up or apparent. The following passage is situated in his larger argument concerning social

ontology and the location of trans people within that ontology and is worth quoting at

length:

> Those of us who live in border zones constituted by the overlapping margins of categories do so because our embodiments and our subjectivities are abjected from social ontology: we cannot fit ourselves into extant categories without denying, erasing, or otherwise abjecting personally significant aspects of ourselves. The price of committing such violence against ourselves is too great, though our only other option is very costly for the dislocated have fallen through the cracks in the structure of the gendered world. Having slipped off all the handholds we have ever tried to grasp, we have fallen between the cracks of language and life. Unintelligible to ourselves and to others, we are driven to search for new category terms, since category terms are the signal-flags of social ontology, and we desperately long to reenter the world. […] While we try to carve out zones of safety in which to create new discourses—structures and category terms—with which to call ourselves and others into fuller social being, we recognize that such social existence will always be precarious and partial. So we are always cautious, drawing tentatively on the various discourses of those locations we only partially inhabit, always ready to shift in resistance to the tactical shifts of hegemonic, normalizing, totalizing, and colonizing forces. Here is queer gender, here is genderqueer: a range of abjected subject positions, dislocated locations, from which the displaced can speak. Here is where I stake my place between places.[49]

Here, we can see the way in which the move to establish new discursive categories that

may render trans ways of life more intelligible shows up as the only tenable option, given

that the social world appears to be structured by ontological gender categories. Yet, even

if the work of carving out spaces (more intelligible spaces) within the social world is

accomplished, these spaces will be precarious none-the-less, because the deck is stacked

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[48] C. Jacob Hale. "Tracing a Ghostly Memory in My Throat: Reflections on Ftm Feminst Voice and Agency," in *You've Changed: Sex Reassignment and Personal Identity*, Laurie Shrage, ed. (NP: Oxford University Press 2009), 55. The term "ftm" or "FTM" or "FtM" is an abbreviation of "female-to-male"; it is shorthand used to refer to people assigned female at birth who identify as male and transition from female to male. It is therefore a descriptive term that can be used to refer to transsexual or transgender men.

[49] Ibid., 55-56.

against the attempts for reinclusion made by those in abjected subject positions. Hale

suggests that the new categories are provisional, allowing individuals to inhabit them for

the purposes of resisting tactical shifts that occur in modes of oppression.

> Hale suggests that trans subjects "be monstrous" in order to
>
> restructure the world, to create spaces for new cultural formations of discursive
> agency that recognize those fractures that already exist between the aspects of
> embodiment, subjectivity, performativity, and self-identification taken to
> constitute unitary sex/gender/sexuality status, and which broaden the conditions
> of possibility for new fault lines to appear. [50]

While it is not entirely clear what being "monstrous" amounts to here, what is clear from

this passage and the passage quoted above is that Hale takes several things to be

necessary in order for more trans ways of life to be possible. First, there must be

resistance to normalizing tactics and tactics that abject trans subjects from the social

world. Second, in order to resist these tactics, trans people must create both discursive

spaces and cultural formations that destabilize the existing, hegemonic categories. And,

finally, Hale also speaks elsewhere in the essay about the necessity for coalitions between

trans people, sexual minorities and feminists, as all of these groups have similar stakes in

combating hegemonic, oppressive structures.

From the above three accounts, we can gather that there is some kind of

relationship or interaction between the discursive or conceptual sphere and that of

practice. Stone, Stryker and Hale all point to the necessity of deconstructing, subverting

or upending discursive regimes that effectively foreclose the possibility of certain trans

ways of life. While the dominant model of a trans way of life does disclose certain ways

of life, specifically, that way of life involving pathologization and medicalized transition,

they each argue, in different ways, that this way of life is restrictive and problematic.

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[50] Ibid., 60.

That is, this model is used to bolster gender essentialist notions of the natural connection between gender and sex. While the passages I have analyzed here foreground the significance of discursive categories or concepts in creating conditions for the possibility of new trans ways of life, it is safe to assume that these new conceptualizations will have corollary practices, just as medico-pathological notions of transsexuality had their corollary medical, psychiatric and regulatory practices.

We are left with the question of how, precisely, changes to the discursive or conceptual sphere, accompanied by related practices, create the conditions for the proliferation of ways of living gender and create conditions for the establishment of more salutary ways of living gender that make life more livable in a world where one's viability as a subject is threatened . It is certainly the case that one can live gender in non-normative ways without either developing or appealing to robust conceptualizations or ways of understanding what their gender means, and neither does one necessarily need to develop rule-governed practices in order to do this. While any way of living gender will exist in some sort of relation to normative, dominant ways of understanding and living gender, these ways may fail to reproduce the dominant ways if they are sufficiently different from the dominant ways of living gender. The question then becomes how these non-normative but perhaps under-conceptualized (from the perspective of academic and everyday discourses about sex and gender) ways of living gender end up in a position to contest dominant ways of life and become understandable enough to show up as possibilities for other people. This dissertation will provide a way to think about how this occurs through understanding or conceptualization, practices and the character of our

relationships with others in a world where power relations structure how possibilities for different and more salutary ways of life are disclosed.

In this dissertation, I attempt to develop a framework for thinking about social possibility in connection with trans ways of life. In chapter 1, I draw on Martin Heidegger's ontology of Dasein in *Being and Time* in order to elucidate 1) how people access certain possibilities, or get into them and 2) how our understanding (including concepts), practices and embodiment are all ways of becoming aware of possibilities for living. In Heideggerian terms, these are all ways in which possibilities are disclosed. Trans ways of life present certain problems for the ways in which gender is understood in an everyday way and in theoretical domains, such as medicine and psychology and I suggest that, consequently, we can understand trans ways of life as posing problems *for* prevailing ways of understanding the social world. However, because possibilities for living gender are not readily and easily disclosed, as Stone, Stryker and Hale all imply in different ways, we can understand trans existence as a kind of problem *for* trans people. In this chapter, I suggest calling this latter problem a "problem of existence. In this chapter, too, I consider the way in which gender is related to social possibilities, namely, that it is something around which social possibilities are arranged insofar as one's possibilities for living are disclosed on the basis of assigned sex. Heidegger also gives us a way of thinking about how we have an everyday or commonsense way of understanding the world that is a social given and the way in which this everyday understanding informs what we think of as being possible for ourselves and for others. I suggest that when social possibilities are not apparent or obvious, as is the case with gendered social possibilities for trans people, this can be thought of as a "problem of

existence" and suggest that this is significantly different from trans existence being a

problem *for* a specific understanding of the world.

In chapter 2, I turn to the work of Michel Foucault in order to think about the way

in which power relations affect the social field, such that the social possibilities in a given

context are affected. I discuss how, in my view, sovereign power, disciplinary power and

biopower all modulate the field of social possibilities in different ways insofar as they

flow through *dispositifs* that enable subjects' actions to be acted on in regular ways.

Different forms of power also produce specific possibilities as effects, I suggest. I then

discuss knowledge production practices in order to describe the relationship between

concept formation and the intelligibility of subjects, which intelligibility, in turn, affects

the subject's access to social possibilities.

In chapter 3, I apply this framework to analyze the emergence of transsexual ways

of life in the mid 20th century. In particular, I analyze the formation of specific concepts

in what I refer to as the psycho-medical formation of transsexuality. I analyze key

concepts from three sexologists who were instrumental in establishing this formation:

John Money, Harry Benjamin, and Robert Stoller. I argue that the medical formation

around transsexuality produced the social possibility of medical transition, but that this

did not happen in a top down fashion. That is, medicine alone did not create the

conditions for the possibility of transsexual ways of life: trans people's needs and desires

to take up possibilities of medical transition, as well as their participation in research that

formed the basis of this construction, served as conditions for this mode of transition

becoming a social possibility. I argue that, in this context, transsexual people can be

understood as trying to navigate gender as a problem of existence and that in doing so,

they contributed to establishing this as a social possibility through their participation in research. However, their aims were different from those of the researchers, and the social possibility of medical transition was one that relatively few people could access. The psycho-medical formation of transsexuality, and the concepts used in connection with it, created certain conditions for the disclosure of trans ways of life then, and which remain background conditions for their intelligibility today.

In chapter 4, I turn to trans theory and apply my framework for thinking about social possibilities to three select works in trans theory. I focus on the conceptual frameworks that Kate Bornstein and Julia Serano have developed in order to more adequately disclose trans ways of life, conceptual frameworks that can be read as correctives to the everyday understanding of trans ways of life that has been informed by psycho-medical knowledge production about them. There, too, I discuss an article by C. Jacob Hale that discusses how non-obvious possibilities for living gender can be accessed through practices other than medical ones, specifically, SM practices and the possibilities for different forms of relationality found therein.

I want to note a few things before getting into the body of the dissertation. The first thing I want to note is that what follows is one of many possible approaches to thinking about social possibilities, in my view. Over the course of this project, I have come to think of the projection onto possibilities, or the taking up of certain ways of life, spatially in terms of lines. I am not sure whether or not I started doing this before or after reading Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology,* where she uses the concept of a line to elucidate the way in we tend to follow certain pre-given, normatively governed paths in

the social world.[51] This indicates to me that Sara Ahmed's phenomenological approach to thinking about the effects of gender and race in the social world is a salutary way to approach these questions about social possibility in connection with trans ways of life. Ahmed uses proposes the concepts of orientation and lines in order to think about how people end up following along, or diverging from, normative and normal ways of life in the social world in her book. I became familiar with this book after beginning my dissertation work and, while Ahmed's concepts do crop up here and there in the dissertation, this is a different matter from really centering her work and other approaches that are compatible with hers in my work. This would be, in my view, a very worthwhile project, but it is not one that I have done here.

Attending to the way in which Ahmed's project in *Queer Phenomenology* appears to be another salutary way of approaching this topic foregrounds something that I've kept in mind throughout this project. It is that, ultimately, I think that this project can be thought of as a particular angle or approach to a topic, rather than an attempt to foreground a new theoretical object: social possibility. Even though theorists do not often use the language of social possibility to discuss what is happening in the social world and how we find ourselves living a certain way or not, I think that it is a central concern of feminist philosophy. Judith Butler points this out in Beauvoir's work, writing that, on her reading, Beauvoir is writing about how one "chooses gender" in a world in which the meaning of sexed embodiment is pre-given. This is a reading of Beauvoir's project in *The*

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[51] Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 19.

Second Sex which I think is reasonable.[52] This suggests that a project foregrounding

social possibility and attempting to explain how people access social possibilities for

living gender can also be done using Beauvoir or a Beauvoirean framework. Indeed, I

have sometimes wondered whether or not an adequate approach to my topic would be a

work like *The Second Sex* in terms of scope and level of detail. That is because,

ultimately, I think that there are a great many topics and issues that can be considered in

connection with social possibilities, how they show up to us in a social world and how

our access to them is allowed or blocked. I occasionally mention other considerations that

other projects on the connection between social possibility and trans ways of life could

include and I do so in order to point out the scope of this project. To use a work I've

already discussed as an example, Stryker argues that affect is centrally important to

considerations of how new ways of living gender emerge in a social context that tends to

forestall them; however, in this project, I have not considered affect at all.. Thus, this

project is far from the only possible approach to this topic.

The second thing I want to note is where my project stands vis-à-vis Das

Janssen's project in his book *Phenomenal Gender*. It is necessary to do this given that we

both develop frameworks using Heidegger and Foucault in order to approach trans

existence philosophically. Our accounts may seem very similar, at first blush, given the

attention we give to *das Man* and gender's relationship to possibility, among other

things.[53] However, I think that our accounts are ultimately different for a number of

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[52] Judith Butler, "Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*", *Yale French Studies* 72 (1986): 40.

[53] Ephraim Das Janssen. *Phenomenal Gender: What Transgender Experience Discloses* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017). For instance, Janssen says of gender that, "…if gender is, rather, a field of possibility, then it is possible that authentic Dasein might vary existing themes in order to create new

reasons. First of all, I think that Janssen and I read Heidegger very differently, so much

so, in fact, that I worry I may misunderstand exactly how Janssen's "applied ontology",

as he characterizes his project, construes the relationship between gender, ontology, the

social world and possibility.[54] The first way in which our accounts seem to differ is that

Janssen understands social change to occur through the transgression of norms.[55] I, on the

other hand, don't think that social change with respect to gender need necessarily involve

transgression and I think that the emergence of transsexuality indicates this, as I discuss

in chapter 3. Next, the most significant difference is, perhaps, that I do not attempt to give

an account of what gender *is*; initially, I thought that an ontology or metaphysics of

gender would be relevant in this connection. However, I am attempting to give an

account of social possibility and how Dasein accesses these social possibilities. While

Janssen's account does include an account of possibilities and of how Dasein accesses

them, his analysis appears to be mostly organized around a Heideggerian ontology of

gender, rather than around an account of social possibility.[56] Janssen's method is applied

ontology, which for him is a project that involves applying Heidegger's fundamental

ontology to a topic (gender) that was not an analytic focus for Heidegger. Thus, Janssen's

analytic priority is explaining the ontology of gender through Heidegger and using that to

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modes of intelligibility by which both understand and dwell in-the-world" (Janssen, *Phenomenal Gender*, 91).

[54] Janssen, *Phenomenal Gender,* 30–31. Regarding his aims, Janssen explains, "[t]his book aims to provide an *application* of the theories Heidegger developed in his fundamental ontology to the lived human experience of gender, the particular details of which in any given situation are ontical" (30).

[55] Ibid., 80, 86, 93, 135.

[56] "So what is gender? I argue here that it is a phenomenon experienced as a style of Being, shaped by tensions that obtain between individuating Dasein, understandings of embodiment, and the social constructs according to which Dasein's Being is rendered intelligible, and operating according to deployments of power by means of technologies" (Janssen, *Phenomenal Gender*, 5).

analyze trans existence. By contrast, my analytic target is an account that can explain how we access social possibilities and how they emerge, such that *that* can be used to help explain trans ways of life. This account of how we access social possibilities is, therefore, very general and while gender is the focus of my inquiry, my aim does not involve giving an ontological account of gender. My account does not privilege or center gender, therefore, as a theoretical object in the way that Janssen's account privileges it. I think that it is methodologically prudent to first unpack the ontological and metaphysical baggage around the concept of gender before deploying it in an ontology. My reason for this position is that there have been various genealogical inquiries into the origin of gender as a concept, which suggest that though the concept purports to point to a transhistorical phenomenon called "gender" our understanding of what "gender" is, like "sexuality" for Foucault, a relatively recent way of understanding our existence and our subjectivity. My analysis in chapter 3 parallels some of these genealogical projects, though it itself is not a genealogy.

Janssen also has a strong view of the pervasiveness of gender in human existence, writing that "[t]here is no aspect of Dasein's Being in which gender is not an issue for it".[57] In my view, this is simply trivially untrue phenomenologically speaking. However, since I think this is the case based on phenomenological reflections on my own experience of gender, and since it is possible that my experience is atypical, I'm willing to grant that this might be true for the most part in our current context. Still, I think that if this is true, it is important to question whether or not this is because gender is an ontological feature of human life, or if it is something that has so pervasively structured the social world that it ends up pervading all aspects of our existence in such a way that it

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[57] Ibid., 5.

is experienced as being something fundamental and integral to our sense of self. While an ontological explanation may be germane in the latter case as well, this will be, I think, a different kind of ontology from the fundamental ontology of human life that Heidegger is proposing. Further, Janssen does not discuss the role of the Heideggerian notion of solicitude in accessing social possibilities, while I place quite a bit of emphasis on it. Finally, I remain agnostic about whether or not gender is ontological or ontic[58] for Heidegger. I am inclined to agree with Heidegger that the sexed body is not part of Dasein's fundamental ontology and *eo ipso*, gender would also be excluded from fundamental ontology. Space precludes me from exploring the similarities and differences between Janssen's project and mine in more detail. Although our projects resemble each other insofar as we place emphasize the role of *das Man*, are dealing with trans existence using Heidegger and Foucault, and are attending to how social change with respect to gender occurs, my project is different because I am attempting to use the framework I have developed to analyze knowledge production practices around transsexuality and trans theory in chapters 3 and 4. This kind of analysis is something that Janssen does not conduct in the course of his project in *Phenomenal Gender*.

Caveats

Before turning to Heidegger's analysis of Dasein and possibility in *Being and Time*, it is important to add a caveat regarding what this dissertation does and does not do. This dissertation is a schematic attempt to think about some of what conditions social possibility. Methodologically, it proceeds from the question of social possibility and,

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[58] When something is "ontic" for Heidegger, this means that it is true of a particular region of beings (as in a science) or is true of specific Daseins. I discuss the confusion of something ontic for something ontological as a kind of category mistake in chapter 1.

consequently, does not consider various factors that condition the social possibilities in a given social world. While trans ways of life are the focus of this analysis of social possibility, the dissertation does not include analyses of specific forms of gender and how these forms of gender condition phenomenological access to and the availability of social possibilities for specific individuals. For instance, standards, norms and assumptions about masculinity and femininity in the U.S. place different kinds of constraints on boys and men, on the one hand, and girls and women on the other. Further, the forms of dominance that men have exercised over women in patriarchal contexts, including Western ones like the U.S., is something that the dissertation does not analyze either. These considerations are surely relevant. However, such an analysis would necessarily require a different framework drawing on different sources. Similarly, it would involve different methodological considerations; in particular, it would involve methodological considerations in connection with feminist theories.

Neither does this dissertation deal with race and racialization, nor does it deal with other social categories that intersect with gender, such as dis/ability, age, sexual orientation, religion and citizenship. All of these things can affect how one experiences gender, how others perceive one's gender and one's access to social possibilities. Further, some have argued for an even stronger claim regarding the relationship between gender and race, namely, that people of color who have been racialized as inferior according to modern Eurocentric standards were not understood to *be gendered in the first place*.[59]

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[59] See María Lugones, "The Coloniality of Gender," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Gender and Development: Critical Engagements in Feminist Theory and Practice*, ed. Wendy Harcourt (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 28; and C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017). Lugones and Snorton reach similar conclusions about the relationship between race and the understanding that people not racialized as white effectively lack gender, though they are each working with different theoretical frameworks. Lugones draws on Anibal Quijano's decolonial theory of the coloniality of power and modernity in order to argue

Given that this is true, and given the emphasis placed on intersectionality within feminism and trans studies, this omission may seem odd at best and irresponsible at worst. There is however, an explanation for this that is related to the above comments about the overall orientation of the dissertation. I draw on Heidegger and Foucault to develop an account of social possibility, and the focus of the dissertation is on characterizing possibility as an important aspect of human ontology and something that is affected by power relations. It is, therefore, intended to be of a schematic nature. The analyses in this dissertation can be read as potential preliminary analyses for more specific investigations, and these analyses could potentially include substantive discussions and analyses of race, class, dis/ability and other factors that contribute the access people have to social possibilities and their evidentness. For example, were the analysis of sexology conducted in chapter three to be expanded into a genealogy, this genealogy should centrally include a consideration of the relationship between whiteness and the clinical formation around transsexuality.[60] This would depend, however, on whether or not (1) the framework presented here is a successful one (i.e. a salutary one for analyzing trans issues and (2) whether or not this framework can be fruitfully combined with other frameworks better suited for analyzing things like race.

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that female colonial subjects who were racialized as non-white were not understood to be women, given the relationship between gender and whiteness in the modern/colonial gender system that she theorizes. Snorton draws on the work of Hortense Spillers and others to argue that there is a relationship between the way in which enslaved black people were understood by white enslavers as being fungible, specifically, and what he calls "ungendering" after Spillers (Snorton, *Black on Both Sides*, 11, 57 and *passim*).

[60] For as discussion of the relationship between whiteness and the media construction of Christine Jorgensen's status as a respectable woman in the mid-twentieth century, see Emily Skidmore, "Constructing the "Good Transsexual": Christine Jorgensen, Whiteness, and Heteronormativity in the Mid-Twentieth-Century Press," *Feminist Studies,* 37, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 270–300. For a discussion of media portrayals of Georgia Black, Lucy Hicks Anderson, Carlett Brown, Ava Betty Brown and James McHarris/Annie Lee Grant, all of whom were black trans people who lived during the same time period as Jorgensen, see Snorton, *Black on Both Sides*, chapter 4: "A Nightmarish Silhouette: Racialization and the Long Exposure of Transition," 139–175.

Mariana Ortega's work in *In-Between* and Sara Ahmed's work in *Queer Phenomenology* indicate that intersectional work can be done while incorporating work from Continental figures and traditions. Indeed, either of their frameworks could have fruitfully served as the basis for an analysis of social possibilities similar to this one. Ortega's work in particular demonstrates that Heidegger's existential ontology is flexible enough to afford combination with other frameworks relevant for thinking about trans issues, as Ortega combines a Heideggerian framework with concepts, orientations and problematics from Latina feminism. A question that arises in connection with the analysis in the first chapter is how we ought to think of Dasein's navigation of different worlds, that is, different cultural, subcultural or linguistic contexts that individuals move between. This is something that a framework like Ortega's is well suited to dealing with, but it is not something I address in a sustained fashion in this dissertation. My focus, instead, is on the way in which social possibilities are created and maintained in the predominant, public world that consists, in part, of culturally dominant norms and assumptions about gender. an analysis of resistant or subcultural worlds is certainly germane to this project, but it is outside the scope of this dissertation.

Now, I will turn to my own interpretation of Heidegger's *Being and Time* in order to begin thinking about social possibilities and trans ways of life.

Chapter One:

Using Heidegger to Indicate Possibilities and Trans Ways of Life

Introduction

A fruitful place to begin a consideration of social possibility is a consideration of human life and the social world. In *Being and Time,* Martin Heidegger provides an ontological framework for thinking about both. However, his ontology is very different from other metaphysical inquiries. Why is this the case? It is because the object of our philosophical theorizing is not an object like a coffee cup or a table[1], but rather, human beings and what human beings do: how human beings relate to one another, make themselves intelligible to one another, come to think of some ways of living a life as possible and others impossible, among other things. That is, an ontological analysis of human beings requires its own methodology and this analysis should be different from an ontology of other entities or objects. Martin Heidegger develops an ontology that is sensitive to this demand and, in *Being and Time,* develops an ontology of human beings that is a much different enterprise from a metaphysical or ontological analysis grounded in an analysis of objects. For Heidegger, Dasein, or human being, is unlike other entities because "Being is an *issue* for it" (BT 32 [12]).[2] Unlike tables and coffee cups, entities

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[1] My formulation of the problem here, and my use of the example of a table, is informed by Talia Bettcher's blog post "When Tables Speak": On the Existence of Trans Philosophy*." Bettcher writes:

> I'm afraid there's a tendency among some philosophers to suppose that philosophical investigations into race, gender, disability, trans issues, and so forth are not different methodologically from investigations into the question whether tables really exist. One difference, however, is that while tables aren't part of the philosophical conversation, trans people, disabled people, people of color, *are* part of the conversation. Or at least, we think we are. We're here. In the room. And we've suffered from life-long abuse" (Bettcher, "When Tables Speak").

[2] Martin Heidegger. *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008) Hereafter cited in text as "BT" with the page number corresponding to the Macquarrie and Robinson translation first, followed by the original pagination in *Sein und Zeit* in brackets (which is indicated by marginal notation in the Macquarrie and Robinson translation). See Macquarrie and

for which being is *not an issue,* Dasein is able to ask questions about its own existence and determine its own way of existing. Heidegger's assertion that Being is an issue for Dasein is well known. However, this point is timely and philosophically crucial when thinking about theorizing trans experiences.

Heidegger's ontology of human life, or Dasein, in *Being and Time* also includes a complicated account of possibility. The possibility that Heidegger discusses is not logical or modal possibility. In other words, the possibility that Heidegger is concerned with, and that I am concerned with here, is not a set of everything that could conceivably be the case in a given context, or everything that is *not* impossible. Rather, Heidegger understands possibility as a fundamental feature of human ontology: it is something that always characterizes human life. Heidegger also develops a nuanced, though imperfect, account of the social and of relationality between individuals that is helpful in this connection. Finally, in *Being and Time,* Heidegger provides an account of how Dasein ends up taking up certain possibilities, made intelligible in a social world, through practices and understandings of its world. In this chapter, I will discuss each of these aspects of Heidegger's theory and explain why they are relevant for thinking about social possibilities in connection with gender. I also use Heidegger's method of formal indication to arrive at methodologically adequate concepts of gender ("gendered ways of life") and trans ("trans ways of life"). The chapter begins with a discussion of formal indication.

Robinson's note on this in their translator's preface ('Translator's Preface', 13). I've included the full quotation here:
 "Dasein is an entity which does not just occur among other entities. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it."

Note on the organization of the chapter: The first section on formal indication and gender utilizes technical Heideggerian language that readers without extensive background in Heidegger may find difficult to follow. If that is the case, I suggest consulting the appendix for discussions of relevant terms (e.g. "Being-in-the-world").

Formal Indication and Gender

Gender can be understood as one of the ways in which Being is an issue for Dasein, as I aim to show in this chapter. However, in this chapter and in this dissertation, I do not deal in a sustained way with the question of whether or not gender is ontological. I mention my thoughts on this question at the end of the first section in passing, but my goal is to develop an account of social possibility and my engagements with ontology are in the service of that project. In other words, my goal is not to provide a robust account of the ontology of gender and, more specifically, of whether gender is an ontological feature or characteristic of human beings. What it means for gender to be an issue, in other words, is far from clear. At the outset, it is important to forgo assertions about what gender is *per se*. If we assume that gender is this or that kind of thing – the social role associated with a biological sex, for instance – then we will be reading gender, constituted *as an object,* back into an existential analysis of Dasein. We can, however, consider what gender does. It is, at least used to divide up roles in the social world: we often understand certain kinds of activities and occupations as being more suited for members of one gender rather than another. For instance, many people think women are more nurturing than men and therefore better suited to child-care. Gender also establishes a basis for many kinds differential treatment. Who we can trust, whose testimony we

believe, whose time is considered valuable, who is thought to have authority: gender influences all of these forms of regard and many others, a point with which students of feminism will be familiar. It affects what kinds of activities we engage in and it affects how we understand ourselves and others. Finally, it conditions what kinds of life we think of as possible for ourselves.

Rather than give a definition of gender here, I want to propose thinking about the term "gender" as a formal indication. In order to explain why I think this is salutary, it is necessary to explain what this term, "formal indication" means. In this chapter, formal indication comes first in the order of reasons; however, I want to note that it came last in the order of discovery. That is, I arrived at my adoption of formally indicative definition *after* I had thought about gender in connection with Heideggerian ontology and had grappled with the most philosophically appropriate way to describe gender as the principle object, along with social possibility, of this investigation. Therefore, arriving at an adequate grasp of formal indication for my purposes here was felicitous.

Formal indication [*formale Anzeige*] is a method for concept creation that Heidegger used in *Being and Time* and which he discusses in some of his early lectures. Heidegger uses the method of formal indication to avoid deploying concepts with certain metaphysical implications. Formal indication is a way of arriving at a definition that points to a phenomenon in need of investigation (like Being), without over-determining it from the outset by either 1) building a specific *content* into the definition or 2) ascribing

specific *formal* characteristics to the thing in question. Formal indication, therefore, is not

a method for the classification of things like a taxonomy in a science.[3]

Instead, formal indication is an invitation to the listener to fill in the content that

the concept indicates. Because Heidegger uses formally indicative concepts to point to

the various features of existence, the listener must engage in phenomenological reflection

on their own existence in order to understand the meaning or sense (*Sinn*) of the formal

indication. In *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*,[4] Heidegger describes

formally indicative definition in the following way:

> It is characteristic of an indicative definition that it precisely does not present
> fully and properly the object which is to be determined. Indeed, it merely
> indicates, but as genuinely indicative, it does not advance the principle of the
> object" (PIA 26). […] The "formal" part of "formal indication", "refers to a way
> of "approach" toward actualizing the maturation of an original fulfillment of what
> was indicated" (PIA 27).

Rather than providing a definition with determinate content, formal indication points to

the phenomenon in question. Heidegger understands philosophy as a specific kind of

comportment that enables a certain mode of access to phenomena in a given situation

(PIA 32, 41). Since philosophy is a "radical ontology", an "ontological phenomenology"

whose object is factical life or Dasein (which he uses to formally indicate the same thing

at different times: human Being), the comportment required of the practitioner of

philosophy is one in which one draws on one's own factical life in order to supply the

meaning of formally indicated terms. Since formally indicated definitions are supposed to

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[3] Martin Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life,* trans. Matthias Fritsch (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2010), 44; hereafter, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life* is cited in text as PRL.

[4] Martin Heidegger. *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle: Initiation into Phenomenological Research,* trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2009). Hereafter, *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle* is abbreviated PIA.

point to ontological features of factical life, it is, in principle, possible for any practitioner

of philosophy to give the formally indicated concept a meaning or sense that is drawn

from their own life. In this fashion, formal indications pick out universal characteristics

of factical life, like Being-in-the-world, understanding and possibility, but these concepts

are empty absent a particular ontic or existentiell (in the language of Being and Time)

fulfillment.[5]

Heidegger distinguishes formal indications from both generalizations and

formalizations (PRL 40). As we can know, generalization is a common method of

definition in philosophy and other disciplines. In *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*,

Heidegger says of generalization that "'Generalization [*Generalisierung*] means

generalizing [*Verallgemeinerung*] according to a genus. For example, red is a color, color

is sensuous quality" (PRL 40). In other words, in generalization, one moves from species

to genus, from the particulars to classes or types. Another way of thinking about

generalization is that it is a "way of ordering" (PRL 41). One implication of this method

of establishing the content of terms is that individuals are explicable as members of

classes. Generalization is tied to what Heidegger calls a "region": a domain of things that

are the object of a particular discipline, approached or accessed through the methods of

that discipline. For example, "living things" is the region of biology, "rocks and

minerals" is the region of geology, "the social world" is the region of sociology, etc. In

short, generalization is meant to capture "what" an object is. On this model, we can know

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[5] This is no easy task, however: formal indication is a very demanding method because one must be willing
and able to unseat habits of thought that characterize not only other philosophical approaches, but also
other disciplines which utilize both contentful definitions meant to designate a particular domain or region
of objects, and disciplines which utilize formalization. Further, it requires that one draw on one's own life
in order to philosophize. Lastly, it requires that one be able to follow Heidegger's deployment of formal
indication, which is circuitous and difficult.

"what" Seabiscuit is by knowing what characterizes horses, or which kinds of things are members of the category "horse", by knowing that horses are mammals, knowing that mammals are animals, etc.

In formalization, "formal predication is not bound in terms of its material contents" (PRL 40). The example of formal predication Heidegger uses is "The stone is an object" (PRL 40). Here, "object" does not refer to a genus of objects. Instead, it points to a formal feature of the stone. This is a different kind of explanation from, for instance, "this stone is a piece of sandstone, sandstone is a type of sedimentary rock". Heidegger says that formalization arises out of the "relational meaning" that comes from the researcher's "attitudinal relation" to the thing in question (PRL 40). Heidegger's understanding of formalization is not entirely clear.[6] But the term seems to mean, at least, that the way in which the researcher comports themself towards the object will to some extent determine the object's formal features that will be identified in a domain of inquiry.

Unlike generalization and formalization, formal indication "only has meaning in phenomenological explication" (PRL 44). Formal indication differs from generalization since it is (1) not classification and (2) unlike species or genus, it posits a concept with no determinate material contents. It differs from formalization because the formal features it

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[6] See S.J. McGrath, "Formal Indication, Irony and the Risk of Saying Nothing." In *A Companion to Heidegger's Phenomenology of Religious Life* ed. by Wierciński and McGrath (Amsterdam: Brill, 2010): 179–180. Part of the reason why formal indication, as a methodological principle, is unclear is because Heidegger discusses it so infrequently. McGrath proposes two interpretive options for thinking about formal indication. Because the term appears in the earlier writings under discussion in this section, but is later largely dropped from *Being and Time*, one way of interpreting Heidegger's use of the method is that Heidegger was looking for a method and, once he arrived at one, he stopped using the language of formal indication (McGrath 2010, 179). The other interpretive possibility, according to McGrath, is that formal indication ended up becoming a basic methodological principle that Heidegger fails to discuss later (McGrath 2010, 180). McGrath favors the latter interpretive option, agreeing with Theodore Kisiel that formal indication is methodologically central and that an understanding of it is key to understanding early Heidegger's project (ibid.).

indicates arise from the phenomenon itself and must be intersubjectively confirmed.

Formal indication has a positive and a negative application. It can be used to disqualify

potential candidates for useful concepts in an investigation, or it can be used to positively

to produce a formally indicative definition.

Positive Application

Towards the end of *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*, Heidegger

elaborates on how formal indication functions both *positively* and *negatively*.[7] In the next

two subsections, I will consider, in as succinct a manner as possible, the ways in which

formal indication is used positively, to provide a formally indicative definition, and

negatively to include concepts that are possible candidates for formally indicative

concepts. One of the interesting things about formal indication, to me, is that it is

simultaneously a procedure for the generation of methodologically appropriate concepts

and a procedure for evaluating the adequacy of existing concepts for phenomenological

analysis.

In an essay on formal indication in *A Companion to Heidegger's Phenomenology of

Religious Life*, S.J. McGrath describes how formal indication is used positively by

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[7] "The formal indication possesses, along with its referential character, a prohibiting (deterring, preventing) one at the same time. As the basic sense of the methodological approach of phenomenological interpretation at all levels of actualization, the formal indication functions both (always "at the same time") to guide as well as to deter in various ways. (Concretely, the formal indication is to be clarified partially where it comes into play in each case but more fundamentally in connection with phenomenological destruction as a basic element of the interpretation of the history of the spirit from a phenomenological standpoint.

      The formal indication prevents every drifting off into autonomous, blind, dogmatic attempts to fix the categorial sense, attempts which would be detached from the presupposition of the interpretation, from its preconception, its nexus, and its time, and which would then purport to determine an objectivity in itself, apart from a thorough discussion of its ontological sense" (PIA 105).

Heidegger.[8] Here, I will reconstruct McGrath's interpretation of how a formally

indicative concept works: the terms for the moments of formal indication as well as the

example, Being-in-the-world, are McGrath's and not my own. Each formal indication

(and all of the existentialia in *Being and Time* are formally indicative concepts) consist of

three moments, according to McGrath. The three moments are 1) affirmation, 2)

deflection and 3) deferral.[9] In the first moment, affirmation, the term affirms something

about what the listener or reader already understands about the intention. So, in the case

of Being-in-the-world, we already understand something about what Being-in-the-world

is supposed to mean in the first instance: Dasein is a Being that always exists in a world.

Then, the formal indication deflects possible meanings of the concept that the listener or

reader might bring to bear given the way in which they have thought about the terms in

question previously. In the case of Being-in-the-world, Heidegger rejects the spatial sense

of "in" (BT 79 [54]). Dasein is not "in" a world in the same sense as water is "in" a glass,

to use Heidegger's example.[10] Deflection does not lead to another affirmation, but instead

to the third moment, deferral.[11] In the third moment, deferral, the existential meaning of

the "in" component of Being-in-the-world is deferred. The meaning can only be fulfilled

through phenomenological explication of the meaning of this "in". In other words, we do

not understand the existential-phenomenological sense of this "in" until we think about

what it means to exist in a world. After reflection, it becomes clear that to be in a world,

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[8] S.J. McGrath, "Formal Indication, Irony and the Risk of Saying Nothing."

[9] Ibid., 185.

[10] Ibid.

[11] "Deflection, however, does not lead to another affirmation; rather the factical meaning of the term is deferred to an existential act of fulfillment which can only happen beyond theoretical discourse" (McGrath, "Formal Indication," 186).

or a building, or a classroom, or an airplane is not explicable simply by referring to how these are all spatial locations. Rather, *how* we are "in" each of these contexts differs because the relationship between these spaces and our Dasein differs. The final result of this three-step determination is a concept that outlines, but does not itself contain, a range of determinate meanings. Or, as McGrath puts it "FI [formal indication] projects a silhouette of content, outlining without defining the range of possibilities of meaning."[12]

I would add that since Heidegger often begins sketching out a formal indication by considering everyday senses of concepts and discussing etymology, this indicates that he thinks there is something to the way that we use terms. However, we must be careful about which ways of using terms are formally indicative, or revealing of a phenomenon, and which are not and be careful to distinguish which senses of a term conceal something about the nature of the phenomenon in question and which do not.

Negative Application

The method of formal indication can help elucidate the way in which an analysis of gender can be constrained by everyday and metaphysical assumptions or implications. When Heidegger evaluates whether or not a term can serve as a formal indication, he considers the kinds of metaphysical implications or metaphysical baggage the term or concept includes. He rejects 'validity' as a suitable anchor for an analysis of assertion as being too "unstable", for instance (BT 198–199 [156]). Heidegger also mentions formal indication is in connection with the term "I":

> The word "I" is to be understood only in the sense of a non-committal *formal indicator [formalen Anzeige]*, indicating something which may perhaps reveal itself as its 'opposite' in some particular phenomenal context of Being. […] Yet

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[12] Ibid., 187.

even the positive Interpretation of Dasien which we have so far given, already forbids us to start with the formal givenness of the "I", if our purpose is to answer the question of the "who" in a way which is phenomenally adequate. In clarifying Being-in-the-world we have shown that a bare subject without a world never 'is' proximally, nor is it ever given. And so in the end an isolated "I" without Others is just as far from being proximally given" (BT 151–152 [116] emphasis original).

This passage illustrates how Heidegger is using formal indication negatively so as to eliminate a plausible candidate for a suitable concept. Given the prior history of Western philosophy and metaphysics in particular, it might seem uncontroversial to assume that talking about a human being in terms of an "I" is a fine place to begin an ontological inquiry into human being. However, Heidegger argues against Cartesian subject/object dualism in a sustained way in *Being and Time*, and, as he mentions here, starting from the "I" implies a separation between subject and object, subject and world. Because Dasein is existence, i.e. *is* Being-in-the-world, this would be an inadequate place to start for Heidegger. The above passage is instructive because it shows how Heidegger considers and then rejects a candidate for formal indication (the "I" as pregiven) and does so on the grounds that his analysis so far prohibits it. This is consistent with is commitment to making his phenomenological ontology appropriate to the subject matter of the investigation: Dasein.

A Formally Indicative Notion of Gender?

Now that Heidegger's method of formal indication has been explicated, we will attempt to apply it to the concept of gender. What would a formally indicative concept of gender look like? I want to suggest that one way to go about this is to proceed first negatively, then positively. While my treatment of the nuances of formal indication here is not exhaustive, I want to consider whether or not the method of formal indication can

be used to generate new concepts relevant to inquiries into gender as well as a method for the evaluation of existing concepts. First, I will begin by considering an everyday understanding of the concept *gender* as, basically, an equivalent of *sex*. Next, I will attempt to develop a formally indicative concept of gender that points to, but does not posit the contents of how gender is lived. Then, I will consider whether or not a formally indicative concept of gender indicates something *ontological* about Dasein.

First, let's consider an everyday understanding of gender. By "everyday" here, I am appealing to Heidegger's existential of everyday understanding, as that which is prereflectively appealed to in day-to-day life and non-theoretical. I do not mean to suggest that everyone has this everyday understanding of gender. Rather, this everyday sense is mutually intelligible, even if one does not deploy this understanding oneself.

There is a tendency to understand gender in two different, but often related, everyday ways: (1) as the social correlate of sex, such that gender describes the roles assigned to the sexes or (we can call this "gender-as-correlate") (2) as a stand-in concept for biological sex, such that the terms "male" and "boy" or "man" are interchangeable and "female" and "girl" or "woman" are (we can call this "gender-as-sex"). Further, according to the everyday understanding of sex is that there are two discrete, binary sexes, male and female. Further, we understand gender in an everyday way in terms of masculinity and femininity. We understand women, or those of the female sex, to typically be feminine and men, or those of the male sex, to typically be masculine. In the U.S. context, the one under consideration in this dissertation, norms of masculinity and femininity are organized around specifically white gender norms, such that perceptions of an individual's masculinity or femininity can be influenced by race and racial

stereotypes. Some may even think of masculinity and femininity as being "proper" to men and women, respectively, in the sense of being essential properties of men and women. In other words, according to the everyday understanding, there is a link between maleness-man-masculinity, on the one hand, and femaleness-woman-femininity on the other, and the two sets of terms are opposed to one another. In cases where these do threaten to come apart, discrepancies are generally resolved through reference to a person's biological sex.[13] In other words, the two different ways of understanding gender, gender-as-correlate and gender-as-sex, are both included in the every day term 'gender'. However, in cases where someone's gender is ambiguous and a decision "must" be made regarding a person's "real" gender, gender-as-sex forms the basis of this judgment, supplanting gender-as-correlate.

I want to suggest that this ambiguous concept of gender is the one that the everyday concept of 'transgender' includes: in order for the 'trans' part of trans gender to make sense, we must presuppose that there are discrete genders between which one passes, between which one transitions from one to the other. Further, depending on the person, the term "transgender" may connote transitioning or moving between genders

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[13] See Kessler and McKenna, "Towards a Theory of Gender," 167–168. Kessler and McKenna identify four features of how gender attributions are made incases where someone's gender is ambiguous. It is relevant to consider these features in this connection, as there is an apparent tension between the everyday understanding of gender as being either the social role associated with a sex or the equivalent of a person's biological sex and the fact that people may challenge or trouble this everyday understanding through gender non-conformity of various kinds (where gender is understood in this everyday way). According to Kessler and McKenna, gender attribution is a process with the following four features: (1) "Gender attributions are based on information whose meaning is socially shared. Not just any information will inform a gender attribution, and certain information (biological and physical) is seen as more important than other information (role behavior). (2) Once a gender attribution has been made, almost anything can be filtered through it and made sense of. (3) Gender attribution is essentially genital attribution. If you "know" the genital then you know the gender. (4) In some way, knowledge about penises may give people more information than knowledge about vaginas" (Ibid., 167–168). Thus, in cases where someone's gender is ambiguous, in the natural attitude, people will resolve this ambiguity by trying to determine a person's biological sex (which can be inferred from other sexed features if a person's genital status is unknown). It is in this way that a person's biological sex and gender *do not* come apart, even though individuals may be more or less typically masculine and feminine.

(gender-as-correlate) or may connote moving between sexes (gender-as-sex). This, in turn, gives us a clue about what trans experience, in all its multiplicity, indicates. Namely, trans experience indicates that the everyday concept of gender *does not* serve as an adequate formal indication. That is, it does not point to something important about gender, namely, that the elements of sex, masculinity/femininity and other things we associate with the gender categories 'man' and 'woman', like comportment, styles of dress, occupation, and social role, actually come apart in some cases. Those individuals who fall under the everyday concept 'transgender' include a variety of ways of life. For instance, people may or may not seek out medical interventions to physically transition, people may be masculine or feminine to greater or lesser extents in a way that conforms or does not conform to the gender they identify as, people may or may not understand themselves as always having been their gender from birth, and so on.

Thus, insofar as we to take an everyday understanding gender as adequate for properly indicating the phenomenon of gender, we are in error. This is because the gender categories, along with any theoretical explications of these categories, do not tell us anything about what gender *means as a phenomenon*. For instance, to say that gender is the social correlate of sex does not indicate anything about gender as lived, aside from physiological differences between people assigned male, female, or intersex at birth (bearing in mind that how sex is determined is its own problematic). Although differences in reproductive role are indicative of certain possibilities of the body, this does not indicate gender. There are men who have vaginas, ovaries and uteri, while there are women with testicles and penises; while these terms 'man' and 'woman' do not track the everyday way in which these terms are used, the idea that the categories 'man' and

'woman' admit of people with different sexed features is the trans-inclusive sense of the terms that would be adequate in an analysis of trans experience. However, according to the everyday understanding of gender, the terms 'man' and 'woman' require both gender-as-correlate and gender-as-sex: if the gender-as-sex part of one of these terms, 'man', for instance, is called into question, the move is to reassign a person to the other category, rather than granting that category membership can be established on the basis of 'gender-as-correlate' alone. In other words, trans existence reveals that the everyday understanding of gender is inadequate because it has difficulty accommodating trans cases which are, after all, cases where individuals have or enact gender in ways that are more or less intelligible.[14] According to the everyday understanding, for instance, if someone is masculine, occupies the social roles of a man, but does not have a penis, then his status *as a man* is precarious and is subject to possible revocation. What appears to happen, phenomenologically speaking, is that the two different senses of "gender" tend to be operationalized, such that, while "gender" refers to social role, comportment and masculinity or femininity *in principle*, if ambiguity arises, then the sense of gender as an equivalent of biological sex is deployed. Thus, the everyday concept of gender is inadequate insofar as it has two ambiguously related senses, gender-as-correlate and gender-as-sex, that are supposed to go together. In instances when they come apart, gender-as-sex is operationalized to resolve the ambiguity.

So, a negative application of formal indication to an everyday understanding of gender reveals that it is inadequate, given that it takes binary, biological sexes to demarcate the genders. How can we use formal indication to attempt to sketch out a more

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[14] Whether or not gender is a unitary phenomenon or a complex of interrelated phenomena is still ambiguous and unclear, I think.

adequate concept of gender? I want to suggest that we can do so in the following way.

Taking trans existence as primary and deploying the three moments of formal indication

to the concept 'gender' can help us arrive at a preliminary, formally indicative concept.

The first moment is affirmation: 'gender' does pick out something about our current

situation (suspending for now the matter of whether or not gender is transhistorical), that

is, it indicates that there are different ways of life that are organized around the sex one is

assigned at birth. Embodiment is a component, but embodiment itself is in need of formal

indication. For now, we can say that 'embodiment' seems to indicate not only

physiology, including primary and secondary sex characteristics, but also comportment

and one's own sense of one's own body. When I use the term "embodiment" in this

dissertation, I mean to indicate the body as lived body (*Leib*) rather than the body as an

object of theoretical investigation (*Körper*). While I do not thematize this relationship in

this dissertation, I also mean to indicate that the lived body is something that is always

potentially objectifiable, such that the meanings imposed on it can make one's perception

of one's own body shift from prereflective awareness to reflective awareness. That

'gender' picks out different ways of life also indicates that it involves practices, including

but not limited to things like dress, occupation and gendered social roles. Finally, it

includes understanding or intelligibility: Dasein is given ways of understanding itself and

others according to the sex it and others have been assigned.[15] Each of these, in turn,

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[15] Throughout this dissertation, I use the language of "sex assignment" and "assigned sex" to indicate that most people in the U.S. context are assigned a sex at birth, which is a practice that has several different important implications. (1) The sex one is assigned usually determines the gender one is assigned and determines whether a child will be raised as a boy or a girl. (2) This sex is recorded on various state issued documents, the first one being a birth certificate, and used as an identifying marker thereafter on state-issued identity documents (e.g. driver's licenses, passports). By using the language of "assigned sex" in order to be inclusive of people with intersex conditions who do not fit into the model of two opposite, binary sexes, but are none-the-less often assigned to one sex or the other through normalizing medical practices. Correlatively, "assigned sex" indicates that, while there are more than two forms of sexual

affect the way in which Dasein has access to possibilities in a given context. Though

Heidegger does not discuss at length in *Being and Time*, his existential analytic clearly

shows that practices and understandings are both means by which Dasein takes up

determinate possibilities in a social world. So, we can affirm that any given Dasein's

gender is a way of life that involves particular embodiment, practices and understandings

(of itself, others, of its possibilities). Further, embodiment, practices and understandings

condition its access to possibilities in a world in which there is a background assumption

that gender consists of both gender-as-correlate and gender-as-sex and that there are only

two genders, 'boy' or 'man' and 'girl' and 'woman.'

 The next step is deflection. Our formally indicative concept should not posit a

necessary connection between the following components: between the sex one is

assigned at birth, the gendered practices one engages in and the gender one understands

oneself to be. It only indicates that they will have some determinate content for each

Dasein. This deflects concepts of gender that aim to establish a necessary connection

between these components, like the everyday notion of gender initially under

consideration.

 The third moment is deferral: it is up to each person to determine what gender

means for them and to consider the way in which gender conditions one's access to

possibilities. Dasein can understand the way it lives gender "as one does" more easily if

its way of living conforms prereflectively to "how one is" or "ought to be" a man or a

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variation in human beings, the assumption that there are only two sexes, male and female, often means that after birth people with atypical sexed features or ways of living gender will be assigned to one of two binary gender categories (girl/woman and boy/man) that are, generally speaking, predicated on sex categories (female and male). When I refer to assigned sex at birth, I do not mean to obscure the social fact of subsequent sex attributions and gendering that occurs after birth; subsequent sex assignments and gender attributions serve, for non-trans people, to reinforce and consolidate this initial sex assignment.

woman. However, some Daseins diverge from the standard, ambiguous unity of embodiment, practices or role and understanding/intelligibility. Many of these Daseins fall under the standard category of "trans" as an umbrella term. However, whether or not a given Dasein is forced to reflect on its pre-given understanding of gender, a formally indicative notion of gender can only be fulfilled by Dasein thinking through its life to arrive at the meaning of this concept, rather than through appeal to a dominant or everyday understanding of it.

A formally indicative notion of gender is specific enough to be useful for thinking about the ways in which our understandings of gender, our practices associated with it assume the binary genders of "man" and "woman" and assume that these gender categories are based on sexed embodiment. It can also be used to think about how this understanding of gender organizes the social world such that some possibilities are readily available to those who adhere to gender norms associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. For the purposes of this analysis, I will be using the terms "gendered ways of life" or "ways of living gender" to indicate that gender is not an ontologically fixed characteristic, but is rather something lived and, consequently, will involve embodiment, what we think (our understanding) and what we do (our practices). I also use the term "gendered way of life" to indicate that gender involves possibilities and how we access these possibilities. I use the term "trans ways of life" to indicate those ways of living gender that significantly depart from the assumed congruence between one's sex and one's gender, understood as one's masculinity and/or femininity and the roles, activities and pursuits one engages in that are taken to indicate that one is a member of a particular sex and gender.

Thinking through Gender and Social Possibility with Heidegger

After this discussion of how I am defining gender and trans ways of life for the purposes of this analysis, we can now turn to a consideration of how Heidegger's work can be used to think about social possibilities in connection with gender. In this section, I first introduce how Heidegger's work in *Being and Time* can be used to address the problem of how individuals have phenomenological access to social possibilities and how this access is conditioned by the social world. Then, I discuss trans people's relationship to social possibilities for living gender, specifically.

Given this characterization of gender as a formal indication, when we think of how Heidegger's analysis of Dasein applies, it appears that gender can be interrogated as a way of being (*Seinsweise*) of Dasein and we can do this without presupposing that gender is a specific kind of thing with determinate features, such as a property of individuals. By "way of being" or *Seinsweise*, I understand Heidegger to be indicating particular ways in which Dasein takes up its existence and comports itself towards the world; for example, scientific investigation (BT 33 [13]) and everydayness (BT 165 [127]) have their own ways of being (*Seinsweisen*). While ways of being are ontic variations of Dasein's fundamental ontological structure, they are not themselves a part of it. For example, while we might say that someone is a "born researcher" or "born gymnast"; however, these remain, nonetheless, ways of being rather than aspects of a particular Dasein's fundamental ontological constitution. Thus, by employing the terms "trans ways of life" or "gendered ways of life" I intend to indicate that gender is a "way of being" or *Seinsweise* for Heidegger by deploying the phrase "way of life." To be clear, all ways of

life, in our current context, are gendered ways of life, including non-trans ways of life; when I refer below to "gendered ways of life," then, this indicates that I am discussing gender as it affects the lives of trans and non-trans people. By "trans ways of life", I mean to refer, specifically, to those ways of living gender that tend to be collected under the "trans" umbrella: transsexual ways of life, transgender ways of life, gender non-conforming and non-binary or genderqueer ways of life.

As I mentioned previously, the aim of this dissertation is to inquire into the relationship between gender and social possibilities, specifically, how social possibilities for living certain kinds of gendered lives appear, are maintained, and how we end up taking certain possibilities up and neglecting others. In this chapter, I aim to show how a Heideggerian analysis can help us think about how different ways of living gender are possible in a given social world through the interplay between embodiment, practices and understandings. We can understand what our possible ways of existing, for Heidegger, through 1) our practices, 2) the social world and 3) our understandings, both pretheoretical and theoretical. I will also briefly include, as I mentioned, a consideration of how embodiment can be a way of getting into certain possibilities for living, something that Heidegger does not discuss.

Here, I'll outline briefly how Heidegger's work can be used to elucidate understanding practices and embodiment in this connection before moving on. Gender is something we understand in more or less theoretical ways. We understand gender in an everyday way insofar as we have a sense of what gender means without having to think about it. In other words, it is part of the background of the social world, structuring our self-perceptions and self-conceptions and mediating our encounters with other people.

The everyday ways we navigate gender evince a pretheoretical understanding of it. We also theorize about gender and about trans experience. In these cases, we bring to bear assertions about what kind of thing gender is, what it means to be a man or a woman, what it means to experience gender in non-normative or non-standard ways, etc. When theorizing about gender, we constitute people, experiences or gender itself as theoretical objects. Heidegger's account of the understanding can account for the everyday, unreflective meanings we assign to gender, specific theorizations of it and everything in between. Heidegger also gives us theoretical tools for understanding practices and how we encounter a world in which significance is already given. Heidegger's analysis of equipment, specifically, gives us a way of thinking about how our participation in practices structures our experience, gives direction to our lives and gets us into possibilities, all without requiring us to think about our participation in these practices in a reflective manner. Although Heidegger does not consider embodiment in *Being and Time*, I want to suggest that it is another way we get into social possibilities.

For whom is gender an issue and why? Further, for whom is *trans gender* an issue and why? Importantly, what gender means in the context of non-normative or non-standard ways of living gender is an issue for different people in different ways. Part of the problem that arises when we attempt to think about gender has to do with the way in which gender has been theorized and by whom. Often, trans people are theorized *about* and trans experiences of gender are thematized in order to make a point about gender *per se*. I'm using the term "thematize" here to refer to the way in which something is made the object of an investigation or the theme of an inquiry.[16] Trans people have also been

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[16] Though I'll discuss this more later on in the chapter, I wanted to mention here that this usage of the term "thematize" is consistent with Heidegger's. Thematization, for him, has to do with how entities are

objects of medical and psychological analysis in the U.S.; in this case, too, trans people

are theorized about. However, theorizations of gender by trans people make clear that

there is an experiential, phenomenological dimension to trans ways of life to which trans

people have privileged access by comparison to non-trans people. Thus, gender is an

issue for trans people, but in a way that is different from the way that trans people's

gender is an issue for non-trans people. For trans people, gender is an issue that must be

worked out through living, through navigating a relationship to one's own embodiment

and negotiating the perceptions, practices, norms and understandings that govern gender

in the social world. For non-trans people, by contrast, gender and gendered ways of life

are part of a prereflective background that does not require as much attention and

conscious thought, because non-trans people's ways of living gender are more aligned

with norms, everyday understandings, practices and embodiments, even if one's gendered

way of life may become more reflective at times in specific circumstances.

Since trans people must navigate possibilities for living gender that are

naturalized and relatively stable (and rendered stable through their naturalization), we can

think of trans ways of life as responding to a problem, a problem that arises from the

tension between trans experiences of gender and prevailing gendered ways of life in a

given social world. Trans people pose a problem for the notion that there will be a

"congruence" between: (1) the sex one was assigned at birth and the comportment

conceived of in an inquiry that takes them as their object or is principally concerned with them. Further, ideally, thematization connotes that the methodology employed in an inquiry is appropriate to the subject matter. Heidegger is concerned with ontology in *Being and Time* and how entities are thematized in an ontological investigation, but it can apply to other areas as well. For example, we tend to think of aesthetics as being the most appropriate domain of philosophy for inquiring into the nature of works of art, their properties, and how they affect their audience. We typically find that the methodology of aesthetics is ideally suited for analyzing art. Thus, aesthetics is that area of philosophy that is best at thematizing artistic objects, though there can be better and worse thematizations of artistic works in different aesthetic theories.

associated with this sex assignment (embodiment); (2) the practices associated with this

embodiment; and (3) the understandings—

both one's self-understanding and the understandings of others—that disclose (i.e. make

apparent and assign significance to) both embodiment and gendered practices. Because

the gendered ways of life trans people desire, or want to project onto (i.e. pursue a

possible course of action), are not readily apparent in the social world, gender shows up

explicitly as a project, something one has to deliberately take up in order to render it a

determinate way of being.

While everyone must navigate social possibilities, that is, to determine what is

possible *for them* in a given social world and cultural situation and how to concretize

particular possibilities that are made apparent and available in a given context, trans

people's relationship to gendered possibilities is different since the possibilities trans

people desire to take up and do take up are not coded as possibilities *for them*.[17]

Possibilities for living gender, while variable, are relatively stable and made apparent on

the basis of the sex a baby is assigned at birth. We have a background understanding of

the obviousness of this connection between sexed embodiment and possibilities that is

often not called into question. The naturalization of the link between embodiment and

gendered possibilities is part of what lends this background assumption of stability. As a

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[17] The possibilities one needs or desires to take up in a given case may be already extant social possibilities or possibilities that are not properly social. For example, a child who has been raised as a girl might want to play football (or join the boy scouts or pursue other activities that are heavily gendered as masculine) and be prevented from doing so. This is a case where something is a gendered social possibility, but not one "for" little girls. Alternatively, a trans person might want to take up something that is possible in principle but not a social possibility. For instance, if someone is gender fluid (i.e. someone whose gender fluctuates over time) and wants to switch between the pronouns others ought to use to refer to them (e.g. switch between he, she or they), then they could indicate to others which pronouns they are using at a given time through a gesture, by wearing a certain article of clothing or through a sound, for instance. However, since this is not a readily intelligible social practice and since switching one's pronouns from day to day is also largely unintelligible, while this is possible in principle, it is not a social possibility.

consequence, certain gendered ways of life often fail to show up as projects. Instead, we might understand them as the natural consequence of "being" a certain kind of person (i.e. a man or a woman, a boy or a girl). This does not mean, of course, that navigating gendered social possibilities are not projects for non-trans people: they are. The difference in non-trans cases, however, is that gendered ways of life do not show up as projects in the same way. To put it differently, non-trans ways of living gender involve projects whose status as projects that take up certain sets of social possibilities is not typically obvious or apparent—they are simply what "one does".

Does this mean that when ostensibly non-trans people (i.e. people who do not self-identify as trans or find themselves at odds with their sexed embodiment and/or gender) take up social possibilities that are not understood as "for" members of their gender, their ways of life ought to be characterized as trans? For instance, a man who does most of the housework is taking up a possibility that is, generally speaking, not understood as being "for" him, nor have many professions been understood as being "for" women in the U.S. until fairly recently. Further, given the way in which gender norms and expectations typically assume a standard based on white norms and values, would this framework, then, render non-white men and women trans for various reasons, depending on the extent to which their ways of life conform or do not conform to normative (i.e. white) ways of living gender? The answer to both of these question is "no". The reason the answer is "no" is because we can draw a distinction between non-conformity or transgression with respect to one possibility or set of possibilities (as in the case of housework, childcare, careers, etc.) and failing to meet racialized expectations of masculinity and femininity based on whiteness, on the one hand, and trans ways of life on

the other. A distinction can be drawn because, although the issue of occupations not being "for" members of a certain gender and the racialized nature of gender expectations and norms are, clearly, very different and complex issues, in each set of cases, non-trans people do not depart from the gender to which they have been assigned as a result of either (1) taking up a possibility that is nor "for" them or (2) departing from a racialized gender standard. In these cases, people might be considered "unmanly" or "unmasculine", "unfeminine", etc., but their status as men and women is not actually called into question, generally speaking, either by themselves or other people.

In trans cases, by contrast, there is typically a persistent desire or need to depart from that set of possibilities associated with the gender to which one has been assigned. Having to live a gendered way of life, given that it is a holistic set of phenomena, is often a considerable source of tension. So, the difference in trans cases is that for trans people, the gendered way of life that is supposed to be "for" one shows up as a problem, more-or-less as a whole. And, often, one wants to depart from the gendered way of life one has been assigned to in such a way that one will be *understood as a member of the other gender*, i.e. to "pass". Trans ways of life show up as projects because trans people are taking up social possibilities that are not obvious for them, or rather, are not socially given as possibilities for them. These projects involve the decoupling of assigned sex at birth from the gendered possibilities coupled with it in a common sense way, challenging the presumption of a natural order of sex and gender in which one is the necessary consequence of the other.

So, we can think of trans ways of life as responses to a problem, as I have already gestured towards, a problem arising from existence. The problem is the following: trans

people have projected and do project onto possibilities for living where these possibilities for living have not been made apparent, or disclosed to them, on the basis of the sex they were assigned at birth; thus, trans people must project onto possibilities for living gender in a particular way where these possibilities are not always apparent or obvious. In other words trans ways of life respond to the question: how should one proceed when it is not clear or apparent what steps one should take to live the way one desires to live? To be clear, the non-obviousness of possibilities can be a problem for everyone; trans ways of life are different, however, because the non-obviousness of the possibilities concerning living gender differently shows up as an urgent matter and shows up as a problem because the way one wants or needs to live is in tension with the way one is supposed to live, given the sex to which one has been assigned. Trans people navigate this problem in a particular situation by taking up certain possibilities and not others.

How do human beings get into possibilities and how are certain possibilities made apparent to us? In this chapter, I will argue that we have access to possibilities (or possibilities are disclosed to us, in Heideggerian terms) through (1) the body (through the experience of our own bodies which is conditioned by our interactions with others and the social world); (2) through our theoretical and non-theoretical understandings of gender, which find their clearest and most intense articulation in concepts; and (3) through our practices associated with gender. It is clear that these ways of getting into possibilities for living are arranged or ordered in particular ways in our society, or, alternatively, that what we think of as possible for certain people is circumscribed by a particular interaction of these factors of existing: embodiment, understanding and practice.

For instance, let's consider a common sense, gender normative, understanding of what it means to be a woman. According to this understanding, in order to be a woman, it is necessary that a woman have certain primary sex characteristics and certain secondary sex characteristics. Having these anatomical features marks certain bodies as being potentially objectifiable, and thereby the possible objects of other people's scrutiny. This scrutiny delimits the contours of what counts as an "acceptable" woman's body. On the basis of having been assigned the gender "woman" on the basis of having certain anatomical features, there are myriad assertions about what it means to be a woman that may or may not be brought to bear on particular women by others, but which make up the background conditions for what is considered a possible or desirable life course for someone assigned female at birth. These understandings and concepts will vary depending on the social, cultural and racial contours of the situation an individual finds herself in. There are expectations that those assigned female at birth will not only have certain pursuits and proclivities, but will also have certain tendencies and emotions.[18] In

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[18] Bell hooks, "Understanding Patriarchy," Louisville Anarchist Federation, <http://LAFF–experiemnt.org> and No Borders: Louisville's Radical Lending Library, http//ImagineNoBorders.org>.
Hooks provides examples of how, when she was growing up in a patriarchal household there were different gendered expectations for her and her brother and these expectations ran counter to each of their tendencies. hooks recounts:

> My brother and I remember our confusion about gender. In reality I was stronger and more violent than my brother, which we learned quickly was bad. And he was a gentle, peaceful boy, which we learned was really bad. Although we were often confused, we knew one fact for certain: *we could not be and act the way we wanted to, doing what we felt like* (1, my emphasis).

In hooks' experience, even though she and her brother had certain tendencies or proclivities, these were considered wrong insofar as they were not associated with hooks' and her brother's respective genders. They quickly learned that they could not do what they tended towards.

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short, it is on the basis of embodiment that we perceive and understand others as having certain gendered ways of being that are proper[19] to them.

Once we perceive, on the basis of someone's embodiment, that they "belong" to one of two gender categories, we associate certain practices with that gender. Our understandings, including ones involving concepts, inform our practices, help to create the conditions for their acceptability and allow for their perfectibility.[20] For instance, the concept "housewife" not only connotes a certain kind of white, middle class womanhood, but also includes a number of practices, such as housework, home economics, and interior design sensibilities. Being a housewife is a way of being understood as feminine, and so the practices associated with being a housewife are coded as feminine. The

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[19] By the use of "proper" here, I intend multiple connotations. The first is the connotation of essentialism. For kind essentialism, specifically, something's essence consists of properties such that an individual belongs to a kind (for more on kind essentialism and gender, see Witt 2011, 5–7). So, to say that a way of life is proper to a gender is to say that it is grounded in the essence of that gender, or related to the properties a member of the gendered kind has. The second connotation I intend here is a normative one, that we think of certain ways of life as being proper in the sense of *appropriate to* or *fitting* certain people on the basis of the sex they have been assigned. Thirdly, I intend the sense of property as possession, and, coupled with the first two senses, this becomes a natural and rightful kind of possession. It appears to be the case that one or more of these senses of property circulate in our everyday discourse about gender and the gendered ways of life that are appropriate for certain people, depending on the sex they have been assigned.

[20] Colin Koopman. "Conceptual Analysis for Genealogical Philosophy: How to Study the History of Practices After Foucault and Wittgenstein." *Southern Journal of Philosophy,* 55: Spindel Supplement (2017): 107. Koopman calls the rule-like function of concepts "conceptual normativity", writing that, "…conceptual rules guide us in the specifically normative sense of enabling us to shape, channel, and transform our conduct so as to improve that conduct." While Heidegger devotes little attention to concepts *per se*, his notion of Dasein as Being-in-the-world includes a complex notion of an everyday, we could say "common sense", standpoint from which individuals find themselves in the world. The everyday background from which we engage with the material world and with other Daseins is normatively laden insofar as we engage in practices "as one does" or as "everyone does" and insofar as what transpires in the world (events, encounters with others, Dasein's interpretation of itself) is grounded in a pre-theoretical understanding of the way things are. Our theoretical understandings occur against the backdrop of our pre-theoretical understanding of the world, insofar as theorizing about the world involves interpretation, and interpretation is grounded in the understanding (BT 188 [148]; c.f. also HF §11 and §12]. What I mean to suggest here is not a worked-out theory of the concept, but rather, to call attention to the way in which we employ terms and concepts to make sense of what we are doing, and the development of concepts lends coherence to practices and makes them changeable or perfectible. Although Heidegger passes over the concept *per se* as a focus of analysis, thinking about the relationship between concepts and practices, insofar as we use concepts in an everyday way to make sense of our existence and what we do, is consistent with the overall orientation of his early project.

virtuous performance of these practices, in turn, determines whether or not one is a good housewife, and, by extension, whether or not one is properly feminine, according to a certain understanding of femininity and what it means to be a woman (specifically, a Western, white, middle class, 20th century understanding). While, in this case, the concept "housewife" does not prescribe how to perfect the practices associated with being a housewife, as a concept that functions as a regulative ideal, it encourages the perfectibility of the practices insofar as they are necessary for the performance of femininity associated with being a housewife. Thus, the concept "woman" involves other concepts, such as "housewife" and the practices involved in being a housewife are governed and made perfectible through still more concepts. Thus, overarching concepts, like "woman" or "femininity" may not themselves prescribe or proscribe certain specific kinds of behavior, but the concepts they contain do, and we appeal to these when making sense of whether or not one is "living up to" being a woman in a specific context.

We can see from this brief example that a domain of social possibilities is marked out as appropriate for some people and not others on the basis of one's embodiment and, specifically, the gender one was assigned at birth. Gendered possibilities become further modulated depending on other factors influencing (or determining) one's social location, including, but not limited to race, class, ability, religion, age and sexual orientation. There are specific concatenations of possibilities associated with some bodies and not others, and how we access these possibilities has not only to do with our bodies and our bodies' tendencies, but also with the understandings we have of gender and our practices associated with gender. In other words, theoretical and non-theoretical understandings of gender and practices are both ways of getting into possibilities for living, or are modes of

access to actualizing a certain way of life.[21] While specific concatenations of possibilities may seem obvious in a particular social context, they nonetheless remain contingent. What trans ways of life show is that it is possible to disarticulate and rearticulate these concatenations of possibilities in new ways that call into question certain stabilized sets of possibilities and call into question the stability of these possibilities *per se*.

Heidegger's concept of thrownness is useful here. The idea that Dasein is thrown into a world it has not made or that it is "dispersed" into a situation, helps us to think through the fact that although Dasein finds itself amid a determinate set of possibilities, it is ultimately up to Dasein to determine how these possibilities will be taken up. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger provides a framework for thinking about how we understand certain ways of life as being possible, how we take up certain possibilities and how taking up possibilities is part of Dasein's ontological constitution. In the next section, I will discuss how, for Heidegger, Dasein takes up certain possibilities and neglects others and how these possibilities are made available by everyday practices. There, I will discuss the way in which more authentic Dasein is able to disarticulate and rearticulate the possibilities into which it is dispersed as thrown into a situation not of its making. In this section, I will also discuss Heidegger's account of the social and intersubjective dimensions of existence. Heidegger's account of the social, which he calls "the they" or *das Man,* helps us to think about how Dasein finds itself thrown into a world in which there are determinate, intersubjectively shared norms and practices that make up Dasein's situation. I will discuss how Heidegger's account of the social has limitations; in

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[21] I am grateful to Maia Huff-Owen for framing the question regarding the relationship between gender and social possibilities in terms of modes of access in conversation. Though I do not know for sure that this is what she meant, when I use the term in this connection, I mean to indicate both phenomenological modes of access to a possibility (i.e. having it appear or be apparent in a particular horizon) and also being in a position to or being able to access a possibility.

particular, issues arise when using his account to consider a social world that is divided by structures that create social divisions. Because Heidegger's picture of the social world is fairly uniform, his account becomes complicated when we consider cases where Dasein is marginalized in a given social world. Heidegger's account of solicitude, or intersubjectivity, too, shows up as underdeveloped when we consider the ways in which, for trans people, other people are an important mode of access to social possibilities that may not be readily apparent in the social world.

In section six, I discuss Heidegger's notion of understanding as one of the fundamental dimensions of Dasein's existence. Heidegger's theorization of understanding and interpretation gives us a way of thinking about pretheoretical, or everyday understanding and interpretation, theoretical understanding and the relationship between the two. This is relevant for thinking about trans possibilities for living gender, particularly in our contemporary moment, given that there is a relationship between how trans ways of life have been theorized and our everyday interpretation of what trans lives mean. Here, I will also discuss the different ways in which trans ways of life are theorized about, arguing that how gender becomes a theoretical problem matters for understanding how gendered possibilities are disclosed. That is, that trans people's theorizations about gender are grounded in the way in which gendered possibilities must be negotiated as a problem and as a project. Theorization grounded in living gender will often, but not necessarily, differ from theorizations of gender that posit it as a theoretical object.

Heidegger infamously neglects embodiment as one of the dimensions of Dasein's existence in *Being and Time*. In section seven, I investigate the implications this has for

theorizing trans ways of life. If Heidegger fails to give embodiment a place in his fundamental ontology, does this mean that using his theory to understand trans ways of life doesn't get off the ground? I will argue that, even though Heidegger does not theorize the body as *fundamental*, ontologically speaking, I will argue that this poses less of a problem than we might think when considering trans ways of life. This is because the sexed body does not mean anything *simpliciter*. Rather, what the body means, and how this conditions which possibilities are made apparent as possibilities for a given Dasein, is a contingent feature of the world in which Dasein finds itself, or is "thrown" into, in Heidegger's terms. While there is a good case to be made that reproduction does mean something *simpliciter*, insofar as it is the continuation of human life and therefore the ground for the possibility of there continuing to be a world, it is another matter whether or not the significance of reproduction need be gendered, or reduced to sex. Embodiment, as the anchor to which gendered social possibilities are tied, can appear to be determinate in ways that exceed reproductive horizon. That is, sexed embodiment *shows up* as something with naturalized significance, and has for a long time; this makes it difficult to know whether or not sexed embodiment means anything apart from the cultural significance assigned to it, which often casts its significance as natural. However, trans experience, and transsexual experience in particular, shows that the putative necessary connection between gender and sexed embodiment at birth is actually a contingent one.

Finally, I will argue that, given Heidegger's analysis of Dasein's existential characteristics, we can think of a way of life as a concatenation of, and projection onto contextually specific possibilities. While our modes of access to these possibilities are conditioned by practices, everyday understandings, and theoretical understandings, our

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modes of access to these possibilities do not necessarily determine their arrangement. By becoming more authentic, either through projecting onto its own death or through being brought back to itself through the negotiation of gender as a problem, Dasein can disarticulate and rearticulate given possibilities for living that contest the naturalness and stability of given arrangements of possibilities.

Heidegger on World, Ways of Being and Possibility

> Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence—in terms of a possibility of itself: to be itself or not be itself. Dasein has either chosen these possibilities itself, or got itself into them, or grown up in them already. Only the particular Dasein decides its existence, whether it does so by taking hold or by neglecting. The question of existence never gets straightened out except through existing itself (BT 33 [12]).

How is a way of life possible? How do we account for the fact that we already find ourselves living in one way or another, largely without reflection, consideration or sustained thought? How do we depart from our given understandings of what ways of life are possible? Is there, specifically, an explanation for how this is possible that is *ontological*? Heidegger's account of the ontology of Dasein in *Being and Time*, provides us with a fruitful approach to addressing these questions. At the outset of his systematic (but importantly, incomplete) analysis of the ontological structures of Dasein in *Being and Time*, he describes Dasein in terms of possibility: that it has the possibility to be itself, to not be itself, that it finds itself in a world in which possibilities appear, or fail to appear, for it. One way of reading *Being and Time* is as a sustained line of thinking about

how it is that Dasein[22] can become, or the ways of life it can lead, given the situation it finds itself in.

Heidegger's explanation for how it is that Dasein can live in one way or another is famously complex and abstruse. However, we can identify different dimensions of his explanation, and describe the way in which these dimensions interact so as to make possibilities show up for us in the social world. Heidegger's analysis includes, as part of the explication of Dasein's ontological structure, an explanation of how it is that Dasein's relationship to material objects in the world, its relationship to other Daseins, its relationship to discourse and the bearing that each of these have on its own self-understanding conditions the possibilities that show up as available to it.

Heidegger's uses the term *Dasein* to refer to the kinds of beings we are (i.e. "human beings"): Dasein is the 'being' (*sein*) that is there (*da*). In every case, each Dasein is a being that finds itself there, and this 'there' is not just anywhere. Rather, Dasein finds itself in a world that it has not made, in a situation which it has determinate, but not completely *determined* modes of access to. We should not be misled, however, in thinking that, because each Dasein is a being that has its "there", this necessarily means that Dasein always exists in a manner that is differentiated. That is, it does not always understand its existence as its own and does not assign its own significance and value to those things that make up its life. Heidegger seeks to make clear at the outset that we should not think of Dasein as a being that is fundamentally differentiated, but rather as the kind of being that is typically undifferentiated. That is, Dasein's way of being is what Heidegger refers to as that of "everydayness," (BT 69 [44] and passim) that way of being

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[22] Importantly, Heidegger defines Dasein in the following way: "This entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term "*Dasein*" (BT 27 [7], emphasis in original).

Dasein has in the first instance by virtue of existing in a world whose structures, significances, and material relations exceed it.[23] Further, Dasein finds itself in a world in which there are other Daseins (or "Others") with whom Dasein shares a language and other systems of signification. It is on this basis that Dasein can, without reflection or often concerted effort, understand itself as having certain possibilities for living in one way or another and navigate a context in which it can pursue the possibilities it thinks are available to it. In Division I of *Being and Time*, Heidegger conducts an analysis of Dasein's ontological structure via a consideration of how Dasein typically is in its everydayness. In Division II, he explicates how it is that Dasein is able to break from this everyday mode of existing, or begin to exist in a more "authentic" manner.

Both Heidegger's analysis of everyday Dasein and his analysis of more authentic Dasein are important for my purposes here. Heidegger's analysis of everyday, or "inauthentic" Dasein gives us a way of thinking about how it is that we can understand certain ways of living as being available to us, or possible. Heidegger's analysis of more authentic Dasein gives us a way of thinking about how individuals may take up or eschew available possibilities, given a particular context.

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[23] More specifically, regarding difference, Heidegger says the following:
> At the outset of our analysis it is particularly important that Dasein should not be Interpreted with the differentiated character [*Differenz*] of some definite way of existing, but that it should be uncovered [*aufgedeckt*] in the undifferentiated character which it has proximally and for the most part. This undifferentiated character of Dasein's everydayness is *not nothing*, but a positive phenomenal characteristic of this entity. Out of this kind of Being [*Seinsart*]—and back to it again—is all existing, such as it is (BT 69 [43], addition of *Seinsart* in brackets mine).

World and the Worldhood of the World

In projection world prevails.[24]

What is 'World' for Heidegger?

A good place to start thinking about possibility, ways of life and gender using Heidegger is the theme of world. Being-in-the-world is an existentiale; Dasein always finds itself in a world and lives in a world. Possibility is also an existentiale: it is a fundamental ontological feature of Dasein as well. As possibility, Dasein becomes what it will become in and through the world insofar as Dasein must always pursue any possibility in a world, or in some relation to a given world. But what is world for Heidegger? Although Dasein is always in a world and living in determinate ways in a world, Heidegger's notion of world is difficult to explicate philosophically, due in part to his departure from traditional metaphysics. In this section, I will discuss Heidegger's notion of world and, specifically, consider the implications this notion has for thinking about gendered ways of life and Dasein's access to gendered possibilities for living.

Heidegger is critical of what I am calling "traditional metaphysics", that is, metaphysical theories that rely on a system of categories in order to provide explanations for the nature of entities. Aristotle is perhaps the most famous and influential example of this kind of metaphysics. Traditional metaphysics also relies on predicative logic in order to establish true or false claims about particular entities. For instance, "Man o' War is a horse" was a true claim because we have established a category, 'horse' and Man o' War was an entity that meets the conditions for being subsumed under the category. Early on,

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[24] Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: Worldhood, Finitude, Solitude,* trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1995), 365. Hereafter, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* is cited in text as FCM.

Heidegger is critical of philosophy's tendency towards "universal classification."[25] Early Heidegger's own approach to ontology, the fundamental ontology of Dasein, is unlike traditional ontologies because it does not rely on a system of categories and logical propositions in order to establish claims about entities. Rather, it is an ontology that proceeds from the fact of Dasein's concrete existence, or its facticity.

Why is this relevant for thinking about gender and social possibility? As I will elaborate on later in section 6, there is a relationship, for Heidegger, between our everyday understanding of beings and our metaphysical questioning about them (FCM 292, 347). Part of the difficulty in theorizing about metaphysics is that our everyday understanding of beings serves as an inadequate guide for developing the kinds of concepts and asking the kinds of questions necessary for thinking about metaphysics (FCM 24).[26] The reason why the slippage between everyday understanding and metaphysical theorizing, and Heidegger's caution about this slippage, is important for thinking about gender is that, though we have an everyday, prethematic understanding of what gender *is* or what it means *to have* a gender, this may only get us so far philosophically. Further, our everyday understanding is always situated in a context in which certain assertions, such as that one has a gender, or that one is a member of one of two binary gender categories, function axiomatically and as part of an experiential and conceptual background, even if these assertions are not articulated. It stands to reason, then, that they can find their way into our theorizing as unquestioned assumptions about the way the world is and the way human life is, which obscures possible avenues for

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[25] Martin Heidegger, *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity,* trans. John van Buren (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1999), 46. Hereafter, *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity* is cited in text as HF.

[26] For metaphysical theorizing, Heidegger thinks that "comprehensive concepts" [*Inbegriffe*] and "comprehensive questioning" [*inbegriffliches Fragen*] are required.

investigating gender philosophically. The alternative need not entail willful obscurantism

and unnecessary complexity, though it may appear that this is what is taking place.

Heidegger thus gives four explanations for what we might mean by world, some

of which are inadequate for his purposes. In a manner consistent with his critical

appraisal of the history of metaphysics (and we could add, epistemology), Heidegger

rejects the idea that 'world' is a concept that denotes the sum of entities within the world.

In §14 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger distinguishes four ways in which we use the term

'world':

1. "World" is used as an ontical concept, and signifies the totality of those entities which can be present-at-hand within the world (BT 93 [64])
2. "World" functions as an ontological term, and signifies the Being of those entities which we have just mentioned. And indeed 'world' can become a term for any realm which encompasses a multiplicity of entities; for instance, one talks of the 'world' of the mathematician, 'world' signifies the realm of possible objects of mathematics (BT 93 [65])
3. "World" can be understood in another ontical sense—not, however, as those entities which Dasein essentially is not and which can be encountered within-the-world, but rather as that '*wherein*' a factical Dasein as such can be said to 'live'. "World" has here a pre-ontological existentiell signification. Here again there are different possibilities: "world" may stand for the 'public' we-world, or one's 'own' closest (domestic) environment (BT 93 [65], emphasis original)
4. Finally, "world" designates the ontologico-existential concept of *worldhood*. Worldhood itself may have as its modes whatever structural wholes any special 'worlds' may have at the time; but it embraces in itself the *a priori* character of worldhood in general. We shall reserve the expression "world" as a term for our third signification. If we should sometimes use it in the first of these senses, we shall mark this with single quotation marks (BT 93 [65], emphasis original)

Importantly, Heidegger is explicitly not dealing with the first sense of 'world', where

'world' stands for the totality of entities in a given spatio-temporal location. This is the

'world' that is presupposed in the sciences and by some philosophers, but Heidegger has

a different sense of 'world' in mind in *Being and Time.* The sense of 'world' that

Heidegger means is the third sense, it becomes clear, because Dasein, as care, is always getting into possibilities in its world. The world is where Dasein lives, where it takes up possibilities and has projects; all of these things are captured by the third sense of world in Heidegger's list. However, Heidegger is also sometimes concerned with the fourth sense, and deals with the issue of world and world-formation in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*.

The world is not simply a composite of objects, as the first sense of world designates, but rather a context in which objects appear as already significant and involved in relations with other objects. In other words, the world is a "referential totality of significance" and this always involves a "for-the-sake-of-which" (BT 119 [86], 236 [192]).[27] Dasein always encounters objects as having significances, these objects are related to other objects that also have significance, and both the objects and their nexuses are characterized by a "for-the-sake-of-which". Significance refers to how things show up "as" something which is connected to the manner in which something is encountered within a world (HF 66 [86–87]).[28] A common example is: a pen, paper, books and a computer are an equipmental context whose "for-the-sake-of-which" is writing a philosophy paper. These objects do not appear to me as mere objects with certain colors, extension, weight, etc., but rather appear to me as "for" writing and solicit me on the

[27] "Dasein always assigns itself from a "for-the-sake-of-which" to the "with-which" of an involvement; that is to say, to the extent that it is, it always lets entities be encountered as ready-to-hand. *That wherein* [*Worin*] Dasein understands itself beforehand in the mode of assigning itself is *that for which* [das *Woraufhin*] it has let entities be encountered beforehand. *The "wherein" of an act of understanding which assigns or refers itself, is that for which one lets entities be encountered in the kind of Being that belongs to involvements; and this "wherein" is the phenomenon of world*. And the structure of that to which [*woraufhin*] Dasein assigns itself is what makes up the *worldhood* of the world (BT 119 [86]).

[28] "The as-what and how if its being-encountered like in what will be designated as *significance*. Significance is not a category of things, one which gathers together into a separate domain certain objects with content in contrast to other kinds of objects and demarcates them over and against another region of objects. It is rather a how of being [*ein Wie des Seins*], and indeed the categorical dimension of the being-there of the world is centered in it" (emphasis original).

basis of my project of writing a philosophy paper. We can thus think of a for-the-sake-of-which as the ultimate goal or aim of a project.

Readiness-to-hand is a way of characterizing how we have modes of access to objects within the world. We encounter objects in a context of involvements and as things with which we can accomplish various tasks. In Heidegger's terms, the objects we encounter as ready-to-hand are characterized by a "towards-which" [*das Wozu*] and a "for-which" [*das Wofür*] (BT 114 [83]). That is, objects do not show up as purely present, something with which I am not already involved. My lighter does not show up as a cylindrical object that is silver and orange, rather it shows up as something "for" lighting my cigarettes, my cigarette pack does not show up primarily as "just" a yellow rectangle, rather, I encounter the pack of cigarettes as containing individual cigarettes *for me* to smoke. Heidegger designates objects that show up as ready-to-hand as "equipment". As illustrated by the cigarette-lighter example, equipment shows up in a context in which it is related to other pieces of equipment. Heidegger uses the term "region" to designate different equipmental domains (BT 136 [103]). Regions are areas of the world in which things have a "place" (BT 137 [103]). For instance, the kitchen is a region in which pots, pans and eating utensils have a "place"; I can expect to encounter these items there and find them in usable condition such that I can use them *for* cooking. Heidegger writes that equipment and the regions different items of equipment occupy are characterized by "inconspicuous familiarity" (BT 137 [104]). When we fail to find a piece of equipment in its proper place, then the region it occupies becomes conspicuous: "Often the region of a place does not become accessible explicitly as such a region until one fails to find something in *its* place" (BT 138 [104] emphasis original).

Being-in-the-world is a fundamental structure of Dasein. Dasein always finds itself in a world it has not made, a world that includes equipment, other people and already given meanings and significances. It finds itself speaking a certain language and taking up certain ways of relating to equipment and to others (customs). Dasein is *in* and is *through* the world in which it finds itself. Yet, as Miguel de Beistegui observes in *The New Heidegger*, there is something that remains when the world falls away, that is, Dasein's existence, the fact of its existence or, as de Beistegui puts it, *life*.[29] Thus, while Dasein cannot live apart from the world, completely separate from it, the world does not completely determine it. This is because *possibility* is also part of Dasein's fundamental constitution; Dasein *has to be*—this is true. But what this has to be entails is up to Dasein, to an extent (BT 174–175 [135]). The world presents Dasein with a range of possibilities, but what is made apparent as this range of possibilities does not exhaust what is possible within a world. In other words, the world places limits on what is a possible way of life for Dasein, but these limits are not apparent in Dasein's everyday mode of comporting itself towards the world. Further, while possibilities are conditioned by material contexts, they are also conditioned by the significance assigned to items of equipment in a material context.

Ways of Being (Seinsweisen)

Existence is Dasein's essence: it is thrown into the world, which it does not determine and that it must continue to exist. Its existence is open-ended insofar as, unlike

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[29] de Beistegui. *A New Heidegger*. Chapter 1, "A Matter of Life." De Beistegui's choice of the term "life" to characterize Heidegger's existential analytic of Dasein may seem strange to some, given that Heidegger moves away from talking about "factical life" in his early lectures to talking about "Dasein".

a stone, there is a relatively wide range of possibilities for it to be in one way or another.[30] Dasein's existence is, of course, finite, but within the space and time of its life, Dasein is capable of determining, to an extent, the *manner* in which it will exist. This is what I take Heidegger to mean by the concept of "way of being" or *Seinsweise*. A brief reflection on human history, or the variety of possible ways of living available in our contemporary moment in different places, reveals that there are and have been many different ways of being-in-the-world and, indeed, different worlds. Even within a world there are many different ways of life. The life of someone without a home, living in a car, for instance, is very different from someone who owns several residences and travels between them (and is able to travel between them!). Our engagements with the material world and our understandings of the world and the significance of things in it often differ, sometimes radically so.

As I previously mentioned, the world in which Dasein exists will condition its possible ways of being. For instance, someone living in the United States at the present moment cannot live in a world without the internet. Even if Dasein chooses to abstain from using the internet, this choice occurs against the background of a world in which the internet does exist and engagement with the internet affects how others communicate, relate to themselves and one another. Choosing not to engage with something so pervasive as the internet is still a stance-taking with respect to the internet, given that it is something that radically affects human interaction and has its own horizon of possibilities. Dasein might wish that the internet did not exist, but, barring a radical event,

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[30] C.f Jean-Paul Sartre. "The Humanism of Existentialism." In *Essays in Existentialism*. No translator attributed. New York: Citadel Press (1993): 31–73. Sartre develops this point in his own way in "The Humanism of Existentialism", where he makes the comparison between a human being and a paper cutter. Unlike a paper cutter, a human being is not designed according to a plan and does not have a function (*contra* Aristotle). Heidegger and Sartre disagree regarding the humanism, of course.

this is something that will not occur. The internet makes things possible that were not possible before, from listening to all kinds of music, to new modes of economic consumption, to endlessly staying "up to date" on the news. A world in which the internet exists and is widely used for communication, entertainment, socializing and consumption is a very different world from one in which this is not a possibility. The existence of the internet, then, affects *how* Dasein is in the world insofar as it presents Dasein with a specific horizon of possibilities and Dasien is forced to take a stance with respect to these possibilities, either to take them up to a greater or lesser extent or to forgo them.

Heidegger talks of *das Man* (an existentiale I will discuss shortly) as having its own ways of being: "Distantiality, averageness, and leveling down, as ways of Being for the "they", constitute what we know as 'publicness' [*die Offentlichkeit*] (BT 165 [127]). He also writes that the sciences are ways of being: "Sciences are ways of Being in which Dasein comports itself towards entities which it need not be itself" (BT 33 [13]). Thus, we can talk about a way of being whenever there is a particular set of practices, norms and a mode of discourse that characterizes a kind of comportment Dasein can have towards the world. That is, a way of Being designates the way in which a Dasein or a life takes on determinate contours through taking up the modes of access to the world via a particular modes of disclosure (e.g. for *das Man*, the world is disclosed in an everyday, public way, possibilities are presented in terms of averageness, etc.). This becomes clear when we consider Heidegger's third sense of 'world' above: world designates a particular mode of life within a larger world.

For example, we have (to use an example Heidegger does not use) the "world" of professional cooking, which has its own rhythms, forms of sociality (e.g. the "family

meal" before service), its own norms and practices, its own hierarchy, values, etc. The world in which cooks live is organized around cooking, providing a smooth service, etc. Everyone in that world views things in terms of the same "for-the-sake-of-which", namely, to cook and serve food. Thus, being a cook is a way of being (*Seiseweise*), and it is a way of being made possible by certain material and social conditions that allow for and maintain the conditions for the practices and forms of social and economic organization required in order for one to be able to be a cook in the current sense of the term. It is difficult to say whether or not today's high profile chefs, who own several restaurants, oversee research and development kitchens in order to construct menus, who make appearances on television, write cook books, etc. have a way of being that is the same as, or different from, the head cook in the 19th century kitchen of an English aristocrat. Both ways of being, or ways of life, are organized around food, but the conditions that make each possible, and the significances that are associated with that way of life are, perhaps, radically different. This is to say: context matters when thinking about ways of life, in my view, and we should not jump to conclusions about similarities or differences between ways of life on the basis of one salient feature or activity.

I want to suggest that genders, too, are ways of Being or ways of life. Gender involves certain practices, understandings, norms and modes of access to the world. A person's gendered way of life projects onto some possibilities and eschews or ignores others. Unlike a specific occupation, like cooking, however, gendered ways of life, involving too certain bodily comportments and ways of relating to others, subtend or traverse other ways of Being like occupation. In this way, gendered ways of life are more

pervasive; they also tend to serve as ossatures for the organization of the social world in a more pervasive way than something like occupation does.

Projection and Possibility

In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger claims that projection is "the fundamental structure of world-formation" (FCM 362). But what does this odd-sounding term 'projection' mean? In *Being and Time,* Heidegger discusses how Dasein is thrown into a world in which it finds pre-given significances and projects, or, in other words, pre-given ways of life. Dasein always projects itself onto the possibilities that are disclosed in a given world or context:

> …as thrown, Dasein is thrown into the kind of Being which we call "projecting". Projecting has nothing to do with comporting oneself towards a plan that has been thought out, and in accordance with which Dasein arranges its Being. On the contrary, any Dasein has, as Dasein, already projected itself; and as long as it is, it is projecting. As long as it is, Dasein has understood itself and always will understand itself in terms of possibilities […] As projecting, understanding is the kind of Being of Dasein in which it *is* its possibilities as possibilities (BT 185 [145], emphasis original).

So, projection onto possibilities is not something that always takes the form of a determinate plan of action, as the term "project" might suggest. Rather, possibilities have already been disclosed in the world in which Dasein finds itself by the equipment it encounters as well as the ways of disclosing significances that *das Man* has. There is a common ground of intelligibility that can serve as the basis for Dasein's own understanding of what is possible for it and for others and this forms a pre-personal background against which Dasein's more individual or authentic understandings emerge.

Heidegger claims that understanding, projection, disclosure and Being-in-the-world are all inter-related. Projection is an existentiale that is linked to understanding,

and Dasein, as long as it exists, is always projecting onto possibilities in the world in which it finds itself (BT 184 [144]). Further, projection is that existentiale that refers to how Dasein has already pre-thematically understood that it is capable of certain things, that certain ways of life are possible for it and that, in projecting, Dasein holds open possibilities as possibilities (BT 185 [145]).[31] How the world has been disclosed to Dasein, and Dasein's own disclosure of the world affect its understanding of the world and, in turn, its projection. Dasein's understanding and its projection involves an awareness of, and comportment towards the meanings and significances it is familiar with as Being-in-the-world, and, in projecting, it takes up a stance towards these as well. Heidegger puts it in the following way:

> The disclosedness of the "there" in understanding is itself a way of Dasein's potentiality-for-Being. In the way in which its Being is projected both upon the "for-the-sake-of-which" and upon significance (the world), there lies the disclosedness of Being in general. Understanding of Being has already been taken for granted in projecting upon possibilities. In projection, Being is understood, though not ontologically conceived (BT 187 [147])

Though Dasein may not always have a thematic understanding of itself and the beings it encounters, it always has an understanding of them. To put it simply, Dasein's priorities (its 'for-the-sake-of-which') are revealed through projection. In taking up some possibilities and forgoing, neglecting, or rejecting others, it becomes what it will be and its existence takes on a determinate character — its being is disclosed (BT 182 [143], and *passim* in ¶ 31). Further, the activities that Dasein involves itself in are organized around the for-the-sake-of-which, which entails, I think, that they take on a different character depending on one's ultimate goal or aim. For instance, if someone steals food from a grocery store out of boredom or because they can, this has, *prima facie* a different

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[31] "…projection, in throwing, throws before itself the possibility as possibility, and lets it *be* as such. As projecting, understanding is the kind of Being of Dasein in which it *is* its possibilities as possibilities."

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character than stealing food from a grocery store because someone is hungry and cannot afford food. In each case, the action is the same, but the difference between the two derives from the for-the-sake-of-which the action fits into (i.e. stealing for entertainment vs. out of necessity).

Further, the world is formed through projection and "*projection is world-projection*" (FCM 362, emphasis original)[32]. How is projection world-projection? Dasein is always projecting onto possibilities in the world, whether these possibilities are reflected upon, or made explicit, or not. Projecting onto possibilities always occurs against the background of the world as a whole (i.e. those things that make up a world and their significance) and projection always occurs in relation to a "for-the-sake-of-which" or ultimate priority, again, whether this priority is explicit or not. The choosing of a particular possibility "binds" us to it, or we ought to bind ourselves to it (FCM 363–364); this is because in choosing one possibility, this introduces restriction (FCM 363). I interpret Heidegger to mean, in this sometimes perplexing lecture, that projection, as an existentiale, reveals something about Dasein, namely, that projection entails "making-possible", that Dasein is the condition for the possibility of world, while world as a set of possibilities is, at the same time, the condition for Dasein's Being (as Being-in-the-world). World is formed both through making-possible and through the taking up of specific possibilities. Moreover, these possibilities are contextually specific, as being made available in and through a world. Through projection, we get into specific

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[32] Heidegger discusses the relationship between projection, world and the "as" of interpretation/manifestation in the final section of this lecture course, §76.

possibilities for living and, in so doing, have phenomenological access to a field of possible actualization that made possible the projection.[33]

Although Dasein is shaped by the world into which it is thrown, it is also world-forming, it can project onto different, unactualized possibilities available to it in a context and, in projecting, make these possibilities apparent, revealing a field of possible actualization. Projection, however, is tied to understanding, and will involve what Dasein has already understood about the world and is able to understand about it; further, it involves how the world is disclosed, how things show up "as" something determinate for Dasein, how things are made manifest (FCM 365). Thus, projection is not a free field, but is tied to the world in which Dasein is thrown and to the understanding of that world that it has. How Dasein has and does understand itself and the world is important in considering what it projects onto and what it has in view as a possible field of actualization.

The World and Gender

Heidegger, as has been well noted, does not deal with gender or sexual difference in *Being and Time* and he scantly mentions it elsewhere in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. However, given what Being-in-the-world entails for Heidegger, we can begin to think about how Dasein gets into possibilities for living gender within a world. Clearly, in our contemporary context, gender, and the existence of two, sometimes more, socially recognized genders, is a relevant feature of the world. How can thinking

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[33] "The projection is intrinsically *completing* in the sense of a casting ahead that is the *forming* of an '*as a whole*' into whose realm there is spread out a quite specific dimension of possible actualization. Every projection raises us away into the possible, and in so doing, brings us back into the expanded breadth of whatever has been made possible by it" (FCM 363–364).

about what Heidegger means by world and his notion of Dasien as Being-in-the-world help elucidate gender and its function in the social world?

Here, I will briefly consider gender in connection with world and in subsequent sections, I will elaborate on how different aspects of the world, practices, equipment, *das Man*, sociality and understanding, all pertain to Dasein's ways of living gender. Because the world is a unitary phenomenon, even though each of these features of the world are isolatable for the purposes of analysis, this does not mean that they are separate from one another in fact. In considering how gender is a feature of the world *in general* as something that structures and discloses Dasein's possibilities for living, this will be apparent.

Gender, understood in an everyday way as the social corollary of sex assignment, is one of the main ways in which possibilities are disclosed to individuals in different ways. Gender serves as a kind of anchor for social possibilities and how one's gender is perceived affects the intelligibility of one's life choices, depending on who certain possibilities are supposed to be "for". To use a simple example, there was a time in the west where women did not wear pants: pants were an item of clothing that was only "for" men and explicitly not "for" women. This had nothing to do with the physical ability of women to wear pants, obviously; rather, it had to do with the appropriateness of women wearing pants and the lack of social support for this possibility.

Let's consider a more complicated example: that of the "gender reveal party". "Gender reveal parties" are parties held in order to reveal the sex assignment of a fetus to a number of people, sometimes the parents of the child themselves, all at once. That these parties are called "gender reveal" parties when, really, what is revealed is the sex of a

fetus, determined via ultrasound, tells us something about their significance. It indicates that we assign so much significance to gender and consider gender as radically influencing the possibilities of a child's life that knowing the gender of the child, which is assigned on the basis of the child's sex assignment, will tell us something concrete or determinate about the future of that child. Although it is supposed to be the ultrasound that reveals the "gender" of the fetus, what is actually revealed in the "gender reveal" party is the commitment those hosting or attending the party have to uncritically disclosing certain possibilities on the basis of a child's sex. In this sense they do "reveal" gender, insofar as they reveal 1) the significance sex assignment has for determining gender (i.e. that everyday understanding interprets sex as entailing gender); 2) that people, parents, family members and friends are invested in disclosing gendered possibilities for living on the basis of this sex assignment and that 3) enough of a child's future prospects (what kinds of toys they will play with, how they will dress, what kinds of activities they will favor, etc.) are bound up with sex assignment and subsequent gender assignment that "revealing" a child's gender is supposed to tell us something significant about what that child will be like after it is born, or about *how it will Dasein*.

In other words, what the "gender reveal" party reveals is that, in our current context, we associate different possibilities with being assigned male or female before birth or at birth. Although gender stratification has diminished in some areas (in certain occupations, for instance) gender is still relevant for the understanding Dasein has of itself and its possibilities and Dasein's understanding of what is possible for others. The "for-the-sake-of-which" of many pursuits, activities and projects is gendered, so much so that certain possibilities may show up as properly "for" boys or girls, men or women.

Further, gender seems to dictate and designate a set of interrelated for-the-sake-of-whiches with their own interrelated relevances. For example, being a father (as opposed to being a parent in general) is a gendered social role, and all kinds of varied, but interrelated gender possibilities are associated with this role or way of life. Fathers ought to be able to protect the family, provide for the family economically, be stoic in the face of adversity or in a crisis, etc. Thus, projecting onto being a father, according to an everyday understanding of what this means, involves a range of comportments, possible comportments and practices (earning money, being in a position to protect the family using a gun or bat, for instance) which are, but need not necessarily be, gendered. Whether or not possibilities are "for" members of one gender or the other will depend on the understandings individuals or groups have of gendered roles and pursuits. Yet, despite degrees of variation, a picture of what "being" one gender or another entails is stable enough to still be an intelligible one. Further, social acceptance, acceptance by one's family, one's peers, and strangers depends (again, to greater or lesser extents, depending on the context) on gender conformity.

Given that gender involves possibilities for living and given the relationship between possibility, projection and world, we can see that gender significantly structures the way in which possibilities are disclosed. We tend to understand certain possibilities for living as being properly "for" members of one gender more so than the other. In other words, gender modulates how a given Dasein will get into possibilities, depending on the sex one is assigned at birth. The significances of these possibilities, while not reducible to gender, are still gendered. When Dasein is a child, it often has little control over how gender modulates its possibilities and whether and to what extent its gender is assigned

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significance. Thus, when Dasein gets older and has some measure of control over *how* it is going to live, this occurs against a background of gendered relevances that have already been established for it. It has already been encouraged to orient itself towards certain possibilities and away from others.[34] To put it differently, how Dasein has been disclosed to itself, the frameworks it has been given for understanding itself and what possibilities it has been encouraged, or perhaps forced, to project onto have been disclosed on the basis of its sex assignment.

Trans people find themselves thrown into a world in which this is the case, a world in which ways of life are organized around the gender thought to be correlated to sex assignment. Thus, trans people must navigate a world in which they are supposed to be oriented towards some social possibilities and away from others in the first instance. Thus, many trans people are faced with the problem of how to project onto possibilities that are not disclosed as being *for them* and must figure out how to *get into* these possibilities when they have not been disclosed as being for them. Gender, then, must be taken up explicitly as a project. But it is not simply a project for trans people; what the gendered nature of possibilities shows is that all ways of living gender are projects, *insofar as projection is the making-possible of ways of life within a given world*.

In the following sections, I will describe in more detail how gendered ways of life are disclosed through practices, by *das Man* and through understandings. With the world, one in which gender affects which possibilities show up for whom, squarely in view, we can begin to explore the ways in which the practices associated with gender and our understanding of gender can disclose possibilities for living gender.

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[34] See Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 2006. Ahmed builds a framework for phenomenological investigation around the phenomenon and concept of orientation in this work, exploring the relationship between orientation and possibility, among other things.

Readiness to Hand and Equipment: Gender and Practice

Heidegger devotes a considerable amount of time to describing Dasein's relationship to the objects it finds in its environment in Division I of *Being and Time*. This analysis provides us with a rich framework for thinking about not only how it is that Dasein is able to take up particular practices and how these are related to the disclosure of certain possibilities, but also how it is that our material environment often recedes into the background and seems relatively innocuous or unimportant. He also discusses the way in which Dasein stands in relationship to other Daseins. His account of sociality (a term Heidegger himself does not use) provides us with an equally rich framework for thinking about how individual Daseins may or may not understand themselves as more or less differentiated from socially given understandings of what it means to be a subject.

Readiness to Hand and Equipment

The world is disclosed through equipment and equipmental contexts, as mentioned briefly above. What is an equipmental context or nexus? Consider the following example: in order to write notes on my reading of *Being and Time,* I need the text (either a physical or digital copy) but also a pen and paper so that I may be able to write. Writing in a notebook, rather than on errant scraps of paper, enables me to keep my notes all in one place and more easily find and read them in the future. I do not encounter the pen and paper as mere objects (i.e. as present-at-hand); instead, I see them "as" objects with particular relevances. A pen is a writing thing, a notebook, a thing in which to write. If there is a breakdown in the usability of a piece of equipment, if my pen runs out of ink and I must then refill it, for instance, it may show up as an obstinate thing, if it turns out

to be broken, it may show up as a mere thing, something characterized by "presence-at-hand" [*Vorhandenheit*] (BT 103 [73]). Objects, therefore, show up as present-at-hand if they have been divorced from their "referential totality", the system of relations for a purpose in which they are involved, or they are not part of one to begin with (BT 99 [70]). For example, lanternslides may show up as present-at-hand because we currently have little or no access to the material context in which they were once involved (that of an early form of photographic image projection). In another case, a rock is not equipment (i.e. it is usually something present-at-hand), but it may become equipment if it used in place of a hammer if it is involved in the referential totality of hammer-nail-wall-picture.

One of the features of equipment is that, in order for it to function well as equipment, its status as equipment must phenomenally "withdraw"; if I were to attend to the fact that a pen is equipment for writing, and that I need it to take notes, I may well lose my ability to concentrate on the notes I intend to write (ibid.). At the same time, our engagement with equipment gives us certain modes of access to possibilities for carrying out tasks and pursuing projects. These modes of access will be contextually situated and will be largely determined by the established relevances and significances objects have within that context. What we can gather from Heidegger's account of Dasein's relationship to equipment is that material objects themselves, coupled with the significances and relevances that go along with them, tacitly and innocuously structure the ways in which our possibilities for acting show up. The way in which possibilities for Being-in-the-world show up for Dasein in its world is something Heidegger calls "disclosedness" [*Erschlossenheit*] (BT 105 [75]). Our material situation discloses certain things about the world to us, but, importantly, discourse and other Daseins disclose the

world and its salient features as well. In other words, the equipmentality of equipment is one of several ways in which the world is disclosed to us and *what* it discloses or *that* it discloses may not be consciously reflected upon, given that it is often part of a prereflective background.[35]

Heidegger calls the kind of "sight" [*sicht*] that characterizes Dasein's concernful dealings with equipment "circumspection" [*Umsicht*]. When Dasein views the world circumspectively, this means that Dasein has a view to how things will be put to use in order to achieve a particular end. The equipmental context is able to disclose the world in particular ways not only by virtue of its equipmentality, but also by virtue of Dasein's circumspective attitude towards an equipmental context (BT 105 [75]).[36] Thus, it is not as if the equipmental context completely determines Dasein and its projects; rather the disclosure of possibilities happens when Dasein's circumspective gaze meets the context of material relations.

Dasein finds itself in a world in which the context of equipment has already been set up, to a greater or lesser extent. It is through this context that it engages with the world and busies itself with various activities and projects, which themselves are contextually mediated and conditioned. Given this, we can see how it is that Dasein begins to take on determinate contours depending on the world into which it finds itself. Here is a farmer, here, a nurse. "Being" a farmer or a nurse, however, are only possible on the basis of there being a particular context which makes these occupations possible,

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[35] To use another example: It is not that I "forget" that I am holding a knife, cutting vegetables; neither do I "forget" I am holding a knife when I turn quickly to greet someone. Instead, in both instances I am not attending to the fact that I am holding a knife, in the second case, I become aware of it because I am wielding it in an inappropriate context (i.e. when I am facing another person).

[36] "The context of equipment is lit up, not as something never seen before, but as a totality constantly sighted beforehand in circumspection. With this totality, however, the world announces itself."

and there is nothing in a particular Dasein's ontological constitution that determines it to pursue a particular occupation, only that it will *have a project per se* (BT 84 [57]).[37] However, neither does the world determine this; rather, the world includes determinate ways of being that are disclosed through the complex interrelation between material contexts, discourse and Dasein's relationship to other Daseins.

When Dasein is going about its way in an everyday manner, the equipmental context in which it pursues its projects in the mode of concern do not show up as obvious. Rather, they are unobtrusive and constitute the conditions for its acting and living a certain way without it having to reflect on its activities or the conditions that make these activities possible. Should a breakdown occur, then the equipmental context and the kinds of possibilities it affords are thrown into relief. For instance, a computer crash is something most academics in our current context dread. When this occurs, the way in which the computer is a condition for the possibility of pursuing various projects (working on articles or manuscripts, answering emails, grading assignments, etc.) becomes apparent. When the breakdown occurs, the mode of access to pursuing these projects is temporarily closed off, and the way in which the computer makes these kinds of projects possible becomes clear.

Gender and Equipment

Gendered ways of life are clearly mediated by equipmental contexts. Though the English term "equipment" has a technical connotation—and though it is likely that the

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[37]"Taking up relationships towards the world is possible only because Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, is as it is. This state of Being [*Seinsverfassung*] does not arise just because some other entity is present-at-hand outside Dasein and meets up with it. Such an entity can 'meet up with' [*Zusammentreffen*] Dasein only insofar as it can, of its own accord, show itself within a world" (Heidegger's emphasis).

most common example of a piece of equipment people use to talk about Heidegger's analysis of equipment and the world is a hammer—"equipment" refers to any object that we encounter in an everyday way and which is involved in our projects. So, things like clothing, jewelry and cosmetics would also be "equipment" in the Heideggerian sense, even though they are not, strictly speaking, tools that we use to accomplish a specific goal or task. None-the-less, they are intimately tied to gendered practices and make them possible.

Further, comportment towards items of equipment that are not so explicitly gendered can themselves be gendered. Iris Marion Young's analysis of "throwing like a girl" is a well-known example of how girls and boys have different comportments toward a piece of sports equipment: a ball.[38] Though a baseball is not gendered in the way an item of clothing like a dress is, the different comportments towards the ball, through repetition, produce ball-throwing as a gendered activity.

Lastly, items of equipment feature prominently in gendered rituals at different stages of life. The most obvious example is, perhaps, a wedding dress. However, we can see that the events in which gender is explicitly inscribed, such as the gender reveal party, utilize equipment in order to signify the gender of the soon-to-be infant. The gender of the fetus is "revealed" by cutting into a cake that is either pink or blue, or hitting a ball that then explodes into a cloud of pink or blue dust. The whole enterprise is made possible, ultimately, by the technology of ultrasound. At the gender reveal party, then, the gender of the child is signified through a material context that is mutually intelligible to the partygoers. The gender of the child can only be instantiated in this way if: (1)

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[38] Iris Marion Young, "Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Motility, and Spatiality," *Human Studies* 3 (1980): 137–156.

ultrasound exists, which enables people to know the sex of a fetus before it is born; (2) gender is assigned on the basis of sex; (3) everyone knows that "pink" means "girl" (and "girl" means presumably biologically female) and that blue means "boy" (and "boy" means presumably biologically male).

Practices matter a great deal when it comes to gendered ways of life. The practices that establish and maintain intelligible genders, from dress to how one comports oneself in certain activities to how one comports oneself towards other people, form a pre-reflective background for many people insofar as the items involved in these practices are ready-to-hand. We typically pre-reflectively associate certain gendered practices, particularly styles of dress and bodily comportment with presumed types of *embodiment.* Since we do not have perceptual access to other people's genitalia most of the time, we rely on other perceptual clues to establish someone's sex and thus gender, among them, gendered practices like styles of dress, wearing cosmetics and the like. If there is a perceived incongruence between someone's body and their comportment towards gendered practices, it is sometimes regarded as a social disturbance.[39]

Gendered practices are designated as "for" the members of a specific gender, and these genders are assigned on the basis of putatively natural categories of sex. In an everyday way, practices, then, show up as masculine, feminine or neuter with masculine activities being proper for boys and men, while feminine practices are proper for girls and women. Competent participation in a gendered practice, provided that practice is understood as "for" the person, is the subject of approval or disapproval by others. Thus,

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[39] See Gayle Salamon, *The Life and Death of Latisha King: A Critical Phenomenology of Transphobia* (New York: New York University Press, 2018). In this work, Salamon discusses the way in which King's bodily comportment and wearing of high heels disturbed students and staff at the school they attended (Salamon, *The Life and Death of Latisha King*, 83–87).

children grow up with a horizon of gendered possibilities designated as "their" possibilities and they are encouraged to project onto these possibilities. As a child grows up, they develop a familiarity with these practices through habit such that, even if they do not actively endorse them, they become part of a pre-reflective background if the child does not explicitly find them onerous and reject them. Trans people, generally speaking, do not experience the practices and possibilities designated "for" them as pre-reflective, rather, the expectation to take up certain gendered possibilities is obtrusive and onerous, occasioning reflection on how one is living gender and occasioning questions about identity or identification. When trans people do or desire to take up gendered practices that are not designated as "for" them on the basis of their assigned sex, they often do this against the background of already having-been encouraged or forced to take up practices they do not want to comport themselves toward. Trans people, too, disrupt the presumption that gendered practices and the possibilities for ways of life they afford will "correspond" to the sex one was assigned at birth.

Although gender is concretized and disclosed through practices and this is a feature of Dasein's Being-in-the-world, and even though Dasein is thrown into a world with stable ways of living gender that are disclosed to it on the basis of its sex assignment, Dasein, as possibility, can always live otherwise. It ultimately decides the "for-the-sake-of-which", or its own ultimate priorities. It is able to determine the significance and meaning of how it lives, rather than simply falling into the pre-given meanings it finds in its world. Practices are one way Dasein can discover that a different way of life is possible; by getting into different possibilities of gender presentation through practices, this can give some Daseins a way of accessing a different way of life.

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In chapter 4, I consider C. Jacob Hale's discussion of BDSM practices and how these practices disclosed the possibility of gender transition to him.

In projecting onto possibilities not designated "for them" and in taking up the practices through which ways of life become concretized, trans people expose the contingency of the relationship between gendered comportment, practices and embodiment. Heidegger's analysis of Dasein helps us to see how this is possible. Because Dasein is essentially possibility, its mode of existence or way of life is not predetermined. Rather, it is concretized in and through Dasein's Being-in-the-world. Gendered practices and possibilities are often understood as interrelated, and thus to successfully pass, a trans person may need to take up more normative gender presentations in order to survive. Or, a trans person may desire or tend to live gender in a more normative way and consequently take up gendered practices in normative ways. For some trans people, it is important to note, physical transition, or steps taken to medically alter the body so as to bring the body into line with one's sense of one's own body, is needed or desired for reasons independent of the relationship between the person and the social world. However, the association between gendered practices is itself contingent, so the nexus of gendered practices that, in part, make gendered ways of life possible is a flexible one. That is, the concatenation of practices understood to be masculine and feminine can themselves be disarticulated, recombined or eschewed, leading to a wide range of possible gender presentations and variation from gender norms.

How flexible are these nexuses of practices, however? Is there a threshold after which practices are no longer gendered if the connection between them and the other elements of gender has been disrupted for long enough? This is a difficult question to

answer, as its answer would involve a phenomenological analysis of the conditions for perceiving practices in connection with gender. Although Heidegger's analysis of Dasein in *Being and Time* presupposes perception as a mode of access to things, the conditions for perception *per se* are never made a thematic object of analysis, though he does mention perception in connection with the present-at-hand objects of knowledge production (BT 88–89 [61–62]). It is possible and perhaps necessary, however, to inquire phenomenologically into the relationship between perception and attributions of gender founded on practices and bodily comportments. That is, an analysis that would take as its object the way in which attributions of gendered subject position are established diachronically through sedimentation of the repeated association between gendered practices and gendered subject positions both at the individual and social level. This analysis would also ideally address how this sedimentation is the foundation of individual attributions of gender, both to oneself and to others. This problematic can, I think, centrally involve the role that passivity plays in perception and how a passivity that underlies perception makes certain kinds of attributions possible.

This is not to say that *only* trans people decide on the significance of gendered practices, reorient, or reorganize them and expose their contingency. This is something that is always a possibility for non-trans people as well.[40] However, since gender practices form part of the pre-reflective background of the social world, they are called into question less frequently for non-trans people. Since trans people experience the gender they were assigned not as pre-reflective, but instead, as onerous, they must navigate possibilities for living gender as a kind of problem: how to get access to the

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[40] C.f. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

ways of living one desires, when these ways of life have not been fully disclosed?

Gender, then, shows up explicitly as a project, one that must be reflected on and taken up.

However, there is no reason, given that Dasein is ultimately responsible for its projects,

the possibilities it takes up and its own self-understanding, that non-trans people cannot

comport themselves to their ways of living gender as problems and as explicit projects.

Medicine as an Equipmental Context

Medicine is a particularly relevant equipmental context when thinking about trans

ways of life, specifically, trans ways of life often referred to as transsexual.[41] What is

relevant when thinking about medicine and equipment is not the equipmentality of

individual items of equipment (scalpels, syringes, etc.) and their equipmental nexus, but

rather the way in which an equipmental nexus makes certain things possible. A certain

equipmental medical context makes sex reassignment or gender confirmation surgery

possible, as well as the prescription of hormones as part of a hormone replacement

regimen. The equipmental context of medicine not only affects trans people, but it also

makes regular sex assignment, either before or after birth, possible for infants born in

hospitals. Recall the gender reveal party from earlier in this chapter: such a practice

would not be possible without the technology of ultrasound. Lastly, the equipmental

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[41] The word "transsexual" is usually used to refer to individuals who undergo forms of medical body modification in order to bring their sexed embodiment into alignment with their sense of it. These medical interventions include surgeries, hormones and some procedures typically designated as 'cosmetic' (though this designation, arguably, trivializes their importance for some people) like electrolysis and tracheal shaving. Through these procedures, transsexuals bring their bodies into better alignment with their felt sense of their bodies; as such, they are correctives to incongruities between one's felt sense of one's own body and the way one's body is. When these incongruities produce distress, this is sometimes referred to using the clinical term "dysphoria". Serano uses the term "gender dissonance" to refer to the sense that one's sex does not match the sense one has of one's sex (Serano, *Whipping Girl*, 85). I think that this term, "gender dissonance", avoids some of the clinical and pathologizing connotations that "dysphoria" has, and I therefore have borrowed it occasionally in this dissertation.

context of medicine makes the surgical sex assignment of intersex infants possible, a practice I will discuss in chapter 3. For all of these reasons, medicine as an equipmental context is relevant in this connection.

The equipmental nexus of medicine is something that, rather than making a specific activity possible, makes forms of sexed embodiment possible, a sexed embodiment that is tied to a domain of gendered practices. I do not mean to suggest here that sexed embodiment is reducible to a practice on a Heideggerian view, nor do I mean to suggest a necessary relationship between a feeling of incongruity between one's own sense of sexed embodiment and the possibility of body modification. Rather, I mean to point out the way in which a material nexus, namely, that of medical technologies, serves as the material condition for the possibility of bodily modification. While there is a relationship between the knowledge production practices of medicine and the development of medical interventions, the significance individuals assign to medical interventions, to sexed embodiment and the relationship between sexed embodiment and gendered ways of life *is not reducible to the way in which this significance is disclosed in the nexus of psycho-medical knowledge production and technological practices.* Although, as I will discuss later in this chapter in section 6, there is a relationship between the ways of understanding a given phenomenon in a specific domain, like medicine, and/or average everyday understandings and individual understandings, that does not mean that these exhaust the possible ways in which individuals may develop their own understandings of what something means.

Das Man

For the most part, Dasein does not exist as individuated; rather, it comports itself

as "one" does. This is what Heidegger refers to as the existentiale of *das Man*. *Das Man*

is a nebulous, ambiguous, anonymous, and pervasive "anyone"; *das Man* is also,

simultaneously, a "no one" (BT 164 [126]). The "they" [*das Man*] is, typically, the

"who" of everyday Dasein. Heidegger thinks that Dasein, for the most part, understands

itself as this impersonal 'one'. In German, the pronoun "man" is roughly the equivalent

of "one" in English, though it is used much more frequently than "one" is used as a

subject in English. Heidegger thinks that Dasein is typically preoccupied with comparing

itself to others in the social world. This way of Being-with-one-another as comparison is

something Heidegger calls *distantiality* [*Abständigkeit*] (BT 164 [126]). When Dasein

takes a view of itself in order to compare itself to others, it ends up standing in

"subjection" to these others. Dasein sees itself and evaluates itself as "one" does, and

therefore exists as one does, or as *das Man* (BT 164 [126]).[42]

Das Man is an *existentiale*, which means that it is a structural feature of every

Dasein and not something that characterizes some Daseins but not others. Heidegger

characterizes Dasein's way of being as *das Man* as both inauthentic and as failure to

stand on its own [*Unselbständigkeit*] (BT 166 [128]). This idea of failing to stand on

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[42] "But this distantiality which belongs to Being-with, is such that Dasein, as everyday Being-with-one-another, stands in *subjection* [*Botmässigkeit*] to Others. It itself *is* not; its being has been taken away by the Others. Dasein's everyday possibilities of Being are for the Others to dispose of as they please. These Others, moreover, are not *definite* Others. On the contrary, any Other can represent them. What is decisive is just that inconspicuous domination by Others which has already been taken over unawares from Dasein as Being-with. One belongs to the Others oneself and enhances their power. 'The Others' whom one thus designates in order to cover up the fact of one's belonging to them essentially oneself, are those who proximally and for the most part '*are there*' in everyday being-with-one-another. The "who" is not this one, not that one, not oneself [man selbst], not some people [einige], and not the sum of them all. The 'who' is the neuter, *the "they"* [*das Man*]."

one's own gives us a clue as to how to interpret the strange notion of *das Man*. Dasein

finds itself in the first instance in a social context, and as such, it finds itself in a social

world that already has significance. As Heidegger puts it, *das Man* "Articulates the

referential context of significance" (BT 167 [129]). When Dasein finds itself in a social

world, which it always does, even if others are not near to it, it finds itself enmeshed in a

nexus of pre-given significances and social practices that disclose the world to it.

Typically, this significance is disclosed in an everyday, average way that attempts to

minimize difference and variation and/or the possibility of this difference and variation

(something Heidegger refers to as "leveling down") (BT 165 [127]). *Das Man* interprets

the world in a way characterized by what Heidegger calls "publicness", a kind of ready

intelligibility that is putatively accessible to most people (ibid.). Thus, if Dasein goes

along with the way in which things are disclosed in an everyday way, it neither takes up

its own stance on the significance of things and the meaning of practices nor does it

develop its own ways of understanding itself or making sense of its own life. This is what

Heidegger, means, I think, by Dasein's failure to "stand by itself". When Dasein calls

into question the pre-given meanings in a social context, it begins to actively negotiate

the world as it has been given, and may resolve to comport itself towards these

significances and other Daseins in a way that is its own.

　　As *das Man*, Dasein has projects, conducts itself and participates in activities as

"one" does. For instance, an inauthentic Dasein may never call the practice of eating meat

into question if this is simply something that "one does". Further, others may ridicule or

critique Dasein for "going against the grain" should they choose to stop eating meat for a

reason that is not widely understood by others. Thus, Dasein's everyday relations with

other Daseins encourage a kind of averageness and easy intelligibility. Possibilities show up as obvious and accessible, and Dasein understands, prior to reflection and without much effort, how it is supposed to live and the kinds of attitudes it is supposed to have toward itself and towards others.

Das Man has a particular way of disclosing possibilities through discourse, something Heidegger refers to as *idle-talk* [*Gerede*]. So too does Dasein as *das Man* have a way of understanding and interpreting possibilities, along with the moods that accompany these understandings and interpretations. In idle-talk, *das Man* "develops an undifferentiated kind of intelligibility" in which things show up as easily understood or acceptable or familiar (BT 213 [169]). Through it, things get disclosed in an everyday manner and things may show up with a kind of obviousness. Further, *das Man* through its public interpretation of things dictates, to a large extent Dasein's understanding and its mood (BT 213 [170]).[43] It is acceptable to cry at funerals or at weddings, but for very different, widely understood reasons. The way in which *das Man* discloses Dasein's situation through the significances it dictates, the interpretation it gives, the discourse it uses, and the moods it prescribes are the background conditions against which different understandings, interpretations and ways of talking about things emerge. Consequently, while the disclosedness proper to *das Man* is not definitive or all-encompassing, it does have a considerable hold on Dasein in the first instance.

Often, and in the first instance, Dasein "falls" into *das Man*. The *existentiale* of *fallenness* is one that characterizes Dasein and is part of its existential structure. Dasein must, then, differentiate itself from *das Man* if it is to interpret the world and disclose

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[43] "The dominance of the public way in which things have been interpreted has already been decisive even for the possibilities of having a mood—that is, for the basic way in which Dasein lets the world "matter" to it. The "they" prescribes one's state-of-mind, and determines what and how one 'sees'."

possibilities in a way that is not consistent with the way in which *das Man* discloses

possibilities in its everyday, average and ambiguous manner. Alternatively, Dasein may

resolutely take up the significances and relevances dictated by *das Man*, but in order to

"stand on its own", it must do so for its own reasons. Therefore, differentiated, authentic

Dasein is not necessarily iconoclastic or countercultural, we could say; rather, its status as

differentiated or authentic has to do with its choice to project onto certain possibilities

disclosed in a given social world. Although Dasein may differentiate itself and thereby

become more authentic, the possibility of falling back into *das Man* always remains, and

Dasein may always live in ways that are consistent with the way in which *das Man* has

understood the world and its possibilities.

Solicitude

"Being-with", is another structural feature of Dasein that is equiprimordial with

Being-in-the-world (BT 149 [114]). Dasein finds itself in a world with other Daseins in

the first instance. While Dasein often encounters other Daseins in the context of

equipment, Dasein's comportment toward other Daseins is not characterized as concern.

Leather, thread, and wood are the objects of a boot maker's concern, but the boot maker's

comportment toward the customer ordering the boots is characterized differently.

Heidegger uses the term *solicitude* to refer to the way in which Dasein comports itself

toward other Daseins.

Indifference to others is one mode of Being-with and this is the mode of Being-

with that predominates in most of Dasein's everyday dealings with others. In standing in

line at the grocery store or riding on a train, Dasein's comportment toward other Daseins

is usually best characterized as indifferent. There are, of course, positive modes of *solicitude* as well. Heidegger describes these positive modes as "leaping-in" and "leaping-ahead" (BT 158 [122]). In instances of solicitude characterized by *leaping-in,* one Dasein takes over something another Dasein is concerned with. In this case, one Dasein makes the concern of another its own concern, effectively displacing another Dasein and separating it from its activity or project. For instance, a parent doing a child's homework for them would be a clear example of *leaping in*. Another form of solicitude, *leaping ahead* also involves another Dasein's care, but in a way that one Dasein gives another Dasein access to possibilities. Heidegger says that *leaping ahead* "helps the Other become transparent to himself *in* his care [in *seiner Sorge sich durchsichtig*] and also become *free for it"* (BT 158–159 [122], emphasis original).[44]

While it is open to interpretation what Heidegger means by enabling the other to become "free for" their care, we can gather from this passage that in authentic *leaping ahead,* one Dasein helps another to project onto certain possibilities that Dasein has chosen. The stance Dasein takes toward others, and the stance others take toward it, therefore, give Dasein modes of access to possibilities. Further, authentic solicitude enables the other to "become transparent to himself." Here again we see Heidegger using the language of sight in his use of the term "transparent" [*durchsichtig*]; the language of

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[44] The context for this statement is this:

> In contrast to this [*leaping in*], there is also the possibility of a kind of solicitude which does not so much leap in for the Other as *leap ahead* of him [ihm *vorausspringt*] in his existentiell potentiality-for-Being, not in order to take away his 'care' but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time. This kind of solicitude pertains essentially to authentic care—that is, to the existence of the Other, not to a "*what*" with which he is concerned; it helps the Other become transparent to himself *in* his care [in *seiner Sorge sich durchsichtig]* and also become *free for* it (emphasis original).

sight [*Sicht*] is conceptually related to Heidegger's account of Dasein's understanding.[45]

Dasein's understanding has to do fundamentally with *projection*, a complicated notion

that Heidegger uses to describe the way in which certain possibilities are disclosed to

Dasein in a given context, and in light of the disclosed possibilities, Dasein choses its

projects and goes about living a certain way. Heidegger uses the term "seeing" to talk

about the way in which Dasein has access to both entities and Being (that is, its own

existence) (BT 187 [147]).[46] In light of developments later in *Being and Time*, we can

read Heidegger's comments about the way in which authentic solicitude enables a Dasein

to become self-transparent as having to do, fundamentally, with giving a Dasein a mode

or modes of access to possibilities.

Gender and das Man

> "In the leveled-off there of this carefreeness [of everydayness] which concernfully
> attends to the world, a world encountered in this carefreeness as something self-
> evident*, care is asleep*. On account of this, the possibility ever remains that
> distress will suddenly break forth in the world" (HF 80 [103], my emphasis).

It is helpful to think of *das Man* as being characterized by pre-given *norms:* when

we do this, how gender is disclosed by *das Man* becomes somewhat obvious. It is

important to note, however, that the pre-given norms and practices that Dasein encounters

in a world with others also make agency possible insofar as they provide for-the-sake-of-

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[45] For Heidegger, understanding always has a "fore-sight" (*Vorsicht*) as I will discuss in more detail in the
next section on understanding.
[46] "…from the beginning onwards the tradition of philosophy has been oriented primarily towards 'seeing'
as a way of access to entities *and to Being*. To keep the connection with this tradition, we may formalize
"sight" and "seeing" enough to obtain therewith a universal term for characterizing any access to entities or
to Being, as access in general."

whiches and constitute a background against which Dasein takes up its projects.[47]

Expectations for gendered possibilities, practices gendered in specific ways, as well as

ways of talking about and understanding gender will all be a part of how gender is

disclosed by *das Man*. Everydayness is characterized by unobtrusiveness and familiarity:

we have an implicit, non-theoretical understanding of how to go about the daily tasks that

compose a way of life. The way in which new activities or skills become unobtrusive is

familiar to anyone who has learned how to ride a bike (I am told): once one has mastered

it, one doesn't need to attend to the activity of bike-riding, and can instead focus on

where one wants to go.

Those aspects of living in a particular manner that show up as gendered, though

they are learned in childhood, similarly become unobtrusive in their everydayness. As

such, they are often not called into question, but rather must be made the object of

explicit questioning, whether this inquiry is theoretical or not. In this way, gender is

"carefree". By "carefree", Heidegger does not mean that something is easy or blithe.

Surely, living gender in particular ways, especially those coded as feminine, is not

carefree in the usual sense of the term, given the way in which the norms around things

like feminine comportment, styles of dress, and styles of engagement are excessively

surveilled and policed in a sexist social world. Rather, when he describes everyday

existence as "carefree" in *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, he is indicating the

way in which everydayness, as unobtrusive, enables us to go about our way without much

reflection. "Care is asleep" in the sense that it often doesn't appear that living gender in

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[47] Dorothy Leland makes this point in her article "Conflictual Culture and Authenticity: Deepening Heidegger's Account of the Social," in *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger*, Nancy Holland and Patricia Huntington, eds. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 114. My view on the relationship between individual Dasein and the social is informed by Leland's interpretation of Heidegger on this point.

particular ways shows up as an explicit project, one which is ultimately up to us and not a way of life given primordially in advance.

But ways of living gender often *are* the explicit object of our attention. Gendered ways of life are excessively policed and reflected upon, as anyone anxious about whether or not they "measure up" to prevailing standards of masculine or feminine appearance will tell you. However, when we are anxious about measuring up to being properly masculine or feminine, this is often done on the basis of how the significance of these ways of life have been disclosed pre-personally. Being a man or being a woman means *something*, and this ambiguous "something" is the significance these ways of life have been given. This something, moreover, is not abstract, but rather indicates discrete things (comportments, affects, self-understandings, kinds of embodiment, practices, etc.) that derive their significance in relation to one another on the basis of being coded as masculine or feminine. If something is "out of place", it usually occurs on the basis of something being removed from the everyday association it usually occupies. For instance, on a Heideggerian view, the kind of femininity performed by drag queens shows up as obtrusive because, from the standpoint of everydayness, people assigned male at birth do not wear women's clothes. Further, the kind of femininity performed by drag queens is a particularly intense articulation of those practices (dress, wearing make-up) that comprise more "normal" or "ordinary" styles of femininity.

Even though how gender is lived or is supposed to be lived is complicated, *das Man's* disclosure of possibilities and the way in which everydayness forms the background of our actions obfuscates this complexity and presents gender as something obvious. Thus, if we fall in line (to use Ahmed's way of putting it) with the everyday

possibilities of gender that are given, this alleviates the responsibility of taking them up explicitly as projects.[48] It is against this backdrop that a given Dasein, as thrown into a world, may individuate itself.

Though *das Man* dictates how gender 'ought' to be lived in the first instance, Dasein can project onto different possibilities of living gender by becoming more authentic. As I mentioned in the first subsection of this section, Heidegger uses the term "authenticity" to describe Dasein's "standing on its own" (*Selbst-ständlichkeit*) apart from *das Man* (BT 369 [322]). Authenticity [*Eigentlichkeit*] and inauthenticity, on my reading of *Being and Time,* refer to the extent to which Dasein's existence as its own, not in the sense of possessing existence as a property, but rather in the sense that it has differentiated or allowed itself to become differentiated from the primarily pre-personal existence it has as *das Man*. Thus the term "authenticity" ought not to bring to bear notions or realness versus fakeness or semblance.[49] However, for Heidegger it does involve responsibility and a taking-up of Dasein's thrownness in a given situation. Dasein cannot step outside its context, as much as it might like to. Dasein becomes differentiated by carving out a way of living "from out of" and in connection with the world in which it finds itself (HF 72 [94–95]).

Heidegger focuses almost exclusively on a specific comportment towards death, indicated to Dasein by the mood of anxiety, as that which individuates Dasein. However, this is not the only conceivable way that Dasein becomes individuated. Heidegger's brief

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[48] See Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*. There, she describes normativity in terms of being "on line" and queerness in terms of being "off line" with respect to the normative life possibilities in a given world (Ahmed 2006, 70).

[49] For a discussion of a more standard notion of authenticity in connection with trans people's place in the contemporary U.S. queer political context, see Marissa Brostoff, "Notes on Caitlyn, or Genre Trouble: On the Continued Usefulness of Camp as Queer Method," *Differences* 28, no. 3 (2017): 1–18.

mentions of solicitude, which I will discuss in more detail in the following section, suggest that this is another way Dasein can become more authentic. Further, it seems consistent with Heidegger's thought here that elements of the situation, if they are uncanny,[50] can serve to individuate Dasein. In the anxiety that enables Dasein to come face to face with its *own* inevitable mortality, the world becomes uncanny. When this happens, the tie between Dasein and the significance of the world, the relevances of things, and the meaningfulness of existence becomes apparent. In other words, the world and things in the world are not inherently meaningful or significant: it is Dasein who assigns significance to them.

Dasein, as *das Man* has a prethematic grasp of the world and its significance. If Dasein fits into the norms and significance dictated by *das Man*, then it is "at ease" in Ortega's terms. [51] However, if Dasein is marginally positioned within the world (i.e. its way of life does not conform to the norms dictated by *das Man*), then features of the world can show up as uncanny, and the uncanniness of the world is not a function of Dasein's mortality. To put it simply, the square peg in the round hole will feel pressure where the corners meet the sides, or not fit into the hole in the first place (which is an image perhaps closer to the one this metaphor is supposed to evoke).

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[50] Uncanniness goes along with the mood of anxiety, which discloses to Dasein *that* it exists. Heidegger describes this uncanniness as "not-being-at-home" (BT 233 [188]). The uncanniness of the world discloses Dasein's thrownness into a world that exceeds it (saying that Dasein is thrown into a world it has not made is another way of putting this), something about which it can become anxious.

[51] Mariana Ortega, *In-Between: Latina Feminist Phenomenology, Multiplicity, and the Self* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2016). *In In-Between,* Ortega borrows the concept of *being at ease* from Maria Lugones's piece "Playfulness, "World"-Traveling and Loving Perception" and combines it with Being-in-the-world to form the new concept of *being-at-ease*, which, in on a Heideggerian view, would be a new existentiale, insofar as it is formally indicated and, in principle, is a possibility of every Dasein. Ortega describes being-at-ease as "[t]he everyday mode of the "they" [that] allows for familiarity and thus the transparency of norms and practices" (Ortega, *In-Between*, 56).

Indeed, for many trans people, a lack of fit between the possibilities for living in gendered ways that were disclosed to them on the basis of embodiment and those they want or wanted, or need or needed, to pursue is something that characterizes life for an early age. To use myself as an example, even though I was understood to be a girl, as a child I wanted to engage in those activities and styles of dress associate with boys, wanted to play with "boys" toys and "boys" games. Beyond this, I wanted that way of life, taken holistically, that is associated with "boyhood". As difficult as it is to conduct a retroactive phenomenological description of one's childhood given the vagaries of memory, I remember at least that much: that, even though there were specific things I wanted (having very short hair, specifically a "boy's" haircut, for instance), I also grasped what it meant to be a boy holistically and wanted to project onto it.

This lack of fit causes the ways life disclosed as "for" one to show up as obtrusive, but because embodiment is supposed to be related isomorphically with given gendered ways of life, there isn't a clear picture of how one is supposed to "get into" living differently. According to everyday understanding, the "price of admission" to these possibilities is one's sexed embodiment. According to *das Man,* being assigned female and living as a man will never "make sense" or being assigned male and living as a girl or woman, similarly, doesn't "make sense". The way in which *das Man* discloses gender forms the backdrop of what Dasein is given to understand it is capable of.

However, trans people can and do project onto possibilities of gendered life that are different from the ones that are disclosed as properly "for" them on the basis of sex assignment. A felt sense of incongruity between one's embodiment and the possibilities associated with it, or a sense of incongruity between how one sees and senses one's own

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body and one's embodiment *per se* can be one catalyst for projecting onto different possibilities.[52] And, seeing how others live and wanting to live as they do can be another.[53] And, a traumatic event may serve as the occasion for Dasein to project onto alternative possibilities of gender and embodiment.[54] And, Dasein may choose to transition after a protracted negotiation, influenced in part by a sense of tiredness.[55] And, and, and… Ultimately, however, it is up to each Dasein to make sense of why it chooses, and/or is compelled to begin to live gender differently. It is up to each Dasein as well to determine, as something that "stands on its own" how to live gender in its own way and how to determine the significance of what it is up to.

The way forward for living gender differently is already "there" in Dasein, that being that is characterized by possibility. These ways are already "there" because the picture that *das Man* discloses of gender is not a necessary one; instead, it is a contingent arrangement of factical givens: embodiment, norms, ways of understanding what gender means and practices. Although Dasein can resolve to live differently alone, it may also do

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[52] See Henry Rubin's *Self-Made Men: Identity and Embodiment Among Transsexual Men* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2003). In *Self-Made Men*, Rubin recounts how the trans men he interviewed as part of this sociological study consistently reported a sense of bodily "betrayal" at puberty. See, in particular, chapter 3, "Betrayed by Bodies", where female puberty is described as "betrayal" specifically (Rubin 2003, 109).

[53] See Lanei Rodemeyer and Lou Sullivan, *Lou Sullivan Diaries (1970–1980) and Theories of Sexual Embodiment: Making Sense of Sensing* (NP: Springer, 2018). Sullivan recounts how he desired to live as a gay man, though he was not quite sure how this is possible (Sullivan, entry 11/20/1970, in Rodemeyer 2018, 1–2).

[54] See Thomas McBee, *Man Alive: A True Story of Violence, Forgiveness and Becoming a Man* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2014). In *Man Alive,* McBee recounts how the traumatic experience of being held at gunpoint was the event that spurred him to transition (McBee 2014, 44–45).

[55] See Eli Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017). In *Brilliant Imperfection,* Clare recounts deciding to medically transition after a prolonged negotiation with how to live gender (Clare 2017, 177–183).

so with help from others, something Heidegger gestures toward with the notion of solicitude.

Gender and Solicitude

Given the way in which *das Man* discloses ways of living gender, ways of living gender that are normative and rigid insofar as they are characterized by averageness and everyday understanding, solicitude is an important consideration when it comes to thinking about how others can help Dasein project onto possibilities for living gender that are not readily apparent. In solicitude, another can help Dasein to become "transparent" to itself. In its authentic mode, solicitous Dasein does not take over another's project, but rather helps another Dasein to pursue a project that Dasein has chosen. While Heidegger does not use the language of "help", this seems to be an apt characterization of what is going on in many forms of solicitude, especially when it comes to trans ways of life. In this section, I want to suggest that solicitude is a key consideration for thinking about social possibilities and trans ways of life, given that it has historically been an important element of trans survival, and given the fact that the possibilities for trans ways of life are not readily disclosed.

It is clear that both deficient and more authentic modes of solicitude are relevant when thinking about gender. If genders are ways of life, they involve "projects" insofar as they are a sets of possibilities for living in different ways, it is clear that not only impersonal "others", i.e. *das Man*, condition the apparentness of possibilities, but that particular others parents, relatives, friends, acquaintances, all disclose possibilities as well and help Dasein to "get into" certain possibilities and not others. This is especially salient

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when we consider that gender socialization occurs in childhood, before Dasein has a greater degree of agency over how it is to live or what it is to become.

Applying Heidegger's characterization of leaping-in and leaping-ahead in the context of gendered ways of life would look something like the following, I think. Given that *das Man* has a pre-given program of appropriateness when it comes to possibilities and projects, in the context of gender leaping-in would characterize cases where another Dasein tries to direct Dasein according to normative gender standards. This would take Dasein's care away from it insofar as it would direct Dasein towards pre-given norms that would allow Dasein to be "carefree" insofar as it conforms to them. This kind of intervention is likely not characterized by ill-will or malice in most cases (though of course it could be), but rather emerges in response to a situation in which living according to normative gender standards allows an individual to be "at ease," to use Ortega's term again, and decreases the likelihood of negative repercussions from the social world.[56] However, in these cases what defines leaping-in is the disclosure of gendered practices and understandings as a kind of totality. Because gendered ways of life are disclosed by *das Man* as ambiguous totalities—that is, they are not totalities *in fact*, but tend to appear as totalities—they come with their own for-the-sake-of-whiches that can serve as the reference points for structuring ways of life. . Consequently, leaping-in when it comes to gender can be quite sustained and extensive.

A hypothetical example will help to illustrate how someone can appeal to gender norms prereflectively in a way that is not characterized by ill will. Consider a non-trans man who is a father with a non-trans son who has a tendency to comport himself in ways that, according to a common sense understanding of gender, would be considered

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[56] See my discussion of Ortega's notion of "being-at-ease" in note 112 above.

feminine or effeminate. Around the age of 12 or 13, his son expresses interest in becoming more stereotypically masculine and expresses this as his own desire. The father has been anxious about his son's apparent effeminacy: it is not clear what it indicates, but he knows that it will likely cause difficulties in a society that is not as tolerant of gender non-conformity as it is of conformity. He worries that his son's feminine tendencies indicate that he has failed as a father somehow; that is, that he has failed to teach his son the ways of proper masculinity. As a result, he is glad to instruct his son in the ways of standard masculinity. This instruction does not happen overtly, but gradually in everyday situations and interactions. He may not have a conversation with his son where he tells him to "butch up", but rewards those behaviors and interests that conform to stereotypical masculinity. Unbeknownst to his father, the son is experiencing bullying at school because he is more feminine than other boys, and the desire to become more stereotypically masculine, while putatively his own, has emerged in response to the negative reactions his peers have given him. While the father is not explicitly intervening at a discrete moment to take over his son's project, the fact that he can fall back on normative masculinity in order to "help" his son is a way of disburdening his son of a difficult situation. Since there is no alternative framework of intelligibility to appeal to (we can imagine a world in which there is a degree of social recognition of and respect for this kind of difference), the obvious way forward is to conform to gender norms "as one does". [57]

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[57] See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "How to Bring your Kids up Gay," *Social Text* 29 (1991): 18–27. Here, Sedgwick considers some of the possible reasons why it is incredibly difficult to think about gay and lesbian development (i.e. Sedgwick considers the development of what Sedgwick calls gay or "proto-gay" children) (Sedgwick, "How to Bring your Kids up Gay," 22). The article consists mostly of a critique of psychological interventions intended to modify the behavior of effeminate boys, which is relevant in connection with genealogies of trans related clinical practices.

In this hypothetical case, the father is guiding the son in order to make his Being-in-the-world easier, and is able to draw on a pre-given understanding of gender in order to do so. He is leaping-in insofar as he does not need to work from within his son's own project, or what he might project onto were the situation different: perhaps the son does not have the expectation that his father would help him to project onto different possibilities. Given how he is situated, it is possible for the father to draw on a pre-established nexus of significance around a particular gendered way of life (non-trans masculinity) and deploy this understanding in order to guide or influence his son's conduct. He is motivated to do so not only by his son's distress, but also by what his son's non-conformity means for him. Insofar as he is trying to enable his son to be in a position where he is relatively "at ease", the father is making a determination about what his son's different, more masculine way of being will mean in the future. I think that one of the implications of Heidegger's account of leaping-in is that the Dasein who is leaping-in for another has posited the significance of that Dasein's project in advance, such that they would be able to take their place. In this example, this determining the significance in advance not only holds for what is appropriate for living in a masculine way, but also what is appropriate for a father son relationship. Rather than renegotiate the relationship, the father happily falls back onto pre-given normativities, ones that would "prove" that he has done right by his son.

Next, consider a case of solicitude that is characterized by leaping-ahead, another hypothetical one. Consider two trans masculine people who are friends, lets call them X and A. X has started taking hormones, but A has not. A tells X that he is interested in starting hormones, but he doesn't know where to go. X tells A where to go, along with

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relevant information about how long it takes to get an appointment. X also lets A know that he'll need a referral from a mental health professional, and he recommends a few to A that he's heard from other trans people have recommended. A feels more confident about being able to obtain hormones and ends up making an appointment.

In this example leaping-ahead consists as much in what X doesn't do as much as what he does do. X doesn't superimpose his own views about what taking testosterone *means*, but rather helps A to project onto a particular possibility, that of obtaining hormones. He is in a position to help A having gone through the necessary steps to obtain hormones himself—he can leap ahead of A insofar as he can help A to navigate the steps that are required going forward for obtaining hormones—but doesn't ascribe a particular significance to it. Rather, he helps hold the possibility open for A, leaving it up to A to determine the significance of this choice and to determine how it fits into his way of living gender as a project. In other words, he does not try to determine A's projection in advance, but instead helps him project onto a relevant possibility.

I am suggesting here that, given that gendered ways of life are composed of different possibilities that, despite being disclosed by *das Man* as ambiguous, naturalized totalities, in cases where someone wants to project onto non-obvious possibilities or different arrangements of possibilities, leaping-in would consist in attempting to help, guide or direct Dasein according to pre-established normative programs of appropriateness. Solicitude is, I want to suggest, as much about what someone doesn't do as much as it is about what they do. In the above example, what X doesn't do is ascribe a particular meaning to A's desire to take testosterone. If he did, then this would constitute an instance of "leaping-in" on my view. What characterizes X's comportment towards A

is that he refrains from doing this. When a Dasein leaps ahead for another, they are able to see the manner in which Dasein wants to live and help them to get into particular possibilities without a commitment to a particular totalizing picture of what it means to live gender in a particular way. In employing the examples above, I don't mean to suggest that those living in a non-trans manner can never be solicitous to those living in a trans manner, nor that people living in a trans manner never show deficient kinds of solicitude for one another. Both are possible, as well as other alternatives and degrees of solicitude. However, given that people living in a trans manner are better situated to understand how living in a trans manner is possible because they themselves have navigated it, the solicitude that those living in a trans manner will be able to show each other will differ in character from that of most of those who live in a non-trans manner.

Being-with and World-formation: Beauvoir Amends the Heideggerian Conversion

   For Heidegger, the reality of a project does not necessarily entail engagement with others, though it can involve engagement with them. For Dasein to become authentic, it is necessary that it become resolute, that it project onto possibilities for its own reasons, and that it dictate the for-the-sake-of-which and the significance of its actions. Indeed, Heidegger does not give a robust account of action *per se*, though projects and possibilities certainly involve action of some kind. Heidegger's account of relationality or interpersonal relation includes neither a robust account of the phenomenology of intersubjectivity nor a detailed account of action. Heidegger's account of relationality, then, appears to be deficient for the purposes of this project, because an adequate account of how people access social possibilities in connection with gendered

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ways of life should include a more robust account of intersubjectivity, as well as an

account of how living in a social world that is sensitive to action and how actions acquire

significance from others. In this section, I suggest that augmenting Heidegger's account

of relationality with Beauvoir's account of action and appeal in *Pyrrhus and Cineas* can

help make Heidegger's account more adequate.[58]

In *Pyrrhus and Cineas*, Beauvoir takes Heidegger, along with the Stoics, to task

for proposing a "conversion" that does not demand that one's actions change in character,

nor that one involve others in one's projects.[59] As I understand it, Beauvoir critiques

Heidegger on the grounds that authenticity does not depend on how one relates to others

and does not entail that the character of one's actions towards others change. Rather, on

her reading of Heidegger, one's comportment towards finitude lends actions their

authentic character. She writes,

> After, as before, life continues, identical. It is only a matter of an interior change.
> The same behaviors that are inauthentic when they appear as flights become
> authentic if they take place in the face of death. But this phrase *in the face of* is
> only a phrase. In any case, while I am living, death is not *here*, and in whose eyes
> is my behavior a flight if for me it is a free choice of an end?[60]

Beauvoir suggests, contra Heidegger, that we ought to reorient authenticity around action,

rather than death. It is unclear, that is, how *actions* take on a different character in

anticipatory resoluteness, i.e. Dasein's projection onto its own death. In Beauvoir's view,

in order for an existential conversion to be genuine (i.e. a turning towards responsibility

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[58] It is an open question, however, whether or not this revised account of relationality is adequate. I intend
to remain open to alternatives.

[59] Simone de Beauvoir, *Pyrrhus and Cineas*, in *Philosophical Writings,* ed. Margaret Simons et al. (Urbana
IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 114.

[60] Ibid., (emphasis original).

for one's own actions and the direction of one's life) then this necessarily entails a change in the character of Dasein's actions.

Yet the significance of our actions does not depend on us alone. Beauvoir suggests that our actions take on a degree of reality when they appeal to others that they lack when they are done in isolation. To illustrate this, she conjures a scene in which a child shows a drawing to his parents:

> As soon as a child has finished a drawing or a page of writing, he runs to show them to his parents. He needs their approval as much as candy or toys; the drawing requires an eye that looks at it. *These disorganized lines must become a boat or a horse for someone*. So the miracle is accomplished, and the child proudly contemplates the multicolored paper. From then on *there is a real boat, a real horse there*. By himself, he would not have dared to put confidence in those hesitant lines.[61]

The "miracle" that the child has accomplished is that he has brought something into existence that has significance for someone besides himself; without the gaze and the approval of his parents, the status of the significance of the drawing is ambiguous: it *could be* a boat or a horse, or it could be shapeless mass or a scribble.

Considering Beauvoir's account of action therefore has two aspects that are relevant in this consideration of solicitude. The first is that authenticity ought to entail a change in one's actions. It is not enough, in other words, that our actions take on a different significance when we take up our own death as significant for our projects and how we will live our lives. So, if solicitude is to be authentic, then that ought to mean that the character of one's actions may need to change in order to be truly solicitous. Whether or not one's actions take on a different character *for oneself*, in other words, is not the same thing as what those actions could mean for another Dasein. Insofar as authentic

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[61] Ibid., 116 (emphasis mine).

solicitude is leaping-ahead, one may need to act in such a way that one does not interfere with the projects of the other, which may entail modifying one's actions in light of this goal or aim. The second relevant aspect of action is that the significance of actions does not depend on individual Daseins alone. We cannot know what our actions truly mean until others reflect the meanings of those actions back to us.

While, for Heidegger, authenticity involves a taking up of significance that is Dasein's own and that this happens in a world where significances are pre-given, Beauvoir is attentive to the fact that if these actions are going to have significance to someone besides Dasein, Dasein must appeal to others and to project a world in which those actions have significance. Further, through our actions, we project a world with significances that can be taken up by others: "In order for men to be able to give me a place in the world, I must first make a world spring up around me where men have their place; I must love, want, and do. My action itself must define the public to which I propose it."[62] While Dasein's actions can make sense *to it* and it can determine the significance of its own actions, for Beauvoir, if these actions are not recognized as significant for others, they exist in a kind of ontological twilight, or, in her terms a "desert."[63] Beauvoir's comments on significance can be read as clarifying Heidegger's comments on world projection, but with an important difference. Whenever we act, we project a world, but we must act in order to project a world and others must recognize these actions as significant.

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[62] Ibid., 135.

[63] Ibid., 137.

In order for our actions to matter to someone else, two conditions are necessary. The first involves appeal. In acting, I appeal to another to acknowledge my actions as significant. Thus, I must be allowed to appeal to another in the first place.[64] I appeal to those with whom I have a pre-established relationship, or would like to.[65] This is impossible if I am silenced or if others show disdain or contempt for me.[66] The second criterion is that I must appeal to others who are equally free and in a position to judge my actions.[67] It is not acknowledgement *per se* that lends my actions significance, but rather significance is conferred on actions by those to whom I have made my appeal.

It is not my intention here to compare Beauvoir's understanding of ontology here with Heidegger's. Rather, I mean to point out that Beauvoir's account of action and appeal can help us to think further about solicitude in connection with gendered ways of life and it can be used to supplement Heidegger's somewhat deficient account of solicitude. Using Beauvoir's notion of the appeal here makes sense, given that gendered ways of life involve activities, comportments, and ways of understanding oneself and others. All of these involve others and derive a degree of significance they would not otherwise have from others. We care, in the Heideggerian sense of being towards something or something mattering, for and about others and it matters whether or not others care for and about us.

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[64] Ibid., 136.

[65] Ibid., 135. Beauvoir writes, "I can concretely appeal only to the men who exist for me, and they exist for me only if I have created ties with them or if I have made them into my neighbors" (Ibid). The mention of "the neighbor" here is important; one of the ways in which Beauvoir frames the piece is with the question "Who is my neighbor?" (Ibid., 91) She argues our neighbor is not just anyone or everyone, but that we make someone our neighbor through action (Ibid., 93).

[66] Ibid., 136.

[67] Ibid., 137.

I read Beauvoir's theory of action and appeal in this early work to be indicating that, as Being-in-the-world, Dasein depends on others for access to certain possibilities. By the same token, others can bar Dasein's access to possibilities and this often happens in connection with the subject position one occupies. In order for a possibility to remain a possibility, it needs the co-projection of other people, or at least the acknowledgement from others that such a projection is legitimate. Because Dasein is able to appeal to others, and others can respond to Dasein's appeal, this can turn, or make room for, the emergence of a social possibility from the projection of an individual Dasein. In other words, Dasein through taking up a specific gendered way of life can carve out what can become a social possibility with the support of others, but this requires appeal (especially in cases where Dasein's project is not readily intelligible) and action on the part of others.

Now that I have discussed the world, everydayness, *das Man* and intersubjectivity in sufficient detail, let's move on to an examination of how different kinds of understanding disclose the world to Dasein.

Understanding and Interpretation

Everyday Understanding and Interpretation

Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, always has an understanding of itself and its world. Heidegger's use of the term "understanding" [*Verstehen*] encompasses a broader scope than propositional knowledge (knowing that) or even knowing how to do something, though it can involve both. Rather, understanding, along with state-of-mind and discourse, forms the foundation of disclosedness, or the basis for how the world is given to Dasein in the first instance. Heidegger discusses understanding in terms of

projection and possibility; thus, understanding is an existentiale that is bound up with these existentialia as well. In the simplest terms, Dasein always has a sense of how it can engage with the world around it — it always has a sense of "*what* it is capable of" (BT 184 [144], emphasis original). This sense of how Dasein can engage with the world is largely pre-reflective or unthematic. This is obvious when considering practices: Dasein can know how to do something without having to reflect on the task at hand or make propositional judgments about the activity with which it is engaged.

Everyday understanding does not centrally involve understanding or comprehending particular things or practices reflectively. Rather, it has to do with what is possible for Dasein in a particular world and Dasein's sense of what it is capable of given the significances disclosed in that world. If Dasein understands itself as "one" does, as *das Man*, then it will understand its projects in terms of the pre-given norms, values and forms of intelligibility available to it. We can think of everyday understanding as "common sense", which is how Heidegger characterizes *das Man's* ambiguous, everyday mode of understanding (BT 439 [387]). Heidegger summarizes everyday understanding in the following way:

> Proximally and for the most part, Dasein understands itself in terms of that which it encounters in the environment and that with which it is circumspectively concerned. This understanding is not just a bare taking cognizance of itself, such as accompanies all Dasein's ways of behaving. Understanding signifies one's projecting oneself upon one's current possibility of Being-in-the-world; that is to say, it signifies existing as this possibility. Thus understanding, as common sense, constitutes even the inauthentic existence of the "they" (BT 439 [387]).

How Dasein understands what it is capable of, in the first instance, will be conditioned by the common sense way that the world is disclosed and by practices. Though Dasein has a

way of understanding itself, a common sense way, this way is not "ontologically transparent" and it is ambiguous (BT 440 [388]).

The full range of what Dasein is capable of and the breadth of possible ways of understanding itself get covered over or obscured by the way in which *das Man* levels down possibilities and discloses the world in terms of averageness. Another way of thinking about this is that *das Man's* everyday way of disclosing possibilities renders them obvious—everyone knows that "everyone" shoots off fireworks (or shoots off guns) on holidays, for instance. In the case of holidays, "shoot off fireworks" shows up as the obvious possibility, given the supposed appropriateness of this practice for celebrating a holiday. The possibility of not shooting off fireworks, out of consideration for animals or people who are distressed by the sounds, shows up as a less obvious possibility in this scenario because shooting off fireworks is just "what one does" on holidays. The understanding associated with projecting onto this latter possibility, which involves taking into account how people and animals might be affected by the sounds is also less obvious: if it were a feature of the understanding of the appropriateness of fireworks according to *das Man,* then it might become unclear whether or not one ought to shoot off fireworks. Das *Man* does not determine Dasein's understanding nor does it determine its possibilities, but Dasein will have to individuate itself from *das Man* (or become more authentic, in Heidegger's terms) in order to develop non-obvious understandings of itself and others, to project onto non-obvious possibilities and to reorder obvious possibilities in non-obvious ways.

Even though Heidegger doesn't talk about concepts or conceptuality explicitly, apart from passing references, it stands to reason that understanding, both everyday

understanding and more specific theoretical understandings involve concepts of one stripe or another.[68] Though in our everyday way of understanding things our concepts may be vague and even contain contradictions, they still are something we have recourse to in our attempts to make sense of the world, ourselves and what is possible in our world. That is, we might not be engaging in Socratic dialogue or philosophical analysis to really test our concepts and to discover what, precisely, they include, they still have an orienting function in our understanding.

Interpretation and Theoretical Understanding

Interpretation for Heidegger is a "self-development" of understanding (BT 188 [148]). Interpretation has a tripartite structure (which we could call the "fore-structure"; interpretation always has a "fore-having" [*Vorhaben*], a "fore-sight" [*Vorsicht*] and a "fore-conception" [*Vorgriff*] (BT 191 [150]). "Fore-having" refers to the way in which there is always something that is phenomenologically given, if not thematically given in advance, i.e. some given from our experience that we are interpreting. "Fore-sight" refers to the view we take towards the object; the ways of regarding an object that Heidegger discusses the most are circumspectively viewing an object as ready-to-hand (an equipmental interpretation) and viewing an object as present-at-hand (as we might regard an object of scientific inquiry). In the first case, view towards an object is that of use; in the second, we regard an object for the purposes of scientific inquiry, not in terms of what it is useful for. Finally, fore-conception refers to how we conceptualize an object on the

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[68] Interestingly, Heidegger engages in a kind of conceptual analysis when discussing how analyses in a particular area are conducted. For instance, recall from the discussion of formal indication that he examines the concept of 'validity' in connection with assertion and judgment, eventually rejecting it as "unstable" and thus unsuitable orienting his analysis of assertion (BT 199 [156]).

basis of our fore-having and fore-sight. Heidegger thinks that we can either develop a

conception of the object that is "drawn from the entity itself" or a conception that is

superimposed, so to speak, on the object:

> Anything understood which is held in our fore-having and towards which we set
> our sights 'foresightedly', becomes conceptualizable through the interpretation. In
> such an interpretation, the way in which the entity we are interpreting is to be
> conceived can be drawn from the entity itself, or the interpretation can force the
> entity into concepts to which it is opposed in its manner of Being [*Seinsart*] (BT
> 191 [150]).

Fore-conception, then, can be appropriate or inappropriate for its object. Interpretation

involves making something conceptualizable, given the fore-having and fore-sight of

previous understanding. In simple terms, in interpreting something, Dasein

conceptualizes it on the basis of a contextually specific understanding that it has in

advance, or that it is "bringing to the table" when it interprets something. As a

"development of the understanding", an interpretation will arise from whatever Dasein

has already understood. As such, the way in which Dasein conceptualizes something will

be influenced by the non-thematic understanding it already has.

The fore-sight of theoretical interpretation has a different character than everyday

interpretations about what something is for, what it can be used for, etc. The view we

take towards an object in a theoretical undertaking is from a position removed from the

situation; we understand things as present-at-hand instead of ready-to-hand.

Interpretations can arise from everyday, circumscriptive understanding or theoretical

contemplation and shades between the two:

> Between the kind of interpretation which is still wholly wrapped up in concernful
> understanding and the extreme opposite case of a theoretical assertion about
> something present-at-hand, there are many intermediate gradations: assertions
> about the happenings in the environment, accounts of the ready-to-hand, 'reports
> on the Situation', the recording and fixing of the 'facts of the case', the

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description of a state of affairs, the narration of something that has befallen (BT
201 [158]).

For Heidegger, we make interpretations all the time and they may be more or less

thematic in nature. Heidegger identifies assertion as the mode of givenness that

characterizes theorizing about something (as opposed to understanding it in an everyday

way). When we theorize about something, we "give it a definite character" by: (1)

pointing something out; (2) predicating something about it; and (3) given 1 and 2, we are

able to communicate the assertion to someone else (BT 196–197 [154–155]). From these

characteristics Heidegger derives the definition of assertion as "*a pointing-out which

gives something a definite character and which communicates*" (BT 199 [156]). When

objects are given in a theoretical realm, they are characterized by the "apophantical 'as'"

of assertion and this "apophantical 'as'" is founded on the more primordial "existential-

hermeneutical 'as'" of everyday pre-theoretical understanding (BT 201 [158]). Thus, in

most theoretical endeavors, we make categorical statements about the objects of

investigation.

Why is this technical foray into the differences Heidegger sees between non-

theoretical, circumspective, everyday understanding and theoretical understanding

relevant for thinking about how we live gender and gendered possibilities? It is important

to draw three observations and bring these to bear on how understanding and

interpretation are related to gendered possibilities. The first important thing to note is the

way in which any interpretation, and interpretations involving assertion—or theoretical

interpretations, we could call them—are grounded in a more primordial, everyday

understanding of the world and on less thematic or unthematic interpretations based on

this primordial understanding. So, whenever we conduct a theoretical inquiry into sex,

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sexuality, gender and things related to them, we always stand in some relation to our everyday understanding of these things. We might venture to bracket off our unthematic assumptions about them or we might not. The second relevant consideration is that our theoretical conceptualization of something can be more or less appropriate to its object. The parts of *Being and Time* where Heidegger reflects on his own methodology and critically evaluates the history of metaphysics can serve as demonstrations of how this is carried out in an analysis. I discuss this kind of methodological reflection on the adequacy of concepts in section 1 on formal indication. Further, my recourse to formal indication in setting out the terms of this analysis is an attempt to generate concepts that are more adequate for the task of thinking about gender in a way that does not circumscribe it in advance.

The third thing to notice is that assertion gives something a "definite character", i.e. something shows up 'as' something of which certain things are said or predicated. While this might seem like a fairly technical point about (mostly traditional) metaphysics, the implications for thinking about gender are important. What I take this to mean, in simpler terms, is that when we try to characterize an entity in a given domain of research, this amounts to identifying the entity "as" something, predicating something of it and putting this into communicable terms (those terms will be those of the discipline in question). Heidegger claims in *Ontology: the Hermeneutics of Facticity* that much of metaphysics is done by a kind of slotting entities into categories (HF 47 [59–60]). We tend to see categorical determination and sorting as fundamentally related to our knowledge of something and our ability to identify a particular as an instance of a universal: for example, I can identify a snake as a snake if I know that snakes are legless

reptiles, if the entity in question no longer has the predicate "legless" but is still a reptile, I can deduce from this that it is a lizard, perhaps it is a skink, specifically. For Heidegger, however, when it comes to Dasein, this kind of thinking misses something fundamental about the character of its being. That is, categorical determinations about what *kind* of being human beings are will miss that which is fundamental about being human, namely, that we are not determined *as* a particular kind of thing at the outset. Rather, we determine ourselves through our manner of being in the world. One way of thinking about it is that existence is not a predicate, but it is that through which we can take on predicates. The ontically relevant things we can say of any particular Dasein are things that characterize *how* it is not *what* it is, and what is ontologically relevant when considering Dasein in general are those things which make it possible to have a manner of being (the *existentialia*). It is in this sense that the existentialia are similar to traditional metaphysical categories, like substance, quantity, quality, relation, etc., but they are different insofar as they are not containers of a determinate range of properties or predicates, but rather only have content insofar as this content is filled in by a Dasein. For instance, my understanding will be different from my friend's understanding, both of which are different from the understanding someone else has. Our experiences of understanding are commensurable insofar as human existence or Dasein means that one is a kind of thing with understanding, but each Dasein differs from another since each Dasein's understanding, as projection, is its own.

Everyday Understanding and Gender

If we examine the common sense, pretheoretical understanding of gender in our own context, some core features begin to emerge. Given the relationship between understanding, interpretation and theoretical investigation, the pre-personal understanding of gender that we have will always serve as the background against which interpretive developments emerge. This understanding is contextually situated, of course, and this is an important thing to keep in mind when we set out to undertake any philosophical investigation into gender.

To begin, let's consider what kinds of things we take gender and specifically, "the genders" to involve pre-thematically. Concepts like 'man' and 'woman' are, perhaps, some of the most bloated concepts around: they contain a dazzling range of things.[69] First of all, we associate gender with sexed embodiment, where sexed embodiment is not understood in the first instance in the technical terms of human physiology and anatomy, but in terms of primary and secondary sex characteristics and reproductive role. Then, we understand "men" and "women" in terms of a differential role in human reproduction. We associate masculinity and femininity with sexed embodiment, and a range of social roles, practices and forms of life with masculinity and femininity. We associate gender, as the extension of sex into social role, with sexuality and sexual object choice that is still, arguably, heterosexual by default. That is, if one is presumed to be a woman/female, then it follows that she is sexually attracted to men. If one is presumed to be a man/male, then he is presumed to be sexually attracted to women. Further, we associate certain kinds of affects with masculinity and femininity: sentimentality and diffidence is often

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[69] For a discussion of what is included in the concept 'woman' see C. Jacob Hale, "Are Lesbians Women?" (Hale 1996).

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associated with femininity and detachment and assertiveness is often associated with masculinity. Lastly, we associate different modes of relationality to the genders, such that women are thought of as nurturing and self-effacing and men as less interested in and/or less capable of forming deep emotional connections, not to mention that women can be mothers, sisters and wives and men can be fathers, brothers and husbands (here there is overlap between mode of relating and social role). To make matters more complicated, masculinity/femininity and man/woman are often understood as binary oppositions that constitute each other through mutual exclusion: to be a man means to *not* be a woman, and to be a woman means to *not* be a man.

Each of these features, affect, social role, appropriate practices, reproductive role, sexual orientation and relating to others have their own concatenations of social possibilities. Our picture of what masculinity (usually taken as the equivalent of *being* a man/a male) and femininity (usually taken as the equivalent of *being* a woman/a female) are understood as stable and robust enough such that we can predict what kinds of possibilities an individual will get into on the basis of the sex they have been assigned at birth, *even though when we pick the concepts "man" and "woman" apart, we see that there are many possibilities contained in them which are not necessarily related*. Were this not the case, gender reveal parties and the like would be almost meaningless; that is, if we did not associate a wide and diverse range of possibilities with sexed embodiment and corral these associations under the ambiguous concepts of masculinity and femininity or 'man' and 'woman', then the assignment of a sex at birth would not be understood as an indication of *how* one is going to be, or the way of life they will have as a gendered

being.[70] According to an average, everyday understanding of gender, it would sound strange to use the language of being *sexed* or of possibilities being *gendered*. Rather, according to this picture, one simply is a sex, which entails that one *has* a gender.

The first is that gender is based in sexed embodiment.[71] That is, sexed embodiment, and external genitalia in particular, is understood as revealing the ultimate 'truth' of gender: if one's gender is ambiguous, or in question, this can be resolved through appeal to an individual's genitalia.[72] This everyday assumption that one's gender will be aligned with the sex one has been assigned is so pervasive that sometimes the terms 'man' and 'male' are used as equivalent terms, the same holds for 'woman' and 'female'. The presumed necessary relationship between sexed embodiment and gender is still, perhaps, the primary way in which gender shows up as non-normative from the everyday standpoint.

Since the ways in which the other elements of gender, presentation, relationality, sexuality, and affect have been analyzed extensively in detail elsewhere, I will not go into all of the ways in which these may appear as normative and non-normative here.[73] It is

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[70] I don't mean to suggest here that masculinity and femininity are reducible to their concepts. I am inclined to think that there are such things as masculinity and femininity, though engaging in an ontological analysis of what they actually *are* and then comparing this account to how we define them or conceive of them is outside of the scope of this investigation. What I mean to say here, however, is that our concepts *masculinity* and *femininity* are related to the concepts *man* and *woman* and *male* and *female*, such that they, together, compose a composite, though ill-defined and ambiguous, picture that we appeal to as a reference for thinking about the social world and what is possible in it.

[71] Kessler and McKenna refer to the attribution of gender based on the assumption that one does or does not have a penis as "cultural genitals"; they argue that the genitals one actually possesses are irrelevant for this attribution, and rather, gender attribution is based on the genital that the observer *assumes* should be there given the gender the observer has attributed to someone (Kessler and McKenna, "Towards a Theory of Gender," 173). See also Hale, "Are Lesbians Women?"

[72] For a detailed discussion of this, see Talia Bettcher, "Evil Deceivers and Make-Believers."

[73] See Salamon, *The Life and Death of Latisha King*; Bettcher, "Evil Deceivers and Make-Believers;" Shotwell and Sangrey, "Resisting Definition."

sufficient for my purpose here to say that we will have an everyday understanding of how all of the different aspects of "being" one gender or the other hang together, such that we can pick out non-normative or what we could even call "queer" cases.[74] It is important to note that what is important about our everyday understanding of gender is that it collects various possibilities that are, in principle, separable, and treats them as being stable features of those who fall into one of two gender categories. Individual Daseins that diverge from norms will either be unintelligible or will be difficult to make intelligible. Anyone who has encountered derisive speech that polices or denigrates possible life choices will be familiar with how this happens in practice.

The phrase "could you imagine?!" or its variants comes to my mind when thinking about how it is that different ways of living gender are *not* disclosed or, when they become apparent, this kind of everyday understanding of gender is brought to bear in order to call into question the possibility of living differently. The sense of the phrase "could you imagine?!" I have in mind is the sense of incredulity it is supposed to convey when used rhetorically, rather than as an actual invitation to imagine alternative ways of living. Even if people rarely or never actually say it, it seems, in certain situations, that it is always already a possible locution. Its rhetorical use is only possible given the assumption that, no, we're not supposed to be able to imagine what it would be like to live differently—it is unimaginable, given the understanding we have of how we ought to

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[74] In my use of the term "queer" here, I mean to call to mind Sara Ahmed's use of the concept in *Queer Phenomenology* as that which departs from a normal trajectory, or that which fails to be in line/on line, where a line is a normatively inflected path through life. I don't mean to suggest that all trans people would identify with or describe themselves as queer, since some trans people eschew this label. Further, the requirement that trans people use the idiom of queer theory or an academic trans discourse more oriented towards or around concepts from queer theory places a demand on some trans people that may go against their experience and political concerns. For a discussion of this issue, see Viviane Namaste, "Sex Change, Social Change: Reflections on Identity and Institutions," in *Sex Change, Social Change* (Toronto: Women's Press, 2005), 12–33.

live. This brings into focus the way in which understanding is related to possibilities: possibilities show up given what we understand and have understood.

But some people do live differently and can imagine living differently. Trans ways of life, as informed by understandings of what is possible for living gender, form against a normative backdrop and stand in some relation to it, regardless of what an individual's own understanding of gender is. One trans person might understand gender as a social construct and emphasize gender transgression and fluidity, another might understand gender as stable and probably in-born, or another might understand gender identity disorder as a psychological condition that serves as a relevant criterion for whether or not one is trans, yet another might value more traditional gender presentations for themself. These are just a few of the many possible understandings a trans person may have of gender. My point is that living gender differently does not entail a single particular understanding of gender; however, the fact that one finds oneself in a situation where some possibilities of living gender are not obvious, given the everyday understanding of gender, trans people must find a way to make sense of their very different ways of life. So, while trans existence does not entail *a particular alternative understanding*, living differently requires the generation of *alternative understandings* that will draw on the pre-given, everyday understanding we have of gender to a greater or lesser extent. Just as theoretical understanding is grounded in everyday understanding, so, too, are individual understandings grounded in an everyday, pre-personal understanding.

Recalling that understanding is related to possibility and has to do with Dasein's sense of what it is capable of or what it can do, developing alternative understandings of gendered ways of life is part of what possibilizes them, not just for a given Dasein but for

other Daesins as well. If we think of understanding as that which discloses those possibilities that are actionable in a given context, expressed by statements like "one can" or "you can", or "some people do", etc., then developing alternative understandings of how gender can be lived is part of one way in which these alternatives are possibilized. Counterpublics[75] or subcultural worlds can provide context for these understandings, or different ways of understanding gendered ways of life may be disseminated on the internet via websites and social media. Insofar as understandings become communicable, through concepts, narratives, talking about one's life and describing how one came to live a certain way, possibilities become repeatable to the extent that these communicable understandings disclose possibilities and disclose what Dasein is capable of in a given world.

Theoretical Understanding and Gender

Here, I will draw some connections between Heidegger's thematization of interpretation and assertion and theorizing about gender. I want to draw attention to some structural features of an analysis that can circumscribe how we think about gender in a theoretical context. In this connection, two things are important to consider.

The first consideration is one that I have already discussed above—it is that our everyday understanding of gender, the concepts we deploy and how they condition our thinking may or may not be appropriate for investigating gender philosophically. If we

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[75] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 56–80. Counterpublics, according to Nancy Fraser, are "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser 1990, 67). In other words, counterpublics are social spaces in which alternative interpretations about social and political conditions can be generated. In this connection, the trans counterpublic would plausibly consist of online spaces, community groups and academic spaces in which alternative forms of knowledge about or alternative interpretations of trans ways of life are generated.

are not self-critical enough at the outset, we may end up "finding" what we set out to investigate because we fail properly to interrogate our operating assumptions drawn from everyday understanding. For instance, one can set out to prove that trans women are not "really women" or that trans men are not "really men", and base an argument on the unexamined premise that being assigned that biological sex is what determines one's gender (along with a failure to call sex itself into question!). In cases like this, it is possible for someone to develop a theoretical interpretation of gender and a specific kind of gendered life on the basis of our everyday understanding of gender. Because seeing sex and gender as related in specific, necessary ways is part of a domain of obviousness, it isn't always interrogated, both in daily life and in theoretical discussions of gender even though calling it into question might seem obvious once we observe that trans people and others contest this necessary connection. It behooves us to have some suspicion of everyday ways of disclosing phenomena, and, in the case of gender, importing everyday intuitions and assumptions about it can potentially hamstring an analysis. It is not possible to completely remove oneself from the context and the understanding out of which particular interpretations emerge; as philosophers, we are charged with the task of how to critically theorize in a context where there is a domain of obviousness that threatens to circumscribe an analysis in advance. This is true of gender and it is certainly true of ontology for Heidegger. In the next chapter, I will turn to Foucault's theorization of power in order to illustrate more fully a picture of how social possibilities take shape in the social world. I want to point out in this connection briefly, one of the ways in which Heidegger and Foucault resonate with one another: both have a view towards conducting some kind of critique that unearths or challenges the

foundational assumptions that dog our attempts to think about particular phenomena (Foucault) or Being (Heidegger).

The second point has to do with giving entities a definite character when theorizing about them in general and in metaphysical speculation in particular. In a given area of inquiry, the significance of a claim is tied to how it stands in relation to other facts or claims in that area. Thus, what can be said will be conditioned by how the different propositions, claims or facts stand in relation to one another. Heidegger identifies one of philosophy's basic tendencies as the tendency towards universalization and totalization: to know something is to be able to place it within a universal system (HF 46–50 [58–64]). However, when it comes to thinking about gender philosophically, uncritically importing assumptions about gender as an ambiguous totality from everyday understanding can mean that we look for categories where we ought not. Because gendered ways of life are composed of a number of things that admit of variation, whether that be embodiment, one's relationship to one's own body, gendered practices, one's understanding of oneself and others, comportment, affects and relationships (though this list may not be exhaustive!), attempting to analyze gender in categorical terms imposes artificial unity on something that *is not a unitary phenomenon*. Being-in-the-world is a unitary phenomenon, but that does not mean that the ontic variations of the existentialia, like understanding, state-of-mind and possibility are unitary by virtue of anything other than Dasein's interpretation of them as unitary. Dasein is a unity insofar as it exists between birth and death, but how Dasein *understands* this unity and gives its life a definite character (i.e. *how* it exists, its *Seinesweise*) is up to it.

In other words, while the ontic (i.e. particular features of an entity or a life) can give us indications about ontological structure, it is a mistake to superimpose ontic features onto the ontological and treat them as if they are ontological. To use moods as an example, there are, for Heidegger, some moods like anxiety and fear which appear to be universal, i.e. part of every Dasein's experience. However, it doesn't stand to reason that *all* moods will be universal. Just because *Weltschmerz* and *saudade* are moods does not mean that every Dasein will experience them, or, to use Heideggerian terminology, that they will be existentiell modifications of the existentiale of state-of-mind. It is likely that lack of terminological equivalents in English doesn't indicate that it is impossible for an English-speaker to experience them, though it does point to the fact that they were concepts developed in particular linguistic contexts in particular cultural worlds. If we were, then, to posit a mood like *saudade* or *Weltschmerz* as a structural feature of Dasein, i.e. as something *ontological*, this would be a kind of category mistake.

A particular way of life is existentiell or ontic, so, if the argument that genders are ways of life is convincing, then it would be an error to posit them as something ontological. Though their stability may be accounted for, in part, because we regard them *as if* they are ontological (it could be that we, in this context at least, tend to be Aristotelians when it comes to entities, including human beings), a Heideggerian revision of ontology does not warrant the claim.

The Emergence of Problems – Theoretical or Otherwise

The above analysis suggests, I think, that we can think of trans ways of life as responses to problems.[76] This is different from saying that trans existence *is a problem*, though it might show up as a problem within a certain framework. The reticence we might feel to use the term "problem" in a discussion about trans ways of life is instructive insofar as it alerts us to the fact that trans existence can be construed as a particular kind of problem, depending on the understanding and interpretation of what gender means that is operational. This is different, however, from thinking about trans existence in terms of problem solving or problematizations of a given social field. Here I will address the concern about the term "problem" first because it is instructive. Then, I will explain what I mean by the statement that a given trans existence, or a trans way of life[77] is a response to a problem.

Trans existence can show up as problematic from the standpoint of a given theory or understanding of gender more generally if that understanding cannot admit of the existence of trans people *as women* and *as men*. If, for instance, the membership of individuals in the category 'woman' is determined by sex assignment, then the statement, 'individuals assigned male at birth can be women' is incoherent. The same is true, *mutatis mutandis,* that the claim that someone assigned female at birth can be a man, according to this logic. Thus, trans existence is problematic insofar as it cannot be easily explained by this logic. Rather than examine this understanding, however, perhaps because it is firmly inscribed in a domain of obviousness, the apparent contradiction that

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[76] My considerations in this section are informed by Audrey Wasser's "How do we Recognize Problems," *Deleuze Studies* 11, no.1 (2017): 48–67.

[77] After an explication of what Heidegger means by Dasein's existence (i.e. that Dasein is existence), it becomes clear that we can use these phrases interchangeably.

trans existence must be explained by pinpointing how or why the trans person is either

explicitly or through action, in error about the reality of gender. If someone who is not

trans says something to the effect of "I just don't understand trans existence", it could be

that they actually can't, given that certain understandings cannot adequately respond to

the problem that trans existence poses for them. In short, they must thematize trans

existence as a problem in order to maintain the coherence of the claims that form the core

supports of that understanding. If we balk at talking about trans existence in terms of

problems, it is possible that this is part of the reason why: trans existence is cast *as a*

problem in some dominant everyday understandings of gender as well as some theoretical

ones.

Instead of thinking of different trans ways of life according to the tendencies,

desires, self-understandings, etc. that may underlie these ways of life (which, however, is

a salutary way to think about them in other connections), I want to suggest that we think

of them as attempts to solve a problem. That is, we should think of them as a response to

problems that arise in situations where an individual wants to live a particular way, but

where given the way we have understood "what" gender "is," this way of existing does

not show up as an option. A way of life is projected onto a circumscribed domain of

possibility, in which certain ways of living appear obvious and others less so. If a way to

live is not readily disclosed, then Dasein must figure out how to live the way it wants or

needs to, despite *das Man*'s failure to disclose *how* alternatives are possible. Dasein does

this is in a given situation, which includes practices, nexuses of significance and

understandings. So problem-solving, insofar as it is a determination of *how* to live in the

manner that Dasein projects onto, can involve things as simple as figuring out how to

navigate mundane interactions with others, to long term strategizing about how to achieve certain goals (how to raise money for a surgery, for instance), to calling into question theories of gender that come up short when it comes to giving an account of one's experience. In other words, it is the concrete situation that poses the problem, rather than trans existence *being problematic* for a given understanding of gender.

Here's an example of practical problem solving in response to a more mundane situation that should help illustrate how solutions to problems emerge in a given domain. For instance, I have a tendency to cross my legs when sitting in a chair. On a particular day, I happen to be working at a table with drawers underneath it, which prevents me from easily crossing my legs and sitting comfortably with my legs crossed. I might have the option of moving to a table without drawers if there were any available. Alas, there are none, but I can swap out my chair for one that is lower to the ground. In this mundane situation there is a problem: I have a tendency to cross my legs and I cannot easily cross them. There is a circumscribed domain of optionality: I can continue to sit in the same chair at the same table, swap out the chair, not cross my legs, or move to another table. Desire plays a role (I want to be able to cross my legs comfortably) but so does the situation (the table with the drawers, the lack of other tables, chairs of different heights). I might wish the particular table I am sitting at didn't have drawers, but this is not up to me. What is up to me is how I choose to comport myself in light of the problem the situation poses for me. This response will be my attempt to solve the problem.

I don't mean to suggest that all of the things that trans individuals do as part of determining their manner of living are responses to things that show up *explicitly* as problems, just as I may not think of my frustrated leg-crossing as a problem *per se*.

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However, what trans existence shows is that problems arise at the point of contact between systems for which different ways of living gender are *problems* and individuals who want to project onto non-obvious ways of living gender. They involve coordinating possibilities that are not designated as *for someone* on the basis of their sex assignment at birth. How they will be coordinated in a given case is up to each individual Dasein to determine . Although these possibilities are up to each Dasein to coordinate, however, acknowledgement and support from others is crucial, as I showed in my analysis of Beauvoir on action and appeal. In order for the possibilities that Dasein projects onto to be actionable, this requires help from others or non-interference, at the very least. Further, without solicitude, it can be difficult for Dasein to project onto non-obvious possibilities. In projecting onto possibilities and coordinating them in specific ways, Dasein determines its manner of living. This is true of non-trans people as well: each of us always has a choice as to how one is to go about living and the significance one is going to ascribe to things, all within contextual limits, of course.

Attention to the two senses in which trans existence poses a problem, or identifies problems in the social world, helps to reveal that how problems get thematized depends on the standpoint of the inquiry. When inquiring philosophically into trans issues, we should ask: are the problems arising from trans lives, or are they arising from the dominant understanding or theory's failure to account for trans lives? If trans existence shows up as problematic from a certain perspective, this can alert us to the shortcomings of a particular approach to understanding the complexities of gendered life. Rather than superimpose concepts or ways of explaining phenomena onto ways of life that pose problems for an approach, we can instead question the extent to which our methods and

concepts are adequate or inadequate for disclosing the nuances and differences between trans ways of life.

<div align="center">Embodiment and Dasein's Projection onto Possibilities</div>

Heidegger's "neglect" of the body[78] and the apparent implications this has for discussing gender are well known. Heidegger barely discusses the body in *Being and Time*. Heidegger does not discuss gender or sexual difference at all in *Being and Time,* though he does have a brief discussion of it in a series of lectures entitled *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. Derrida, for instance, observes in "Geschlecht: Sexual difference, ontological difference," where he discusses Heidegger's treatment of sexual difference in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, that it is strange that Heidegger neglects the topic of sexual difference as ontological difference when this is a topic that ended up being one of the most pressing ontological problematics of the 20th century.[79] Heidegger's lack of attention to the body is well known; it is equally well-known to those familiar with trans theory that the body is an important topic in many trans theories. The body has such pride of place, I think, because contesting the relationship between one's assigned sex and the sex and/or gender one identifies as brings into sharp focus the way in which we understand both sex and gender as embodied. The sexed features of the body, genitals, secondary sex characteristics, pitch and tone of voice, etc. are, in an everyday way, thought to tell the truth of not only a person's sex but also their gender.

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[78] This is Aho's way of phrasing the problem, also the title of his book on the subject. Kevin Aho, *Heidegger's Neglect of the Body* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009).

[79] Jacques Derrida. "Geschlecht: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference" *Research in Phenomenology*, 13 (1983): 65–83.

So, how ought we think about the body, gender, possibility and trans ways of life in this connection? For the purposes of this dissertation, I will provide the following, provisional sketch of how embodiment is related to social possibilities in the picture I propose, in lieu of a more detailed and, ultimately, necessary phenomenological analysis of the relationship between gender, embodiment and possibility. The sufficiently detailed analysis I've alluded to here is outside the scope of this dissertation, however.

The body is certainly a way of getting into possibilities for Heidegger, it stands to reason: it is that through which we find ourselves spatially oriented in a world (BT 81 [55]). However, Heidegger does not think that the sexed body is ultimately part of Dasein's fundamental ontology. In *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*,[80] he argues that Dasein is fundamentally *neutral* with respect to sex: "The particular *neutrality* of the term "Dasein" is essential, because the interpretation of this being must be carried out prior to every factical concretion. This neutrality also indicates that Dasein is neither of the two sexes [*beiden Geschlectern*]" (MFL 136 [172]). Heidegger then goes on to say that Dasein is "dispersed in a body" (MFL 137 [173]). Having a determinate sex [*Geschechtlichkeit*] is part of this "dispersal" (ibid). The body and, by extension, the sex of the body, are ultimately ontic matters.

Heidegger mentions Dasein's dispersal in *Being and Time* as well. This provides a clue for how we should interpret his remarks regarding Dasein's sex. He writes that

> Dasein's facticity is such that its Being-in-the-world has always dispersed [*zerstreut*] itself or even split itself up into *definite ways* of Being-in [my emphasis]. The multiplicity of these is indicated by the following examples: having to do with something, producing something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining…(BT 83 [56–57]).

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[80] Martin Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. Michael Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992). Hereafter, *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* is cited in text as MFL.

In other words, all of the ways that Dasein can be in the world are concretions and determinations made by Dasein: they are ultimately ontic because they do not necessarily characterize Dasein in every case: Dasein does not have to produce things, interrogate things, discuss things, etc. "Dispersal" appears to refer in both cases to Dasein's thrownness—it does not have control over the conditions, including the bodily conditions, it finds itself in. These conditions, of course, are variable. While thrownness is an existentiale, the particular situation into which Dasein is thrown is not properly part of its fundamental constitution. If it were, it wouldn't be possible for Dasein to be otherwise than it already is, factically speaking.

How Dasein concretely is or can be, in other words, is not part of Dasein's fundamental ontological constitution. Those ontic features that Dasein may or may not have (e.g. an eidetic memory, colorblindness, curiosity) or particular projects Dasein takes up (occupations, ways of being) are grounded in its ontological constitution but are not properly ontological because they do not characterize all Daseins. They are, ultimately, grounded in *a particular world* because their pre-given significance will depend on that world; further, whether and how they will ultimately matter depends on *a particular Dasein*. For example, that one can be assigned IQ scores is context dependent and the significance of these scores is given in particular ways; further, whether or not one's IQ matters to an individual Dasein and how it matters depends on that Dasein. By saying that sex is part of Dasein's dispersal, then, what Heidegger means is that sex is not part of Dasein's fundamental ontological constitution, it is not ontologically prior to Dasein's Being-in-a-world and it derives its ultimate significance from Dasein's concrete existence. The issue is one, then, of ontological priority and what grounds what.

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Although Heidegger's instance on the neutrality of Dasein seems odd, as Derrida points out, I think that Heidegger's remarks on Dasein's neutrality can be glossed in the following manner. That Dasein is embodied and that this body is how Dasein is oriented towards its spatial location is part of Dasein's fundamental ontology, but the specific features of that body, as well as the significance tied to features is not fixed, but is rather disclosed in a particular worldly context. In other words, the significance of sexual difference and of the body is something that is given in a particular world and, therefore, not part of fundamental ontology. I want to suggest that the bodily "dispersal" conditions what kinds of social meanings will be projected onto Dasein by *das Man*, but it is ultimately up to Dasein, as the condition for the possibility of meaning, to ascribe meaning to its embodiment. Otherwise, practices such as recoding[81] would not be possible. In this regard, I agree with Aho's interpretation of the status of gender in fundamental ontology.[82] In fact, it might be a category mistake to suppose that gender is a fundamental ontological feature of Dasein. The question of whether or not gender is, ultimately, ontological or ontic, while extremely relevant to thinking about gendered ways of life, cannot be dealt with thoroughly in this dissertation.

While it might prove just as unsatisfying to reiterate the point that the body constitutes its own problematic here, I'm going to do just that. The reason for this is that what is required is something I will not carry out here. That is, what is needed is a

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[81] "Recoding" is a practice wherein the normative sex and gender codes assigned to parts of the body, such as genitals, are given or take on different sex and gender meanings in a sexual context. For a discussion of the phenomenology of recoding, see Talia Bettcher, "When Selves Have Sex: What the Phenomenology of Trans Sexuality Can Teach about Sexual Orientation," *Journal of Homosexuality* 61, no.5 (2014): 605–620.

[82] Aho discusses this issue in detail in chapter 3 of *Heidegger's Neglect of the Body*, "Gender and Time: On the Question of Dasein's Neutrality" (53–71). I agree with Aho although our readings of Heidegger are different, I think.

phenomenological investigation into the constitution of a sexed and gendered body

schema (not just for trans people, but for everyone). This analysis, in turn, should be

considered in relation to an individual's projection onto possibilities and how others view

what gendered possibilities as being "for" that individual. This involves investigations

into body schema, perception, and the relationship between these and the lifeworld that

constitutes a dissertation's worth of work on its own. Work on the phenomenology of the

sexed body in connection with trans ways of life has already been conducted by Gayle

Salamon in *Assuming a Body*. In that work, Salamon draws on a Merleau-Pontean

framework to discuss sexed embodiment at length.[83] Salamon's work on feigning as a

way of engaging in eidetic variation in connection with gender also seems promising in

this connection.[84] Also relevant in this connection is Sara Ahmed's work in *Queer*

Phenomenology. There, she develops an account of orientation and of how bodies

become oriented in social worlds where norms structure our relationship to spaces and

others along race and gender lines.

What can be said in this current connection, however, is that one's experience of

one's own body can disclose the possibility of living gender differently and serve to

orient one towards projecting onto non-obvious possibilities for living gender, or

attempting to. Trans people's experiences indicate that one's sense of one's own

embodiment is an important mode of disclosure. For instance, some trans people feel

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[83] Gayle Salamon, "The Sexual Schema: Transposition and Transgender in *Phenomenology of Perception*" in *Assuming a Body: Transgender Rhetorics of Materiality* (New York: Columbia University Press), 43–65.

[84] Gayle Salamon, "Gender Essentialism and Eidetic Inquiry", conference presentation, Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy conference, October 20th, 2017.

"betrayed" by their bodies at puberty.[85] Many trans experiences are characterized by what Julia Serano calls "gender dissonance", a term she uses to describe "the mental tension and stress that occur in a person's mind when they find themselves holding two contradictory thoughts or views simultaneously", the views in question here being one's sense of one's own sex and/or gender and other's perception of their sex or gender.[86] The term "gender dissonance" is related to cognitive dissonance, and is meant to indicate the "mental tension and stress that occur in a person's mind when they find themselves holding two contradictory thoughts and views simultaneously", like being perceived as male when seeing oneself as female or vice versa.[87] Clearly, being in a constant state of tension about one's sexed embodiment can motivate approaching gendered possibilities as problems. Thus, the phenomenon of gender dissonance indicates that one's sense of one's embodiment, and the sense of one's embodiment being at odds with how one is perceived, can be an important site of disclosure, if not always of determinate possibilities, at least of the fact that something needs to change. However, at the same time, I think it is important to interrogate the social world and what relationship it has to the intensity with which this dissonance is felt and the factors that might contribute to this.[88]

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[85] In Henry Rubin's sociological study of transsexual men, *Self-Made Men*, Rubin finds that the notion of bodily betrayal is a common theme in the narratives of the transsexual men who participated in his study (Rubin 2003, chapter 3, "Betrayed by Bodies", 141–173).

[86] Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl* (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2016): 85.

[87] Ibid.

[88] The reason why I mention this is because in my own experience, my sense of gender dissonance has varied in intensity over time and appears to have some relationship to the way in which gender is coded (or not) in the social world or the extent to which people with whom I have specific close relationships (both romantic and non-romantic) are drawing on commonsense notions of gender and gender attribution. For instance, I spent several years in social milieux that were predominantly homosocial and inhabited by girls

Conclusion of Analysis: Gender as Nexus of Possibilities

How, then, does Dasein "get into" possibilities of living gender that are different from the ones disclosed as "for" it? Dasein may do so through practices, with help from others, through developing alternative understandings or, what is likely, some combination of these. In becoming more authentic, or standing on its own, the way in which *das Man* discloses possibilities shows up as *contingent*. Dasein can come to realize that though certain significances are pre-given, they are contingent and not necessary. The lives trans people live, and the fact that trans people are able to project onto possibilities that are *not* disclosed as "for them", given particular sex assignments at birth, illustrate this point beautifully. Turning to Heidegger's account of Dasein as something with possibility at its basis shows that the taking up of certain possibilities are not the necessary outcomes for a being that has a certain kind of nature. Unlike Aristotle's stone, which has no choice but to fall towards the earth no matter how many times it is thrown in the air, human beings establish determinate ways or manners of being through action and thought.[89]

I have attempted to show that as something with possibility at its basis, Dasein is always projecting onto different possibilities whether it has reflected explicitly on whether or not these possibilities are to be taken up or not. As something that often exists as *das Man*, Dasein has the ability to appeal to pre-given understandings of how the world is, how life should be and how to understand itself; in this way, it is able to

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or women (depending on how old I was). In those contexts, I experienced far less gender dissonance than when I was in milieux inhabited by girls and boys or women and men; this experience of gender dissonance as variable in intensity phenomenologically indicates to me that there could be a relationship between the two, at least for some people. I would not claim definitively that there is a relationship between the two for all trans people on the basis of my own experience alone, but it does indicate that this is the case for at least one person.

[89] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* Book II (1103a 21–24).

disburden itself of the responsibility it has to "stand on its own" and determine itself through its projection and assignation of meaning and significance to its life. Dasein gets into possibilities through concrete practices that are situated in a particular social and historical context. Though it is aware of the sensibilities, judgments and understandings of *das Man*, the impersonal "one", it also stands in relation to others, intersubjective relations that are characterized by solicitude. It is through solicitude, too, that it can project onto possibilities or receive help in pursuing its projects. Understanding and interpretation, things that always characterize its existence, disclose possibilities to Dasein. Theoretical understandings are always rooted in a pre-personal everyday understanding that discloses the world in which Dasein finds itself.

Ways of living gender, like other ways of life, are made possible by practices, others, and understandings of what gender means. Although possibilities of living gender are disclosed as an ambiguous totality involving sexed embodiment, comportment, activities and pursuits, sexuality, relationships with others, affects, practices, and understandings of oneself and others, this totality is not natural or necessary. Dasein is able to decide on its own for-the-sake-of-whiches, or ultimate priorities and assign meaning to them. Further, insofar as Dasein acts and projects in a world with others, it, in taking up determinate possibilities for action and in disclosing the meaning of these actions, it projects a world in which certain things are possible, provided other Dasein's answer its appeal. What trans ways of life show is that, although these particular totalities, these concatenations of possibilities, often show up as natural or necessary (if "natural" is taken to mean necessary, as it often is), their arrangement is, in fact, contingent.

Chapter 2:

Thrown into Subjection: Dispositifs *and Possibilities*

Introduction

Given the wide influence Michel Foucault's work has had on various fields, it may seem redundant to analyze the way in which Foucault's methods and concepts elucidate the conditions under which trans ways of life are lived, that is, the conditions for the social possibility of specific gendered ways of life.[1] However, another look at Foucault's work is warranted in connection with questions related to social possibility and trans ways of life. While Heidegger's analysis of Dasein gives us a way of thinking about the way in which human beings are the kinds of things for which possibility is ontological, or something that defines their existence, Foucault is helpful when it comes to inquiring into and analyzing the social dimensions of human life that give people living in particular contexts a determinate range of possibilities. Foucault's work reveals the way in which power shapes the social world at a fundamental level; his attention to the operations of power can serve as part of the ground for an account of how certain

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[1] The Foucaultian concepts of biopolitics and biopower, in particular, have been influential, as has genealogy as a method. For a discussions of the use of biopower and biopolitics as concepts in trans studies, see Stryker "Biopolitics" in *TSQ,* 1:1–2: "Posttransexual: Key Concepts for a Twenty-First-Century Transgender Studies" (May 2014): 38–41 and C. Riley Snorton and Jin Haritarworn, "Trans Necropolitics: A Transnational Reflection on Violence, Death, and the Trans of Color Afterlife," in *Transgender Studies Reader* 2, Susan Stryker and Aren Aizura, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2013): 66–76. For an analysis of the way in which administrative policies and mechanisms limit possibilities for trans life in the contemporary US, see Dean Spade, *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015). Genealogies that are relevant in this connection, whether appealing to Foucault in a sustained fashion or not, are Jennifer Germon, *Gender: A Genealogy of an Idea* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Bernice Hausman, *Changing Sex: Transsexualism, Technology and the Idea of Gender* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995); Jemima Repo, *The Biopolitics of Gender* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Gill-Peterson, *Histories of the Transgender Child* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018); C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017). It is important to note that Gill-Peterson's and Snorton's genealogies reject Foucaultian methodology as being sufficient for their purposes (Gill-Peterson *Histories of the Transgender Child*, 26 and Snorton *Black on Both Sides*, 39–40).

ways of life become and remain possible, along with an account of how subject formation

affects and is affected by the forces that shape social possibilities. Thus, a Foucaultian

analysis of concrete historical conditions and the conditions for the possibility of the

givenness of particular ways of life fleshes out one of the senses of 'possibility' I intend

in this dissertation. Recall that possibility in this connection refers to both possibility as a

fundamental ontological condition of human life, as a horizon of projection that all

Daseins always have, and to a specific historical and cultural context in which Dasein

projects onto a range of possibilities that are opened up, stabilized, rendered intelligible

and repeated in a concrete nexus which conditions, but does not completely determine,

the range of an individual's projects. Foucault provides tools for thinking about this

second aspect of possibility, insofar as Foucault can be used to analyze the relationship

between the disclosure of possibilities and networks of power and knowledge that give

subjectivities determinate contours in the first instance. In other words, while

Heidegger's analysis helps us to think about what follows from thrownness as an

ontological condition, Foucault gives us tools for thinking about how we become *subjects*

in a particular context, the context into which we a thrown. Further, Foucault helps us

analyze how certain subject positions, or ways of life are given in a circumscribed

manner in the world where there are specific relationships of power, knowledge and

practice through which subjects are conditioned.

In this chapter, I will first discuss how Foucault's approach to thematizing power

relations through his analysis of *dispositifs* describes diverse sets of factors that condition

the ways in which social possibilities emerge and are given in particular times and places

for particular subjects. After describing Foucault's approach to *dispositifs* and to relevant

forms of power, I will go into more detail by discussing particular elements that tend to

comprise *dispositifs* that are relevant in the context of the dissertation. As I aimed to

show in chapter 1, it is salutary to think of gender in a formally indicative fashion as a

phenomenon consisting in a specific nexus of embodiment, understanding and practice;

this nexus in turn is related to specific social possibilities, and each of the elements of this

nexus conditions how social possibilities are disclosed. Individuals who have been

assigned a particular gender have differential access to certain social possibilities insofar

as these possibilities are not always apparent, intelligible or accessible; specifically,

social possibilities for how one ought to live gender will typically be more apparent to

non-trans people than they will to trans people, since gendered social possibilities are

disclosed on the basis of sex assignment.[2]

I want to suggest that attention to the operations of *dispositifs* helps to elucidate

the relationship between different forms of power and a subject's access to social

possibilities. In general, on the one hand, modern power relations fix subject positions

such that some subjects are socially invested while others exist on the margins of these

networks of power.[3] On the other hand, power relations make certain forms of life

possible through specific arrangements of practices, bodily comportments and ways of

knowing about or understanding given phenomena, all of which affect the subject's

capacity for pursuing certain projects and for understanding themself in certain ways.

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[2] For instance, one might live in a time and place, or be at a stage of life (childhood) where the possibilities of living differently, either as the gender one has been assigned or otherwise, do not present themselves. This is true of non-transgender and transgender people; however, trans ways of life are less apparent due to the way in which gendered ways of life are typically thought to closely correspond to sex assigned at birth, as I argued in Chapter 1.

[3] Importantly, this dissertation concerns only power relations that exist in modernity, given that the historical period of time under consideration here, which I will discuss in more detail in the next chapter, is a context beginning in the 19th century and continuing to the present.

Following Heidegger, insofar as the networks of power and knowledge Foucault describes form the pre-reflective and prethematic background against which one projects onto possibilities, these networks modulate the social field such that certain possibilities are more readily apparent and may, in fact, be more actionable. Although ways of life or activities that make them up exist diachronically across different contexts, specific arrangements of power and knowledge that emerge at specific historical times give ways of life a determinate character insofar as they change the meaning and significance assigned to them. Foucault's analyses are useful because they are helpful for describing some of the relevant nexuses of power and knowledge, such that their operations can be better understood. While alternatives to the ways of life invested by these modern power knowledge networks are obviously possible from a trans standpoint, the existence of prevailing ways of life (prevailing due to their proximity to certain nodes or points in these networks) tend to dominate and be more readily apparent in the social field, regardless of whether or not they are empirically more numerous. I will argue that when subjects find themselves in positions that are not opposed to, and easily integrated into, dominant power relations, the way in which forms of power and *dispositifs* modulate one's possibilities are less apparent.

After my summary of Foucault's understanding of *dispositifs*, I will elaborate on each of those elements of *dispositifs* that relate to gendered ways of life, namely discourse and concept formation, practices, subject formation, and the body. I should first note that none of the elements of a *dispositif* are separable in fact, insofar as *dispositifs* consist of the relations between their elements; these relations, in turn, create and maintain the conditions for the possibility for the exercise of certain forms of power and

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the production of certain forms of knowledge. By implication, it is not possible and

unwise to attempt to assign a kind of causality to any of the elements, such as discourse.

In this chapter, I will argue that subject positions end up having an analytic priority in

this connection because the focus of this investigation is how *people* do or do not have

access to certain social possibilities given specific contextual conditions. This

investigation is a philosophical one, not a sociological one, however, and this

investigation of how people do or do not have access to social possibilities is not of an

empirical nature.[4] Forms of knowledge, practices, institutions and forms of social and

political organization all have conditions of possibility that are analyzable in a

Foucaultian register. However, my analytic focus will be on those elements of *dispositifs*

that track the foci of my previous analysis in chapter 1, namely, concepts, discourse,

practices and embodiment. Further, these condition the ways in which people occupying

certain subject positions do or do not have access to certain social possibilities, or whose

access is very limited due to the multivalent nature of power's operation. Finally, I will

bring this framework into conversation with my analysis of trans ways of life. Through a

discussion of problematization and critique, I will outline the next two chapters on

sexology and trans studies.

<div align="center">What is a Dispositif?</div>

One of the upshots of Foucault's analyses of the formation of domains of

knowledge and the relationship between knowledge and power is that, for those doing

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[4] This is not to say that empirical studies and evidence cannot be relevant for thinking about social possibility in connection with trans ways of life. As I was editing the final version of this dissertation, I learned of a work of sociology that deals with social possibility medicine and discourse called *Understanding Trans Health: Discourse, Power and Possibility* (Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2018). Although this book appears to be highly relevant in connection with this chapter, and with the dissertation in general, I was unable to include a discussion of it here because I learned of it too late.

things like political philosophy and social theory, it becomes apparent that social possibility can be analyzed in terms of power. I want to note that, clearly, this is something that has been apparent to marginalized and oppressed people for a very long time. Of course power affects who has access to what social possibilities and allows for the emergence and maintenance of certain social possibilities and not others! Thus, it might seem like this consideration is redundant or not doing anything new. However, what is important to consider about Foucault's approach is that he gives us many diagnostic tools that enable us to identify specific mechanisms that affect things like subject formation, social hierarchies and knowledge production, such that we can begin to discern how shifting contextual conditions affect what is possible for whom and why. Further, Foucaultian methodology is helpful because various things that are historically specific in their relation to power, like sexuality, show up as natural and diachronically extant. Due to this fact, we can easily miss how specific features of a formation are historically contingent *and* how, as contingencies, they shape social possibilities in ways that show up as necessary or natural. Although Foucault does not use the language of social possibility to describe the results of his analyses of power, his descriptions of *dispositifs*, or "deployments", along with his diagnoses of the various mechanisms and techniques of power, can be taken to describe the ways in which possibilities for living are circumscribed in modernity by networks of power.

How does Foucault understand power? Though we often think of power as being exercised in a top-down fashion through prohibitions, something associated with what Foucault calls "sovereign" power or "juridical" power, power is something that is diffuse in the social field because it is produced in and through the relationships between

elements in the social field, including individuals (HS1 93).[5] In a piece entitled "The

Subject and Power", Foucault defines the exercise of power as "a way in which certain

actions may structure the field of other possible actions."[6] Power differs from

domination, a common way we understand power, I think, insofar as power relations do

not mean that someone is acting directly on another *person*. It differs from violence

insofar as it does not involve the level of force present in violent acts— violence either

produces passivity or resistance to be overcome through the use of more violence. Rather,

in a relationship of power, both parties are indispensable to the relation. This is because

power acts on another's actions and possible actions. While violence forecloses a field of

possibilities for action, in an extreme case, because violence results in death, in power

relations, there are fields of possibilities attached to these relations that include

"responses, reactions, results and possible inventions."[7] Insofar as power relations consist

of acting on the actions of another, they must involve free subjects: "[p]ower is exercised

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[5] "The omnipresence of power: not because it has the privilege of consolidating everything under its invincible unity, but because it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. And "Power", insofar as it is permanent, repetitious, inert, and self-reproducing, is simply the over-all effect that emerges from all these mobilities, the concatenation that rests on each of them and seeks in turn to arrest their movement. One needs to be nominalistic, no doubt: power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (HS1 93).

[6] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 4 (1982): 791.

[7] The passage that I'm paraphrasing from "The Subject and Power" is worth including here for reference: "In effect, what defines a relationship of power is that it is a mode of action which does not act directly and immediately on others. Instead, it acts upon their actions: an action upon an action, on existing actions or on those which may arise in the present or the future. A relationship of violence acts upon a body or upon things; it forces, it bends, it breaks on the wheel, it destroys, or it closes the door on all possibilities. Its opposite pole can only be passivity, and if it comes up against any resistance, it has no other option but to try to minimize it. On the other hand, a power relationship can only be articulated on the basis of two elements which are each indispensable if it is really to be a power relationship: that "the other" (the one over whom power is exercised) be thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end as a person who acts and that, faced with a relationship of power, a whole field of responses, reactions, results, and possible inventions may open up" (789).

only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments maybe realized."[8] Thus, a common reading of Foucault as a philosopher who does not leave room for the subject's freedom is a misreading.[9] If freedom were not an element of power relations, all power relations would be reducible to domination, which they are not.[10]

Dispositifs are formations that enable the exercises of power in relatively uniform and regular fashions. Although the concept of *dispositif* captures particular features of the way in which power operates, namely, though relations between specific points of inflection that are typically mutually reinforcing, the specific immanent conditions of power's application must be analyzed in order to determine the whether or not forms of power are continuous or discontinuous with other forms. Although power relations are not the only thing that determines the availability of social possibilities, they are of central importance when considering how certain ways of life are more or less available

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[8] Ibid., 790.

[9] For a discussion of the relationship between an ontological reading of the subject and Foucault's characterization of power, see Neve Gordon, "Foucault's Subject: An Ontological Reading," *Polity* 31, no. 3 (1999): 395–414. Gordon argues for combining Foucault's account of power with a Heideggerian reading of the subject (i.e. an ontological reading) to explain how it is that, while power produces subjects and constrains what they can do, resistance and agency is still possible because human beings are free, ontologically.

[10] This is one of the reasons why collapsing all instances of exercises of power into "violence" can produce analytic confusion unless one is careful to describe, specifically, what violence means or what violence does.. The labeling of all instances or interactions that involve power relations as instances of violence bleaches the concept of violence and muddies the waters, making it difficult to see how the operations of specific power relations are producing certain possibilities and effects. That is, if one finds Foucault's definition of violence convincing, the implication of calling certain power relations instances of "violence" is that, if these were in fact instances of violence, they would involve the foreclosure of possibilities rather than their circumscription. By "foreclosure", I mean the elimination of something as a possibility. For instance, certain possibilities of relating to specific others are foreclosed when someone is institutionalized or the possibility of biological reproduction is foreclosed when someone is sterilized.

in a given time and place.[11] To be clear, *dispositifs* are not the only means by which

power operates: Foucault frequently mentions techniques and mechanisms through which

power is exercised, and these are not the same thing as *dispositifs*. *Dispositifs* may

contain various techniques and mechanisms through which power is exercised. They may

also be grafted onto social forms, like the family. The reason why *dispositifs* are

important, I want to suggest, is that they are particularly intense sites through which

power flows, and tend to have more impact on the social field than particular mechanisms

and techniques taken in isolation. Further, in Foucault's genealogical work, they tend to

indicate when one or more forms of power are operating in a given context and help to

explain the way in which a particular form of power produces regular effects.

Foucault's definition of power relations as those relations in which one acts on the

actions of another is important in this connection for the following reason. It means that

power relations are not *reducible* to those that are inscribed in *dispositifs*, although, after

Foucault, these are perhaps easier to identify. Given this definition, power relations are

possibilities of human relation in general. Yet, I want to suggest, when power relations

are inscribed in *dispositifs*, they regularize the ways in which subjects act on one

another's fields of possibilities in regular fashions, such that specific forms of life or

subjectivity emerge in the nexuses of different points of contact between subjects. So, an

understanding of how the different relevant *dispositifs* that condition trans ways of life

will serve as a useful diagnostic framework for thinking about how ways of living gender

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[11] Material conditions are, obviously, important to consider when thinking about social possibility. However, they will not be under consideration in this dissertation. Interpersonal relationships which, in a Heideggerian register, would be called "more authentic" or "authentic solicitude" are also important considerations. In this chapter, I do not mean to imply that the social field is so thoroughly saturated with power relations such that resistance to the possibility-effects of power is not possible. It clearly is possible, as I will aim to show in chapter 4. However, resistance to the way in which power modulates social possibilities always occurs against this backdrop of forces that circumscribe one's agency and affect the conditions under which one will be or become intelligible as a subject.

are conditioned. At the same time, this understanding of power relations leaves room for those relations that depart from the normalizing forms reproduced in *dispositifs*.

In the interview titled "Confessions of the Flesh," Foucault describes in detail what he takes a *dispositif* to be. He describes three aspects or features of *dispositifs* that clarify how they operate in the social field and why they are able to do so. The term *dispositif* is meant to pick out, first of all, the "system of relations" that obtain between, "a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical moral and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid" (PK 194). Since *dispositifs* are "heterogeneous ensembles", the elements of which they consist may be surprising, given that their own internal rationalities may tell a different story about how and why they are arranged. Foucault, in both his archeological and genealogical works, aims to show how it is that they are possible and how the possibility of their arrangements may depend on things that are not readily apparent at first blush.

For example, in *The History of Sexuality, vol.1*, Foucault responds to the intellectual commonplace that sexuality is characterized by repression and a prohibition against talking about it.[12] In this work, he famously demonstrates that, to the contrary, in order for sexuality to emerge as an object of knowledge, this required a great deal of speaking about sex. Understanding sexuality in terms of repression, furthermore,

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[12] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction,* trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990). Hereafter, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1* will be cited in text as HS1. He also discusses why he takes the concepts of 'suppression' and 'repression' to be methodologically inadequate for his purposes in *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France 1974–1975,* trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2003): 236. Hereafter, *Abnormal* is cited in text as AB.

obscures the way in which it has, over the last two or three hundred years, become a privileged site for the application of different forms of power (HS1 92–93). Rather than being repressed and silenced, it is constantly called to mind and involved in discursive exchanges modeled on the historically prior technology of Christian confession. Thus, part of the difficulty in understanding how *dispositifs* operate has to do with the way in which formations integral to their functioning, like the classification of types of sexual deviance and sexual deviants in the *dispositif* of sexuality, are made intelligible in everyday ways and through various knowledge production practices that obscure how they are actually functioning in a given ensemble of power and knowledge.

Dispositifs are also characterized, in the second place, by the "nature of the connection that can exist between these heterogeneous elements" and Foucault attempts to track the changes that these relations undergo over time (HS1 194–195). *Dispositifs* are importantly not static, and it is important to pay careful attention to the interrelation between the elements of a *dispositif*. Lastly, the "major function" of *dispositifs* is to respond, at a particular historically specific juncture, to "an *urgent need*"; they therefore have a "dominant strategic function" (HS1 195).[13] In various places, Foucault describes

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[13] See also Michel Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1979,* Colin Gordon, ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 194–228. Hereafter, *Power/Knowledge* is abbreviated PK. In this interview, Foucault says regarding the term *dispositif* that, "What I'm trying to pick out with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical moral and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. *Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements* [emphasis added]. Secondly, what I am trying to identify in this apparatus is precisely the nature of the connection that can exist between these heterogeneous elements. Thus, a particular discourse can figure at one time as the programme of an institution, and at another it can function as a means of justifying or masking a practice which itself remains silent, or as a secondary re-interpretation of this practice, opening out for it a new field of rationality. In short, between these elements, whether discursive or non-discursive, there is a sort of interplay of shifts of position and modifications of function which can also vary very widely. Thirdly, I understand by the term 'apparatus' a sort of—shall we say—formation which has as its major function at a given historical moment that of responding to an *urgent need* [emphasis original]. The apparatus thus has a dominant strategic function. This may have been,

the ways in which things like epidemics served as the occasions for the development of things like disciplinary mechanisms and mechanisms of security. These mechanisms are maintained after their initial field of application is no longer a problem, as in the case of epidemics, and they become implicated in other arrangements for control and management of individuals and populations. For example, the internment of lepers is no longer an urgency, but the practice of confining people deemed threatening to the social body persists in the prison system and its subsidiaries, like half-way houses, court ordered detention facilities, etc. The production of certain forms of knowledge in *dispositifs* also means that problems are produced, or things can become problems for a *dispositif,* and the application of certain mechanisms of power and control happens as a result. For instance, the problem of degeneracy and heredity only emerged as a problem due to the development of biological racism in the 19th century, and thus eugenic practices, like sterilization, were put in place to respond to the urgency of racial degeneracy. These urgencies, then, should be understood as urgencies from the perspective of a form of power and a form of knowledge. They are not, that is, urgencies in some transcendental sense.

For the most part, I will use the *dispositif* of sexuality as my example throughout this chapter, though I may mention others here and there. Very briefly, the *dispositif* of sexuality is a power formation that acts on individuals and populations through the monitoring and control of bodies, desires, pleasures, forms of relating to others and through discourse. By sexuality, however, Foucault does not mean a natural feature or set of features all human beings posses (e.g. sex drive, sexual orientation, sexual identity,

for example, the assimilation of a floating population found to be burdensome for an essentially mercantilist economy: there was a strategic imperative acting here as the matrix for an apparatus which gradually undertook the control or subjection of madness, mental illness and neurosis" (PK 194–195).

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etc.). Rather, knowledge production practices that make up part of the *dispositif* of

sexuality *produced* sexuality as a scientific object beginning in the 19th century.

Subsequently, the effects of this *dispositif* on subjects through various techniques

inscribed 'sexuality' as a putatively natural and essential feature of subjects. Foucault

explains how sexuality functions within the *dispositif* of sexuality in the following way:

> …sexuality was defined as being "by nature": a domain susceptible to
> pathological processes, and hence one calling for therapeutic and normalizing
> interventions; a field of meanings to decipher; the site of processes concealed by
> specific mechanisms; a focus of indefinite causal relations; and an obscure speech
> (*parole*) that had to be ferreted out and listened to (HS1 68).

Once sexuality was constituted as a scientific object, this allowed for the establishment of

a domain of normality and abnormality in connection with it. Sexuality could then

function as a site for medical and psychiatric interventions aimed at ensuring the health of

individuals (insofar as sexual practices affected or were thought to affect the health of

individuals) and populations (insofar as sex is the means by which humans biologically

reproduce). The knowledge production practices that make up part of the *dispositif* of

sexuality were, in turn, made possible by specific forms of speech, along with the

recording and interpretation of these forms of speech.

 My reason for using the dispositif as my main example in this chapter is that it appears to

be the case that the *dispositif* of sexuality is the one from which gender, as a scientific

object and feature of subjectivity, emerged.[14] Though sexuality is not the only *dispositif*,

it is also one of the most diffuse in our current context.

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[14] It is unclear whether or not gender is part of the *dispositif* of sexuality or if it ends up being its own
dispositif. It is also contentious and difficult to think about whether or not gender is reducible to being a
dispositif or part of one. This is due, I think, to the way in which the concept of gender, its functioning as a
principle of social organization and its integrality to identity and subject formation makes it difficult to
conceive of it as historically contingent. This is compounded by the fact that it stands in relation to sex and
sexuality, both of which are also often understood as not being historically contingent. Jemima Repo has
argued that gender is an apparatus, or *dispositif* in her book *The Biopolitics of Gender* (Repo 2016, 25) and

Importantly, *dispositifs* exist in relation to other *dispositifs*, and they also exist in

relation to social forms. Foucault's discussion of the relationship between the *dispositifs*

of alliance and sexuality, and the relationship each has to the family in *History of*

Sexuality, Volume I is a great place to look in order to become clear on these

relationships. The *dispositif* of alliance is "a system of marriage, of fixation and

development of kinship ties, of transmission of names and possessions" (HS1 106). The

family is the "interchange" of the *dispositifs* of sexuality and alliance since both of these

dispositifs operate on and through the relationships between family members (HS1 108).

Dispositifs may be inscribed in social forms, like the family, but these social forms are

not necessarily reducible to *dispositifs* or wholly produced by them. Further, social forms

can be sites where different *dispositifs* are operating and in which they overlap. Just as

the *dispositifs* are not the same as the social form of the family, neither are the *dispositifs*

of alliance and sexuality reducible to each other (HS1 106–108). The *dispositif* of alliance

is not superseded by that of sexuality; instead, the *dispositif* of alliance created the

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in the article "The Biopolitical Birth of Gender: Social Control, Hermaphroditism, and the New Sexual Apparatus," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 38, no. 3 (2013): 228–244. It seems very likely, in any case, that gender is either an object that emerges as an element of the *dispositif* of sexuality or a *dispositif* that has sexuality as the conditions for its possibility. Although I agree with Repo on the status of gender as being either a *dispositif* or an element of one, a genealogy focuses on the emergence of transsexuality as a scientific object and the transsexual subject position as a site of normalizing practice is required, in my view, to get a better picture of how gender as a *dispositif,* or part of one, functions. While a genealogy of transsexuality does exist, Hausman's *Changing Sex*, it is reasonable in my view to read this text with a hermeneutics of suspicion, given that the book as a whole evinces a hermeneutics of suspicion *towards trans people*. Consequently, a genealogy that is focused on transsexuality (broadly construed) *and* psycho-medical knowledge production practices would be more adequate for taking into account the perspectives of trans people is warranted. Such a genealogy would, ideally, attend specifically to the biopolitical situation trans people face. Though the term is frequently used in trans studies, more focused analyses are warranted. In other words, it is not sufficient to describe the conditions trans people face as biopolitical. Rather it is necessary to attend to specific mechanisms in a more careful and nuanced way.

conditions for the *dispositif* of sexuality, and the two have subsequently operated in

conjunction with one another (HS1 108).[15]

Elements of a dispositif may be intensified as the result of being the point upon

which different forces of the *dispositif* operate via the different techniques of which the

dispositif consists, or due to their involvement in multiple *dispositifs*. An example of the

first case is how the body, as a nexus of different operations of the *dispositif* of sexuality,

is intensified through its being an object of knowledge and "an element in relations of

power" (HS1 107).[16] The body is the object of techniques of production, as well as the

object of disciplinary practices meant to ensure the development of normal sexuality. An

example of the second form of intensification is how the family is intensified because it

serves as a nexus for the interchange and operation of different, co-conditioning and

reinforcing *dispositifs,* those of alliance and sexuality (HS1 110).[17] So, it is not the case

that only one *dispositif* operates at a time; *dispositifs* are not the same thing as social

forms and *dispositifs* do not produce social forms. The reality is much more complicated

because what this means is that *dispositifs* are involved in reciprocal relationships with

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[15] "'Sexuality' was taking shape, born of a technology of power that was originally focused on alliance. Since then, it has not ceased to operate in conjunction with a system of alliance on which it depended for support" (HS1 108).

[16] It is unclear if Foucault means anything specific by the intensification he refers to here, i.e. anything beyond the normal sense of the term.

[17] Foucault makes similar points in *Discipline and Punish* with respect to the technique of internment developed in response to the urgency of lepers threatening the social body and the techniques developed in response to plague. In the case of plague, he writes that, "it called for multiple separations, individualizing distributions, an organization in depth of surveillance and control, an intensification and ramification of power" (DP 198). That is, power is intensified and ramified through the application of multiple techniques in attempts to control the spread of plague, as the quarantine protocols he discusses include not only sequestration (i.e. the "segmentation" of the space of the town), but also involved surveillance, a hierarchy among those who were permitted to go outside their residences during the quarantine, procedures for distributing food and rules for who could leave or enter the quarantined area. Although Foucault doesn't use the language of intensity or intensification to describe the eventual convergence and combination of techniques of internment and disciplinary techniques developed in response to plagues, he does remark that they do begin to converge after a time (DP 199).

one another (often but not necessarily reinforcing one another) and with social forms and individuals which have their tactical involvements with *dispositifs*. The family is a "tactical component" in the *dispositif* of sexuality, for instance (HS1 111). Lastly, elements of *dispositifs*, whether bodies or social units like the family, are intensified through their involvement as elements within different *dispositifs*.

I want to suggest that *dispositifs* involve the modulation of social possibilities, and centrally involve them. This is true insofar as power conditions what kinds of relationships individuals can have with each other, produces formations, like sexuality, that mediate an individual's own self-relation and invests ways of life or establishes conditions under which certain ways of life meet with resistance. Not only does power, through the operation of *dispositifs*, circumscribe the range of possible ways of life, it also makes certain new ways of life possible as effects. Both of these, what could provisionally be called "possibility-effects" tend to be most obvious in those *dispositifs* that have institutional components, such as schools and psychiatric hospitals.[18]Importantly, *dispositifs* are not reducible to the institutions that form part of their nexus.

However, the ways in which *dispositifs* condition social possibilities is, I think, less obvious when it comes to those *dispositifs* that are relatively diffuse and not readily locatable in particular institutional contexts, like the *dispositif* of sexuality. This is because the way in which *dispositifs* condition social possibilities has to do with the form

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[18] There are no psychiatric patients without psychiatric hospitals, though people were characterized as mad prior to the emergence of the discipline of psychiatry, along with its system of categorization and practices made possible by psychiatric hospitals. Asking a child, "What grade are you in?" is descriptive only in a context in which there are schools with grades, etc.

of power that flows through them, and whether or not this form of power is exercised through more or less subtle mechanisms.

In his middle works, Foucault analyzes various forms of power. Here, I'll consider sovereign power, disciplinary power and biopower. While sovereign power is the oldest form—disciplinary power emerged after it, and biopower, a combination of an "anatomo-politics of the human body" and a "biopolitics of the population," emerged after disciplinary power—these forms of power do not supersede or replace one another. Instead, they overlap temporally and their mechanisms sometimes overlap (HS1 139). I want to suggest here that the *dispositifs* through which each form of power operates modulate social possibilities in some way.

For instance, since sovereign power utilizes demonstrations of the sovereign's power over life, such as public executions, it is fairly obvious how sovereign power limits one's possibilities: plot against the sovereign, or contradict the power of the state, and you may risk death.[19] Alternatively, if you break the law, you'll be sought by the police, placed in detention, subjected to a trial, etc. In this way, sovereign power circumscribes a domain of possible actions that are prohibited. Disciplinary power modulates social possibilities in more subtle, but still fairly obvious ways[20]: not only do the distribution of bodies in space, the prescription and proscription of movements, the management of time and the deployment of individual bodies as part of collectives in tactical deployments limit social possibilities insofar as they are ways of controlling what subjects do and do

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[19] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 7–9. Hereafter, *Discipline and Punish* is cited in the text as DP. At the beginning of this work*,* Foucault discusses the execution of Damiens in graphic detail; this is an oft-quoted example of how sovereign power acts on the body of the condemned, demonstrating the sovereign's power over life through torture and spectacle.

[20] Now that Foucault's theory of disciplinary power has been widely disseminated in academic circles, that is.

not do with their bodies in given spaces at given times, but they also give subjects certain

capacities for action that they did not have previously. Further, the kind of training

necessary for functioning well in certain institutional settings will have an effect on what

kinds of possibilities one can access. For instance, a student who is more disciplined will

do better in a school that requires certain kinds of discipline (sitting still, completing

assignments on time, conducting themself in certain ways, being able to concentrate for

long periods of time, being able to sit and take a test etc.) and doing "well" in school in

turn affects the access one has to further schooling and different kinds of employment. To

use another example, being honorably discharged from the U.S. military carries little or

no social stigma, whereas being dishonorably discharged does, because the way in which

one is discharged is taken to mean something about the character of the person rather the

functioning of the military as a disciplinary apparatus. Finally, the ways in which power

modulates social possibilities through *dispositifs* is even more subtle when it comes to

biopower, which is comprised of anatomo-politics, inherited from the temporally

antecedent disciplinary power, and biopolitics, which regulates and intervenes at the

population level in order to ensure the life and well-being of some populations at the

expense of others. Because biopower's target is life, both at the level of individual bodies

and at the level of populations, its techniques are more diffuse in the social body and less

obvious than those of sovereign or disciplinary power. So too are its effects on

individuals and populations more subtle. Through the deployment of the norm and

through techniques of normalization, anatomo-politics modulates social possibilities

through the management of individual health and sexuality, while biopolitics includes

regulatory mechanisms that invest certain populations with life, while others are exposed to death due to relative neglect and lack of investment.

While the deployment of norms or standards for shaping the conduct of individuals in regularized fashions, or "normation" is integral to the functioning of anatomo-politics, one of the integral components of biopolitics is the deployment of the norm and the mechanism of normalization.[21] The statistical norm deployed in normalization, made possible by the collection of data and the emergence of statistics as a discipline, enabled the establishment of a domain of continuous variation that included normality and abnormality.[22] The norm that techniques of normalization deploy, then, is a norm that establishes who is counts as normal and who counts as abnormal and in what respect, such that one either is or is not a candidate for various interventions and forms of control. This differs from the kind of norm deployed disciplinary *dispositifs,* which, in turn, are part of the anatomo-politics element of biopower; in those cases, the norm refers to a standard of conduct or comportment that individuals are trained to conform to.

In *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault writes,

> Disciplinary normalization [i.e. "normation"] consists first of all in positing a model, an optimal model that is constructed in terms of a certain result, and the operation of disciplinary normalization consists in trying to get people, movements, and actions to conform to this model, the normal being precisely that which can conform to this norm, and the abnormal that which is incapable of conforming to the norm. In other words, it is not the normal and the abnormal that is fundamental and primary in disciplinary normalization, it is the norm (STP 57).

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[21] Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures as the Collège de France, 1977–1978, trans. Graham Burchell* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 57. Hereafter, *Security, Territory, Population* is cited in text as STP.

[22] Mary Beth Mader, "Foucault and Social Measure," *Journal of French Philosophy* 17, no.1 (Spring 2007): 7.

In other words, the disciplining of the body that is a key component of anatomo-politics deploys a norm or standard that is based on a model of conduct, conformity to which is the goal of disciplinary training. This norm is different from the statistical norm deployed in normalization, which is biopolitical and establishes a scale of normality and abnormality at the population level via the use of statistics. Normalization, in contrast to normation, involves the measurement and quantification of bodies.[23] It is through the creation of a norm, which is derived from quantification and statistical measurement, that social technologies for the management of bodies are derived. The norm, as something derived from statistics, is something that is descriptive, but it is also prescriptive because, in its application in normalizing techniques, it is able to serve a regulatory, biopolitical function. Biopolitical projects aim to bring individuals into line with norms via normalization in order to establish and maintain population-level regularities. In other words, the regularizing function of anatomo-politics acts on individual bodies, movements, conducts, etc. via normation, and the regularizing function of biopolitics acts on the level of populations via normalization.

As power's operations become more and more diffuse in the social field, they become less and less perceptible. For instance, there is a progression in the obviousness of power's operation from the more to the less obvious in the shifts from sovereign power, to disciplinary power, to biopower. Phenomenologically, the obscuring of power's operation may lead to the impression that power is not being exercised in as intense a fashion as it was in the past and it may even lead to the impression that it is not being exercised at all. We may also be unaware of the way in which power is being exercised through us and of the ways in which power's productive function gives us access to

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[23] Ibid., 6.

certain ways of life. For instance, the way in which mechanisms of discipline are brought to bear on prisoners by prison guards is a more obvious form of surveillance and control than parents monitoring the development of their child's way of living gender, and correcting behavior if the behavior does not conform to standards of normalcy. However, Foucault thinks there is continuity between power's technologies or mechanisms, even if their application is not obvious or isomorphic.

In the rest of this section, I will discuss the three most relevant forms of power for thinking about social possibilities and trans ways of life—sovereign power, disciplinary power and biopower—and how each affects social possibilities through various mechanisms, *dispositifs* and techniques. In doing so, I aim to show how, in more or less subtle ways, power conditions what possibilities are available, and how these mechanisms, techniques and *dispositifs* make some ways of life possible while foreclosing others, or making them difficult to take up.

<p style="text-align:center">Sovereign Power, Disciplinary Power and Biopower</p>

Here, I will briefly discuss the relationship between *dispositifs* and these three forms of power, disciplinary power and biopower, and their corollary forms of political rationality. For Foucault, power is not limited to the sovereign power, disciplinary power and biopower, he mentions other forms of power as well, such as medical power (AB 251) and psychiatric power (PP 133). However, here I will focus on the three-fold division between sovereign power, disciplinary power and biopower, for the sake of brevity. Importantly, the different forms of power, though they emerge at different times in different contexts, are continuous, though the *dispositifs* and mechanisms though which

they flow undergo modifications when different forms of power operate in tandem in at a particular site.

Sovereign Power

Sovereign power is the form of power we tend to think of when we think of 'power'. It is often exercised in a top-down fashion. Sovereign power operates through the police, laws and administration. The sovereign, according to Foucault, has the power to "let live or make die."[24] According to social contract theory, individuals agree to a social contract in order to preserve their lives; consequently, the sovereign ensures the preservation of life in a given society (SMD 241). However, in the event that sovereignty is threatened, that someone poses a threat to the state, the sovereign retains the right to kill whoever breaches the contract and threatens society. Sovereign power, clearly, has been around for centuries. Though disciplinary power and biopower succeed sovereign power in time (that is, they are more recent forms of power) they do not *supersede* sovereign power, rendering it obsolete or vestigial. Rather, we begin to see, in certain cases, combined or concatenated forms of power. For instance, our current forms of incarceration are possible because the state retains the right to punish violations of the law, on the one hand, and because disciplinary mechanisms, architecture, training, and forms of security, on the other, make the specific forms of punishment possible, and this form of punishment produces certain effects. Correlatively, incarceration is able to produce other effects once someone is released due to administrative mechanisms that are made possible by state power (i.e. the maintenance of a police force, administrations in

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[24] Michel Foucault. *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976,* trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003): 241. Hereafter, *"Society Must be Defended"* is cited in text as SMD.

charge of monitoring people after they are released from prison). Incarceration is also a paradigmatic instance of the exercise of disciplinary power too, however, something Foucault discusses at length in *Discipline and Punish*. Therefore, incarceration is a practice involving institutions and applications of sovereign as well as disciplinary power. In order for it to produce the effects it does, then, both sovereign and disciplinary power are deployed. In this way, it is a practice through which both forms of power are deployed.

The way in which *dispositifs* of sovereign power affects what is socially possible is relatively obvious. Insofar as sovereign power establishes and enforces laws, there are limits to what can be done in a given context, insofar as violations of the law will be punished. However, this is context dependent, as laws may not be uniformly enforced, nor may punishments for violating the law be uniformly meted out. Administration and bureaucracy, which depend on sovereign power for their relevance and efficacy, affect the ways in which individuals or populations access certain possibilities. For instance, one must present a state issued ID in order to vote in Tennessee and you have to be a registered voter. The way in which identity documents, administration and bureaucratic procedures affect access to social possibilities are particularly important considerations when thinking about how these mechanisms affect trans people's access to social possibilities, specifically.

As Dean Spade argues at length in his book, *Normal Life,* "[f]or trans people, administrative gender classification and the problems it creates for those who are difficult to classify or are misclassified is a major vector of violence and diminished life chances

and life spans."[25] This is, briefly, due to the fact that, in the US, identification documents track gender, but policies and practices around changing gender markers on different documents vary. Consequently, discrepancies between identity documents can affect access to employment, affect people's access to sex-segregated facilities, like homeless shelters, and can affect healthcare access, since discrepancies in gender markers on forms of identification can indicate someone's trans status.[26]

Though this is only one of the ways in which *dispositifs* and technologies of sovereign power can affect access to possibilities, we can derive a schematic account from this example. Sovereign mechanisms affect social possibilities insofar as certain things are demanded of individuals as sovereign subjects. Further, the particular forms of violence and exclusion that trans people face when incarcerated is ultimately occasioned by the state mechanism of punishment and is, therefore, partially an effect of sovereign power. One notable difference between sovereign power, disciplinary power and

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[25] Dean Spade, *Normal Life*, 77.

[26] It is important to note that, though Spade uses a Foucaultian notion of power in *Normal Life*, he does not discuss his project vis-à-vis Foucault's, and therefore does not conduct an analysis in terms of the different forms of power, as I am doing here. I think that, provisionally, the mechanism with which Spade is concerned, namely, forms of state-issued identification, would fall under the purview of sovereign power. However, it is clearly related to biopower as well, insofar as changes to gender markers often require medical and/or psychiatric interventions. Given that Spade is a legal scholar and the aim of Spade's book is to argue for the urgent necessity of reforms to administrative systems such that trans people's exposure to "administrative violence", which results in the limiting of possibilities for sustaining trans life, is reduced, it makes sense that he does not pursue the project of diagnosing which forms of power are operating in the context he is describing using a Foucaultian rubric (Spade 2015, 15). Provisionally, I think it makes sense to classify administration and legal documentation as sovereign functions, if not biopolitical functions or mechanisms as well, since the way in which identity documents end up limiting access to social possibilities has to do with issues and policies that are at the administrative level, or state level. Further, the information they track is meant to reflect someone's status as a sovereign subject, rather than a disciplinary, biopolitical, psychiatric or medical subject.

biopower, each of which I will discuss at greater length, is that sovereign power *does not*

include the power to constitute subjects, whereas the latter two do.[27]

Disciplinary Power

Disciplinary power is a form of power that acts primarily on the movements,

orientations, and spatial locations of bodies. Disciplinary power is not identical to either

the institutions nor the apparatuses through which it operates, but is rather a "physics" or

an "anatomy of power" (DP 215). Disciplinary power produces effects via the

disciplines.[28] A straightforward example of a kind of discipline is military training: it

involves bodily training, coordination with other bodies, specific spatial arrangements of

bodies and relationships between bodies and space, such that it produces certain

efficiencies. Discipline is not purely restrictive — it is also productive. Those who have

undergone some kind of disciplinary training, which is, currently, nearly everyone in our

society, can attest to the fact that discipline, though it restricts the range of activity,

produces certain capacities that are made possible by it. For instance, a child who is

disciplined in school to sit still, pay attention, talk in turn and take notes develops certain

kinds of capacities as a result, capacities that are necessary in order to be well integrated

into the institution of the school. Being able to do well in school, in turn, gives one access

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[27] McWhorter aptly points this out in *Racism and Sexual Oppression*: "Juridical power [i.e. sovereign power] operates, then, on subjectivities as already constituted; it does not seek to reshape them in any way. Nor does it seek any knowledge of their interiority. What is to be known is the law and whether the law has been breached; what is to be seen is the authority of the lawgiver and the judge" (RSO 49)

[28] In *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault gives the following description of "disciplines": "These methods [disciplinary methods], which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-unity, might be called 'disciplines'. Many disciplinary methods had long been in existence – in monasteries, armies, workshops. But in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the disciplines became general formulas of domination" (DP 137).

to various possibilities that one would not otherwise have access to, depending on how long one stays in school, of course. One of the key functions of disciplinary power is the management of multiplicities: it introduces order into masses of people, breaking up groups, serializing individuals, fixing subject positions and, in so doing, it aims to neutralize possible modes of resistance to the exercise of its forces (DP 219).

Importantly, one of the effects of disciplinary mechanisms is their internalization by subjects. Consider the Panopticon, an initially hypothetical and later real architectural plan in which a group of serialized individuals thinks that they are being watched from a central location which produced specific effects on individuals whether they were being watched or not.[29] The goal of the panopticon, for instance, is not to create a situation in which each individual is actually surveilled by someone else.[30] Rather, the effect of panopticism that is achieved through the unidirectionality of the gaze from the panoptic tower is the internalization of the possibility of being watched by another; it does so by establishing a field of visibility to which all are, in principle, subject. Once subjects internalize this disciplinary mechanism, they take it with them wherever they go. In this way, discipline produces specific forms of subjection, whether the relationship these subjections are predicated upon is real or fictitious. Foucault summarizes the process whereby the panoptic mechanism is internalized in the following way: "He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection" (DP 202–203).

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[29] Jeremy Bentham, *The Panopticon Writings* (New York: Verso Books, 1995), 35–37.

[30] Though, with technological advancements this seems to be increasingly more possible!

The disciplines produce a certain kind of subjection at the bodily level, which Foucault calls the "docile body"; the docile body is the power-effect of the small-scale exercise of constraint over bodily forces, via the management of comportment and movements (DP 137–138). The kind of bodily coercion exercised over the body is constant, and the bodies of those subjected by disciplinary power are under constant observation. The result of this form of discipline is that,

> In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection. If economic exploitation separates the force and the product of labour, let us say that disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination (DP 138)

If we imagine the relationship between bodies and the *dispositifs* of discipline in which they are located as a kind of circuit, *dispositifs* draw off energy from individual bodies, introduce uniformity and constraint on the body's gestures, movements and comportment, and these constraints serve as the conditions for the body to be capacitated by the disciplinary dispositif or mechanism. The energy that *dispositifs* extract from docile bodies in turn reinforces the disciplinary apparatus and this extraction of energy enables it to continue to exist. Without workers, there are no factories, without pupils, no schools, without soldiers, no military, etc.

We can also think of disciplines as creating spaces within the social field in which training, correction, alteration of behavior, monitoring of individuals can occur, and where relationships between individuals can be modified. To use the example of a school again, the classroom is a site of training, correction, behavior modification, and monitoring for individual students. There is, further, a set of fixed and specific

relationships that are supposed to obtain between students and between the students and the teacher. Deviation from the disciplinary norms of the classroom, if it cannot be corrected through other channels, is ultimately punished. Further, certain disciplinary *dispositifs*, techniques and mechanisms create the conditions for the possibility of certain divisions within a given field, such as a workplace or factory.[31] Since there are certain options only available to people within certain positions in a hierarchy (receiving a wage vs. receiving a salary in a company, for instance), these hierarchies affect social possibilities to the extent that they establish relationships between certain conditions of conduct, activity, docility and training and accessing certain possibilities, with their own capacitating function. The possibility of being in a position to access these possibilities is used, in turn, as a regulatory mechanism that reinforces the normalizing or goal directed function of certain activities, conducts and forms of training.[32]

The way in which disciplinary power, its *dispositifs*, techniques and mechanisms, inflect social possibilities is a bit less obvious than how sovereign power does this, but it is still relatively easy to discern once one knows what to look for. The effects disciplinary power has on social possibilities, the "possibility-effects" of the disciplines, can be

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[31] In an lecture entitled "The Mesh of Power", Foucault says that "[w]ithout the discipline of the workshop, which is to say, without hierarchy, without surveillance, without the appearance of foremen, without the timed control of movements, it would not have been possible to achieve a division of labor" ("Mesh of Power" 8).

[32] This shows up clearly in corporate hierarchies and institutional hierarchies that are designed on corporate models, as well as in schools. It is obvious that not every student can be at the top of the class, but in principle, every student should strive to be according to certain institutional rationalities. Being at the top of the class may have certain privileges associated with it, students may receive awards that have a kind of currency when it comes to trying to access a good school in the next stage of schooling, etc. In corporate settings, this mechanism is nearly bald, though corporate discourses can obscure the baldness of this mechanism by appealing to affective registers. For instance, moving up in a company may motivate certain employees to work harder, though there are too few jobs at the next level of the hierarchy for all of the employees at a lower level to eventually get these jobs. This situation applies *mutatis mutandis* to academia.

grouped into at least three more or less distinct categories, though their effects may overlap in specific case and be mutually reinforcing.

First of all, disciplines, through the disciplining of bodies, affect what one's body can do, condition the relationship one's body has to other bodies and the relationship one has to one's own body. While I cannot explore each of these effects in detail for the sake of time, it should be clear that these follow as consequences from how disciplinary regimes operate and the kinds of effects they have on individual bodies as bodies subjected to discipline. The internalization of disciplinary mechanisms means that these effects are produced in contexts where they are not coerced from the outside. In fact, internalization, arguably, produces greater regularity of these effects. The effects of discipline on comportment may travel from local contexts into others.[33]

Second, disciplinary power modulates social possibilities by breaking up multiplicities of people, atomizing the individuals in the multiplicity and dispersing them into fields in which they stand in specific relation to apparatuses of power and knowledge. Foucault mentions that this is one of the ways in which discipline "neutral[izes] the effects of counter-power" (DP 219). What I take the upshot of the breaking up of multiplicities to entail is that it is a strategy for foreclosing alternative forms of social organization, and their corollary forms of relation between individuals,

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[33] For instance, I worked at Starbucks for about a year and a half, enough time to pick up the disciplinary comportment of that job. One of the things we used to do was say "behind" when walking behind someone so they wouldn't bump into us (especially if they were carrying something hot). For a few years afterwards, I would still say "behind" if I was walking by while someone was doing something in the kitchen, even though this practice really only makes sense as part of a functional arrangement where people are moving quickly and risk bumping into each other often. Another example of this is when people perform various chores, such as folding clothes, out of a habit that has formed as a result of military training.

that could establish and maintain different social possibilities than the ones that establish

and maintain the ways of life fostered by discipline.[34]

Thirdly, discipline fixes subject positions in the social field, such that they serve

as productive forces for the production and reproduction of disciplinary *dispositifs* and

techniques. The emergence of fixed subject positions is a result of the regularizing and

serializing functions of discipline. Arguably, what it means to be a prisoner, for example,

changes after the advent of panopticism, serial confinement in cells and other carceral

techniques. While modern and pre-modern prisons share some features, namely, the

limitations on movement and action imposed through incarceration and the removal of

some individuals from the social body for a certain period of time, carceral disciplinary

techniques produce new forms of subjection through mechanisms like the panopticon.

Thus, the fixing of subject positions, on my reading, does not simply have to do with the

external limitations placed on action in certain contexts. Rather, it also has to do with the

way in which discipline aims at the internalization of its mechanisms such that subjects

do what they are supposed to do, in simple terms, without external constriction or

coercion. In other words, the fixing of subject positions means that subjects will, after

internalizing certain disciplinary mechanisms, take up certain ways of life as an effect of

discipline's fixing function. The internalization of disciplinary mechanisms is key:

through the internalization of disciplinary mechanisms, it becomes no longer necessary to

forcibly block certain social possibilities and prevent subjects from accessing them.

Instead, I want to suggest, subjects, having been subjected through disciplinary

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[34] Foucault writes that "It [discipline] must also master all the forces that are formed from the very constitution of an organized multiplicity; it must neutralize the effects of counter-power that spring from them and which form a resistance to the power that wishes to dominate it: agitations, revolts, spontaneous organizations, coalitions – anything that may establish horizontal conjunctions" (DP 219).

mechanisms, will simply not take up certain social possibilities and, over time, the contingent forms of discipline and institutions through which disciplinary mechanisms are exercised may appear to be the only possible social options.[35]

Biopower

A third form of power emerged, beginning in the 17th or 18th century[36], which Foucault calls "biopower". While sovereign power, for Foucault, consists in the power to "make die or let live", biopower is the power to "*foster life* or *disallow it* to the point of death" (HS1 138, emphasis original). This shift in the operation of power, however, is no mere rearrangement of the terms "life" and "death". Instead, biopower is a form of power that operates on an increasingly minute level of detail, while simultaneously operating on a massive scale (SMD 249). In HS1, Foucault writes that there were two "poles" around which two distinctive but interrelated forms of power over life formed: "The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constituted the two poles around which the organization of power over life was deployed" (HS1 139; see also SMD 253).[37]

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[35] In Ahmedian terms, I want to suggest, the internalization of disciplinary mechanisms as a function of subjection fixes certain orientations. It is possible for these orientations to become part of a phenomenological background insofar as the internalization of discipline happens, often, imperceptibly. In times of conscious adoption, for instance, when one consciously adopts norms of gendered comportment that one does not tend towards or in instances in which there is breakdown in a particular practice (a machine breaks, one injures oneself, etc.), these "disciplinary noemata" (my term), or the way in which discipline pre-reflectively structures our orientations towards objects and other people, may appear.

[36] Foucault cites the 17th century as the beginning of both disciplinary power and biopower in HS1, while in the 17 March 1976 lecture of SMD, he cites the 18th century as the beginning of the formations of these two types of power (HS1 139, SMD 249).

[37] Here is the full quote, for reference: "One of these poles—the first to be formed, it seems—centered on the body as machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the *disciplines:* an *anatomo-politics of the human body.* The second, formed somewhat later, focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: the propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause

Biopower operates, via disciplinary mechanisms, on the level of individual bodies while simultaneously operating at the level of the population and human life *qua* species.[38]

How does biopower invest some forms of life while exposing others to death? For one thing, part of biopower's power over life consists in measures meant to foster the health of the population. Biopower's domain includes, therefore, public hygiene, demographic information regarding births and deaths, natural processes that incapacitate individuals, like old age, "accidents, infirmities and various anomalies", as well as issues affecting the environment surrounding cities and towns insofar as these conditions could lead to epidemics (SMD 244–245). In short, "biopolitics will derive its knowledge from, and define its power's field of intervention in terms of, the birth rate, mortality rate, various biological disabilities, and the effects of the environment" (SMD 245). There are various techniques involved in accomplishing the fostering of health, including disciplinary techniques, medicalization, the neutralization of potential threats and hazards, forecasts and demography, and security mechanisms meant to protect the population (SMD 245–246). In general, one of the things these mechanisms are meant to control for are "aleatory events" (SMD 246). I think it is necessary to take a moment to emphasize the way in which biopolitical mechanisms are meant to respond to these aleatory events, or the aleatory dimension of social life, since this point is, I think, crucial for understanding the way in which biopower and biopolitics modulates the field of social possibilities. Further, the way in which the mechanisms of biopower are directed toward

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these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls: a biopolitics of the population.* The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constituted the two poles around which the organization of power over life was deployed" (HS1 139, emphasis original).

[38] On species being as the object of scientific racism, see Mary Beth Mader, "Modern Living and Vital Race: Foucault and the Science of Life," *Foucault Studies* 12 (October 2011): 97–112.

controlling the aleatory dimension of social life is relevant for considering biopower and biopolitics in connection with gendered ways of life and in connection with sexuality.

It is impossible to completely do a way with the aleatory dimension of biological or social life. However, privileging one way of addressing aleatory elements over others, those designed to contain aleatory elements in certain ways, foreclose the possibility of other forms of engagement with these elements, I want to suggest. I'll use an example from my own life to illustrate this. I dropped a paving block on my toe when I was very young and ended up with toenail fungus as a result. I never felt bad about it as a child because my father had toenail and fingernail fungus. I saw that he wasn't particularly bothered by it, first of all. Second of all, the way I made sense of having fungus as a child had to do with being related to my father: it made sense to me that we both had it *because* we were related. It was an almost comforting physiological parallelism. So, it ended up, for me, functioning as a physical sign of genealogical relation. I learned later that I should be ashamed of it and treat it medically. Even though I could have ended up feeling bad about it and could have tried to treat it with medication (probably unsuccessfully), the prior significance that I had assigned to it ended up inoculating me, in a manner of speaking, against feeling ashamed of it. In this example, there is an aleatory element, the toenail fungus, and an obvious and non-obvious way of understanding the significance of this. One way of dealing with the toenail fungus involves biopolitical mechanisms (namely, medicalization, receiving treatment) while the other does not. The medicalized understanding of this condition is the more obvious of these two options for making sense of it (that is, most people don't understand skin and nail conditions primarily in terms of kinship or genealogy, as far as I know). So, the problem with biopolitical attempts to

control the aleatory has to do with how the mechanisms or techniques for dealing with

the aleatory tend to show up as the only possible or desirable social option, while other

options are foreclosed, not explored, or forgotten about, as in the case of cultural or

family traditions.[39]

Foucault thinks that a number of things have been happening since the 18th

century that can account for the conditions of the possibility of biopower's functioning.

First of all, the emergence of sexuality as a *dispositif* via certain conjunctions of power

and knowledge is central to the functioning of biopower, and, consequently, to

understanding its operations. While biopower creates the conditions for the possibility of

the formation of the *dispositif* of sexuality, since it consists of disciplinary control over

individual bodies (anatomo-politics) and population-level regulatory controls that operate

along an axis of normality and abnormality (biopolitics), the *dispositif* of sexuality

emerged as integral biopower's application. Looking at the *dispositif* of sexuality, as

Foucault does in *The History of Sexuality, volume 1*, brings into focus the way in which

biopower functions. Foucault's description of the way in which "sex" as an object of

power and knowledge was constituted is worth quoting at length:

> First, the notion of "sex" made it possible to group together, in an *artificial unity*,
> anatomical elements, biological functions, conducts, sensations, and pleasures, and it
> enabled one to make use of this *fictitious unity* as a *causal principle,* an omnipresent
> meaning, a secret to be discovered everywhere: sex was thus able to function as a
> unique signifier and as a universal signified. Further, by presenting itself in a unitary
> fashion, as anatomy, and lack, as function and latency, as instinct and meaning, it was

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[39] This issue is not limited to only the aleatory elements in the social field. The concealing or foreclosing of
particular social options is also apparent in the case of death, which is certainly not up to chance, though
the manner of death might be. The medicalization of death has meant not only a narrowing of social options
and the evidentness of certain possibilities of dying, but has also narrowed the social options of what can
occur after someone has died. For instance, restrictions on who can handle dead bodies has made it so that
there are limits to the kinds of funerals that can be performed. Families, relatives and friends are not
supposed to cremate or bury a body themselves, for instance, even though this might impose a financial
burden.

able to mark the line of contact between a knowledge of human sexuality and the biological sciences of reproduction; thus, without really borrowing anything from these sciences, excepting a few doubtful analogies, the knowledge of sexuality gained through proximity a guarantee of quasi-scientificity; but by virtue of this same proximity, some of the contents of biology and physiology were able to serve as a principle of normality for human sexuality" (HS1 154–155, my emphasis).

It is important to note that in this passage that Foucault refers to sex as an "*artificial unity*" and as a "*fictitious unity*" that was able to serve as a "causal principle." A genealogy of sexuality is necessitated by the fact that the originary fictitiousness and artificiality of this unity has since been naturalized and thereby obscured. This genealogy makes apparent the way in which the constitution of "sex" as an object is at the core of the *dispositif* of sexuality (HS1 155).[40] However, there was a period of time in which the obviousness of this unity of disparate elements that we call "sex" had not yet been established. It was through the establishment of this unity and its subsequent naturalization via knowledge production and discipline that sexuality, as we now understand it, came to be understood and regarded as a natural element of human life. There is thus a reciprocal relationship, I want to suggest, between the stability and centrality of sex as an explanatory object, and something that has explanatory function in various domains, and the *dispositif* of sexuality.

The constitution of sex as an object that involved diverse, heterogeneous elements made it possible for these different elements to become measurable or describable in terms of normality and abnormality insofar as knowledge production about sexuality had points of contact with biology and physiology, while at the same time, these elements became points of contact for regulatory controls. The normalizing function of biopower, which is one of its distinctive features, is possible because the norm "circulates" between

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[40] This accounts, in large part, for the enormous scholarly impact HS1 has had in various fields.

disciplinary, or anatomo-political regimes and regulatory, or biopolitical, regimes (SMD

252–253). Sexuality, since it involves both the lives of individuals, and their bodies, and

the life of the population, is the point of conjunction between two regimes of power.

At the level of individuals, the *dispositif* of sexuality links sex to identity and

intelligibility. Foucault writes,

> It is through sex—in fact, and imaginary point determined by the deployment of
> sexuality—that each individual has to pass in order to have access to his own
> intelligibility (seeing that it is both the hidden aspect and the generative principle
> of meaning), to the whole of his body (since it is a real and threatened part of it,
> while symbolically constituting the whole), to his identity (since it joins the force
> of a drive to the singularity of a history) (HS1 155–156).

The *dispositif* of sexuality establishes a relationship between sex, truth and knowledge

that affects how one becomes intelligible to oneself and others. The binding together of

sex and identity via knowledge production practices that established a domain of

knowledge around sexuality is what makes this relationship between sex, truth and the

subject possible. Since the *dispositif* of sexuality has established sexuality as a feature of

each individual's identity, it becomes difficult to think of sexuality in any other terms

besides identity.[41] Thus the subject's intelligibility hangs, to an extent, on the discourse of

sexuality and how this discourse discloses sex, while at the same time, sexuality is the

dispositif through which both disciplinary (i.e. anatomo-political) and biopolitical

mechanisms operate, making it so that the subject's intelligibility, then, is bound to

subjection through this *dispositif*.

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[41] The common misconception about asexuality, namely, that asexual people do not exist or are impossible,
is a case in point. This is sometimes due, I think, to the slippage, precisely a biopolitical one, in fact,
between the biological fact of human sexuation and reproduction, on the one hand, and sexuality
(understood as a drive or instinct as well as an orientation) as a core property or feature of individuals. The
logic is something like: human beings are sexuate and must reproduce sexually, therefore, each individual
has a sexuality.

At the level of populations biopower, via biopolitical regulatory mechanisms, acts differentially on populations split along the axis of normality and abnormality. Foucault refers to this split as "racism" in *"Society must be Defended".* It is important to note that Foucault's use of the term racism here, and his description of the function of racism in a biopolitical context, is controversial and a subject of scholarly debate, but a treatment of it here is outside of the scope of this dissertation.[42] Here is how Foucault describes racism in *"Society must be Defended"*: "What in fact is racism? It is primarily a way of introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power's control: the break between what must live and what must die" (SMD 254). Foucault also describes racism as a "caesura" in the domain of life, a continuous domain that biopower has established between the lives of individuals and the life of the population (SMD 255). Elsewhere, in *Abnormal,* Foucault describes this biopolitical *dispositif*, as "racism against the abnormal" (AB 316). What, however, is racism against the abnormal?

Very briefly, the emergence of the modern science of biology, developments in medicine, and the emergence of psychiatry, make it possible, by the 19th century, to conceive of abnormality in human beings in a different fashion from its ancestor, the monster, which was a figure in juridical, medical and natural history discourses in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In the Middle Ages, the monster is something that represents transgression of natural law, and is as such, outside the classification tables

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[42] Ladelle McWhorter, in *Racism and Sexual Oppression in Anglo-America,* provides a detailed and comprehensive response to the question of the relationship between Foucault's biopolitical, and seemingly idiosyncratic, notion of race and racism in *Society Must Be Defended, Abnormal* and *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1* and racism throughout the history of the US from the early 17th century to the present. In this genealogy, McWhorter tracks the relationship between juridical or sovereign mechanisms, disciplinary mechanisms and biopolitical mechanisms in the US context and how the commonplace of white racial superiority, which is evident in full-force in eugenics, developed over time through a complex interplay of these mechanisms. Since I find this account convincing, at present, I refer to it in this section in order to make clearer the ways in which what we, in the contemporary US, typically currently understand as racism overlaps with Foucaultian racism against the abnormal.

that were meant to represent the orders of life (AB 63). Abnormality, rather than

something that exists at the limits of life, is understood, after the advent of modern

biology, as something that admits of degree and that occurs within a biological

continuum. The abnormal individual, the figurative heir to the monster, comes into focus

at the juncture between biological sciences that aim to describe and place developmental

trajectories on a normal/abnormal continuum, and psychiatry, which conceives of mental

illness in terms of instincts and tendencies (AB 274–275). How is this conceptualization

of abnormality possible? On the one hand, in the modern science of biology, functional

variation is the indicator of difference between living things. Organisms come to be

understood as collections of functions.[43] Attention to functional variation makes it

possible to conceive of organisms ontogenetically in terms of developmental trajectories,

on the one hand, and species in terms of phylogenetic trajectories, on the other. The

relationship between ontogeny and phylogeny, and specifically how salutary

development or degeneracy comes about at the individual level and level of the

population, becomes a subject of sustained scientific inquiry. Theories of hereditary

degeneration, which are most evident in eugenics discourses, are the result of knowledge

production practices that aim at explicating a relationship between ontogeny and

phylogeny. On the other hand, the development of psychiatry, and specifically the

conceptualization of the connection between individual sexual development, instincts,

tendencies and behavior, enables individual conducts to be understood as normal or

abnormal. The link between sexuality and subjectivity, further, enables individuals *per se*

to be understood as normal or abnormal.

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[43] Ladelle McWhorter, *Racism and Sexual Oppression in Anglo-America: A Genealogy,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 99–100. Hereafter, *Racism and Sexual Oppression* is cited in text as RSO.

This is, perhaps, an overly simplistic picture of the emergence of the abnormal

individual. However, it is perhaps sufficient to explain how, in the fields of psychiatry

and medicine, human beings began to be categorized in terms of normality and

abnormality, and human genealogical trajectories could be understood in these terms as

well. For instance, in Krafft-Ebing's famous *Psychopathia Sexualis,* case studies include

both family histories of both physical and mental illnesses, as well as histories of the

growth and maturity of the individual case subjects.[44] This evinces that, in terms of the

explanatory framework of mental and sexual abnormality, phylogenetic events, such as

family illnesses, signs of degeneracy and mental illness, and events in the life of the

individual that could divert normal sexual development were both understood as causally

explanatory for the purposes of an etiology of mental illness and sexual abnormality in

individual cases.

Racism against the abnormal, then, is not necessarily racism based on

morphological or phenotypic features. In the US context, it certainly does include this

form of racism because the norm is based on whiteness, but racism against the abnormal

is not limited to this form of racism. As Ladelle McWhorter's work in *Racism and Sexual*

Oppression in Anglo-America illustrates, however, Foucault's concept of racism against

the abnormal can fruitfully orient genealogies that shed light on the complex

interworkings of different forms of marginalization and oppression, including what we

typically mean by race, dis/ability and sexuality, organized around the biopolitical

imperative to invest certain populations with life at the expense of others. According to

McWhorter's genealogy of racism in the US, racism against the abnormal, as biopolitical

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[44] Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis,* trans. Charles Gilbert Chaddock (Philadephia: F.A. Davis Company, 1908), passim.

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dispositif, was intended to preserve and invest in a specific subset of the white

population, the Nordic or Anglo-Saxon race. Thus, racism against the abnormal,

including the scientific racism that served as the power-knowledge complex upon which

eugenic scientific production and public policies were based, targeted all non-white

people as well as subsets of the white population considered subnormal or abnormal for

various reasons.[45] Rather, racism against the abnormal has to do with those individuals

and populations that threaten the health of the social body due to their degeneracy,

atavism, weakness and susceptibility to illness. On the positive side, this form of racism

aimed to invest those forms of life conceived of as normal, salutary and morally sound,

i.e. white, bourgeois, Nordic or Anglo life. So, the social exclusion, disciplining,

normalizing regulation and exposure to death of those individuals and populations

deemed abnormal is best thought of as a corollary to the project of promoting the life of

the population conceived of as normal.

The establishment of a continuum of normality and abnormality in various

domains (sexuality, health, behavior, intelligence) enables the formation of normalizing

techniques that end up fostering certain forms of life. Normalizing mechanisms operate

on different levels, producing different effects. For instance, vaccination is a normalizing

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[45] See McWhorter, *Racism and Sexual Oppression*. After analyzing the historical conditions for the emergence of a biological kind of racism in which sexuality and race were imbricated, McWhorter writes of the US context in the early 20th century: "As Foucault asserts, then, scientific racism was racism against the abnormal, against any individual or group that seemed out of step with the march of progress. This included all or virtually all people of color. But it also included all whites who failed to measure up to the Anglo-Saxon standard of physical, mental, and moral development—the feebleminded (the idiot, the imbecile, the moron, the moral imbecile); the mentally ill (the neurasthenic, the masturbator, the monomaniac, the sexual invert, the hysteric, the senile, the psychopath, the epileptic, the schizophrenic); the physically disabled (the deaf, the blind, the disfigured, the crippled); the ill (the consumptive, the scrofuluous, the syphilitic, the cancerous); the inebriate; the chronically impoverished; the homeless; mothers of illegitimate children; prostitutes; mannish women; effeminate youths—in short, *anyone* who could not be located in the Progressive Era's picture of developmental health. They were enemies of the biologically conceived nation-state. They were pathogens to be eliminated, contained, or controlled in the name of the nation and its precious lives" (RSO 218).

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technique that acts on the level of the population (STP 58–62).[46] The normal and abnormal split in the biopolitical *dispositif* of racism against the abnormal is able to produce regularized effects because biological racism against the abnormal determines those traits deemed threatening to the social body. The fostering of the life of populations understood to have desirable traits, and the disinvestment, neglect and letting die of those populations understood to have undesirable traits is the goal of biopolitical normalization. Given that *dispositifs* respond to urgencies, the specific biopolitical tactics that are advanced against the abnormal individual or population will vary depending on the trait and the local circumstances. For instance, sexual deviance and perversion was a target for normalization in white bourgeois families in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (and arguably, today, in a less intense form) whereas non-whiteness marked and continues to mark individuals and populations for various forms of economic and social marginalization and exploitation, such that members of these populations are disproportionately exposed to death or conditions increasing mortality and morbidity. The way in which the normal/abnormal split functions as a chokepoint, then, has to do with the relationship between normality and abnormality and the conditions under which life is biopolitically invested or not. The more ways in which one is a threat to biopolitically invested forms of life in the US,[47] or the more ways in which one is abnormal, the more caesuras, to use Foucault's term, are opened up between one's life and the life of the population and, consequently, the more ways in which one may

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[46] Vaccination, as a technique, is unusual insofar as it was developed before the medical science that enabled people to know how it worked or why it was effective was developed, which Foucault notes.

[47] This is usually heterosexual, non-trans, middle to upper class white life.

become a target for normalization, biopolitical containment and exclusion, or some combination of these.

The way in which biopower modulates social possibilities is more difficult to discern, at first blush, than the other two types of power discussed here. In general, I want to suggest that biopolitics modulates social possibilities at the level of the population by opening up access to new social possibilities, on the one hand, and limiting access to them, on the other, depending on an individual or population's proximity to normality. A clear example of this is the development of medical protocols for sex and gender transition in the mid-20th century, which I discuss in the next chapter. In order to access these procedures through gender identity clinics, candidates had to conform to specific standards of gender presentation and sexual practice that enabled some people to access this new social possibility while barring access for others. Further, and crucially, the condition for gaining access to certain possibilities is one's proximity to a normal, biopolitically invested form of life. On the positive side, access to social possibilities often involves medical care and other technologies for the investment of life, such as mental health or psychiatric care. On the negative side where access is blocked, biopolitical interventions at the policy level, such as eugenic sterilization policies targeting those considered mentally unfit, have the goal of closing off possibilities for certain segments of the population, biological reproduction, in this example. Since normality functions as a mode of access to social possibilities, and biopolitics is a set of technologies by which one may achieve normality, if normalization is possible, given the specific biopolitical criteria operative at a given time (e.g. those criteria used to establish normality in the US will be different in 1890, 1960, 2010, etc.), then one may access

certain possibilities. If it is not possible, one's access is limited or blocked via various mechanisms. Further, one's access to normalizing technologies may be blocked, which then functionally precludes access to those possibilities predicated on this form of normalization. For instance, if someone cannot access gender affirming procedures due to poverty, and one is impoverished due to structural racial inequalities, one may have a hard time finding employment due to being read as gender non-conforming, or due to straightforward transphobia. Lack of employment, in turn, narrows the range of social options for survival, exposing one, perhaps, to violence and disease through sex work, for instance.

Biopolitics operates on a still more basic level of social possibility, however, insofar as it operates at the level of life. One must be alive, at least, in order to access any social possibility. This is trivially true, of course. Yet, when it comes to biopolitics, it is important to note this: the "let die" function of biopower aims at creating a social field in which certain forms of life are made to flourish at the expense of those deemed less healthy or salutary or at the expense of the moribund and dangerous forms of life that threaten the social body. Therefore, I want to suggest, one of the features of biopolitics' effect on social possibilities is to create the conditions under which certain forms or ways of life are more possible. Further, the extent to which one is healthy and not disabled due to preventable disease, or from injuries for which rehabilitation is possible, for instance, affects whether or not one has access to certain possibilities such as work, forms of community life and civic engagement, depending on the accessibility of the spaces in which one engages in these and other activities.

I want to suggest, too, that biopolitics modulates social possibilities at the level of individuals in a much more subtle way, but perhaps in a way that has more pervasive effects. Sexuality, the *dispositif* that conjoins individual bodies and subjectivities and the life of the population, understood as the human species, is a very effective mechanism for directing individual conducts and desires along normative trajectories through the interplay of desire, fear, other affects and the individual's relationship to normality and abnormality (STP 74–75; RSO 200). Also, the specter of sexual threats and sexual violence, though always present as social possibilities, are marshaled and concentrated around particular figures whose biopolitical significance is given through both scientific and everyday discourses. Historical examples of this figuration of sexual threats are the mythical figures of the black rapist, the homosexual pervert/child molester and a contemporary example would be the myth of the man who lives as and identifies as a woman in order to access women's bathrooms, or who dresses as a woman in order to do so. This kind of figuration affects how we relate to others, and thus affects possible modes of relation through inducing a kind of suspicion and diffidence with respect to specific others.

When this suspicion and diffidence comes into contact with the centrality of sexuality to identity, then the real possibility of violence emerges. This alerts us to the centrality of sexuality to identity, but, given a world in which sexuality is the "point we must pass through" in order to be intelligible to ourselves and others, the role of sexuality in this matrix of violence is difficult to see and not called into question *simpliciter*. Why understand oneself in terms of one's sexuality in the first place? Socially, doing so does a great deal, since in a biopolitical context, a good portion of the social world is organized

around the maintenance and disciplining of sexuality, as well as the intense forms of knowledge production around it. As McWhorter notes, "The manipulation of a thoroughly sexualized social environment was a highly effective and relatively inexpensive way of managing bodies and populations" (RSO 200). Insofar as the social world is saturated by sexuality and sexuality is integral to one's sense of self, one's identity, it becomes increasingly less necessary to police sexuality from without once the conditions for certain kinds of subject formation have been created. Thus, people tend to fail to identify and/or take up possible ways of life as a matter of course, without having to deliberately reject them. I want to suggest that this is true not only of those whose sexuality and/or gender is considered normal, but also true of those considered deviant or abnormal in some way.

For instance, if one's lesbian identity precludes them from having sex with men they may automatically reject the possibility of having a sexual or romantic engagement with a cis man they find attractive, since he does not fall into the category of their sexual object choice. If they have a transphobic understanding of the status of trans people as being "not really" men or women, they may automatically forgo having a sexual or romantic engagement with trans women, but not automatically reject the possibility of having a sexual or romantic engagement with a trans man. If their understanding is that one *is* the sex that one is assigned at birth, and being a lesbian is predicated on having sexual and romantic relationships with people of the same sex, then, on this view, having sex with a cis man, a trans woman, or possibly a trans man would challenge this specific understanding of what it means to be a lesbian. Rather than call into question what one's identity means and how it is defined, and whether or not the understandings on which the

significance of one's identity is predicated make sense, given one's desires, it is easier to

reject the possibility of relating to others in ways that would call how one understands

oneself into question. Arguably, if sexuality were not so integral to one's identity, this

would not show up as an issue so frequently. However, in a biopolitical context, we do

not get to choose, in the first instance, how relevant we take sexuality to be in our lives.

Sexuality has already been assigned a great deal of significance, such that we do not have

a choice whether or not to assign it significance in the first instance. It appears on the

horizon of our being-in-the-world even before our sexual maturity, in childhood and as

such, shows up as natural and inescapable.

Summary of Forms of Power and Social Possibilities

When taken together, a composite picture of the way in which the different forms

of power, via their different *dispositifs*, affect the field of social possibilities. Since each

of the forms of power are grids that are overlaid[48] on top of one another, like layers of

mesh,[49] the way in which each form of power and the relationships between different

forms creates a complicated network of social possibilities. These possibilities are

arranged around certain forms of embodiment and forms of life, since disciplinary

dispositifs produce effects on the level of the body, and biopolitical *dispositifs* manage

aspects of life relevant to individual lives *qua* members of a species, such as sexuality,

reproduction, family life, etc. Insofar as biopower, specifically, is about investing life or

disinvesting it so that it is exposed to death, the way in which it modulates social

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[48] Deleuze describes the relationship between forms of power and the historical *a prioris* to which they are related as "diagrams" (Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault,* 84–85).

[49] Foucault uses this metaphor to describe power in the lecture entitled "The Mesh of Power."

possibilities has to do with "fostering" the conditions for life and death, where life is understood as a certain normalized, putatively salutary form of life. Finally, sovereign power modulates social possibilities via juridical mechanisms and administrations that condition individual possibilities qua juridical or sovereign subjects. Insofar as the *dispositifs* of the different forms of power come into contact and reinforce one another, it is possible to see how, in specific or individual cases, their specific combination affects the access that specific individuals or populations have access to, depending on how one is "caught" in the mesh. For instance, a white trans man who has not in the past and is not currently incarcerated at present has access to different social possibilities than a black trans woman who is currently incarcerated or recently released. Each of their access to social possibilities differs still from those that a white, straight, middle class cis man has access to. These differences exist due to the way in which each set of *dispositifs,* techniques, and mechanisms of power act on subjects, bodies, and ways of life differently.

In the next few sections, I will go into more detail regarding the elements of *dispositifs* most relevant for my purposes here. While I spend the most time discussing discourse, knowledge and conceptualization, I do also briefly discuss practices, the body and subjection at the end of the chapter.

Discourse, Knowledge and Conceptualization

There are two important Foucaultian concepts to consider in connection with concept formation and its relationship to social possibilities in a Foucaultian register. The first is the '*episteme*' and the second is 'discourse'. In order to understand how concept

formation and knowledge production practices are implicated in *dispositifs*, it is

important to have an understanding of these two notions. In this section, I will first

discuss the episteme. Then, I will discuss discourse. Lastly, I will discuss

conceptualization in the context of knowledge production practices, and how this relates

to social possibilities.

Episteme

By "episteme", I understand Foucault to be referring to all of that which is

putatively sayable, thinkable, knowable, and the reciprocal relationships that obtain

between these terms in a given context.[50] The adjective "putatively" is doing a lot of

work in this definition. That is because epistemes are circumscribed by that which is

excluded from the domain of what is sayable, thinkable or knowable in them; while it is

conceivable or hypothetical that it would be possible to include certain questions,

problems, concepts or kinds of explanation in an episteme, the episteme's internal

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[50] Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge,* trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Vintage Books, 2010). In *The Archeology of Knowledge,* Foucault defines "episteme" in the following way: "By *episteme*, we mean, in fact, the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalized systems; the way in which, in each of these discursive formations the transition to epistemologization, scientificity, and formalization are situated and operate; the distribution of these thresholds, which may coincide, be subordinated to one another, or be separated by shifts in time; the lateral relations that may exist between epistemological figures or sciences in so far as they belong to neighboring, but distinct, discursive practices" (AK 191). In this definition, discursive practice is carrying quite a bit of explanatory weight. Foucault clarifies what discursive practices consist in elsewhere in the course summary of the 1970–1971 Collège de France lectures entitled *Lectures on the Will to Know*. There, Foucault says that discursive practices can be understood in the following way: "Discursive practices are characterized by the separating out of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the subject of knowledge, and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories. Each of these thus presupposes an interplay of prescriptions which govern exclusions and choices" (LWK 224). So, epistemes and discursive practices are mutually implicated and, I'd venture to say, often mutually reinforcing for Foucault. Discursive practices presuppose the conditions for the possibility of something counting as an object of knowledge, the conditions under which a potential object of knowledge becomes an object of knowledge (its formalization or epistemologization) and the relationship between a discourse and other discourses. In turn, epistemes arise from the interrelation of discursive practices and the objects of knowledge that emerge from them.

organization precludes this certain varieties of questioning, problematizing, knowing and

explanation from counting as legitimate. For instance, to use an example that Foucault

uses in *The Order of Things*, while it is in principle possible to understand things like the

body in terms of analogy, these typically do not enjoy the status of being knowledge

claims in our current episteme, though in the Middle Ages, these explanations and

understandings did.[51] Though the recent uptick in interest in astrology may seem to prove

the contrary, it is still the case that in order to establish claims in the science of anatomy

in our current episteme, we do not appeal to analogies between the planets and parts of

the body in order to explain ailments. Thus, an episteme is an epistemological framework

and one that includes specific structural conditions for the possibility of something

counting as a knowledge claim. While it is of course possible for someone to understand

what can and ought to count as knowledge in a way that is inconsistent with an

episteme,[52] something's counting as an item of knowledge, generally speaking, has to do

with the episteme in question.

　　　　Epistemes are characterized by what Foucault calls the "historical *apriori*". The

historical *apriori*

> is what, in a given period, delimits in the totality of experience a field of
> knowledge, defines the mode of being of the objects that appear in that field,
> provides man's everyday perception with theoretical powers, and defines the
> conditions in which he can sustain a discourse about things that is recognized as
> true (OT 158, emphasis added).

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[51] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 21. Hereafter, *The Order of Things* is cited in text as OT.

[52] For instance, someone in our current context may think that an astrologer has knowledge of how people's lives are affected by the movements of the planets, such that they can advise people about what they ought to do during specific times of life or times of the year. They may grant that the astrologer's knowledge of, for instance, the Return of Saturn, is justified by their more general knowledge of the influence planets have on behavior, the movement of planets over the course of someone's lifespan, etc.

In other words, the historical *apriori* is a prior determination of what will count as a possible object of knowledge, how it will come to be known as an object of knowledge (i.e. what features it has such that it can be knowable), what kinds of attunement or perception are required for inquiring into objects of knowledge and how the objects of knowledge can be talked about and written about, such that what one says or writes can be evaluated as true or false. The historical *apriori* is what is presupposed in an episteme and it is what implicitly structures knowledge production practices. It assumes both the means by which knowledge is acquired (textual analysis, experimentation, interviews, etc.) and the conduct of the researcher participating in these practices. The historical *apriori*, and the features of an episteme more generally, are often not visible to those who live in the context in which a particular episteme prevails: it is, as the saying goes, a "fish in water" situation. Similarly, the way in which knowledge production worked and truth-claims were made in other epistemes often seems unintelligible or incomprehensible to us. Instances of this, which are likely familiar to many in the field of philosophy, are pre-Socratic explanations of the natural order. Putting the fragmentary nature of many of these accounts to the side, the idea of Anaximander's *apeiron*, for instance, appears strange to us in part, I think, due to the fact that our understandings of how the world came to be are predicated on modern natural science (cosmogony), religion or some combination of the two, such that something like *apeiron* or Empedocles' love and strife are almost unintelligible, at first blush, as being even potentially explanatory for how the world came to be or how the world works.

Epistemes, therefore, include not only structures through which knowledge claims are established, procedures for doing so and ways of writing and talking about the

knowledge produced, but are also characterized by background conditions that establish the conditions for the possibility of something counting as knowledge. These background conditions are not always obvious; archeological projects aim to excavate the relationship between an episteme's constitutive conditions and the claims made in it, such that the historical contingency of the claims, and their dependence on non-obvious features of knowledge production, become apparent to us.

Discourse

Appeals to Foucault's notion of discourse abound, yet explanations of what Foucault actually means by discourse are not as frequently found. Here, I'll attempt to briefly explain how discourse relates to *dispositifs* and knowledge production practices, though I'll refrain from going into detail regarding what Foucault takes discourse to consist in, avoiding a rigorous attempt to explicate Foucault's notion of discourse.[53] Discourse (*discours*) consists of the kinds of speech and writing that comprise a given episteme, such that knowledge or truth claims are possible in and through it. Discourse is not the same as speech and language, though both are implicated in it. Discursive practices form around objects of knowledge and as such are part of knowledge production practices. Knowledge production practices, in turn, are inscribed in *dispositifs*. Discourses, like knowledge production practices and the *dispositifs* of which they may

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[53] Foucault's most sustained treatment of discourse is *The Archeology of Knowledge.* There, he defines discourse in terms of the statement: discourses consist of groups of statements (AK 80, 107, 115). What Foucault means by "statement", however, is very difficult to discern in this text. Foucault gives the statement the following characterization: "We will call *statement* the modality of existence proper to that group of signs: a modality that allows it to be something more than a series of traces, something more than a succession of marks on a substance, something more than a mere object made by human being; a modality that allows it to be in relation to a domain of objects, to prescribe a definite position to any possible subject, to be situated among other verbal performances, and to be endowed with a repeatable materiality" (AK 107). Statements are not the same thing as language (*langage*) (AK 108).

form a part, are not static, but rather change and mutate over time. However, despite their vagaries, which include local forms that are not continuous with other forms, there are specific features of all three of these formations that enable Foucault, and us, to establish continuities between their instantiations over time. For instance, there are regularities in the discourse of sexuality, appeals to a relationship between identity and truth and the specter of abnormality (however the normal and the abnormal are construed), for example, that traverse the various instantiations of this discourse such that there is a demonstrable continuity between, for instance, turn of the 20th century sexology and mid-20th century sexology. This is not to say that discontinuities should be elided, since it is important to track these as well. Rather, the point is that certain core features of discourses, knowledge production practices and *dispositifs* can be ascertained such that it is possible to surmise whether or not one is in the same context or a different one. To turn to the example of the *dispositif* of sexuality again, a medico-psychiatric discourse of sexuality is a part of the biopolitical *dispositif* of sexuality. In order to rationalize and make intelligible power exercised over individuals and populations, it is necessary to have forms of knowledge that justify the practices that comprise these forms of control. This is not to say that there is any deliberate attempt to link up discourses with *dispositifs*; rather, these connections end up being formed because doing so may seem obvious or evident.

When Foucault discusses discourse he means to include, I think, the conditions that dictate who is speaking to whom and why.[54] There are ways in which the speech of certain subjects is put to work in knowledge production practices, just as the kinds of discourses produced about subjects in knowledge production practices conditions the

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[54] See note 50 above, AK 107.

ways of life with which these knowledge production practices intersect. For instance, the confessional mechanism, which involved a penitent examining the intricacies of their mind and heart in search of sin and the confession of these sins to a confessor, was transferred, with modifications, to the *dispositif* of sexuality. The power dynamic between penitent and priest was preserved in the transfer to the medico-psychiatric knowledge production practices that emerged as part of the *dispositif* of sexuality. The difference was, however, that the sexual confessions of the patients in the latter case were used to form data in the knowledge production practice around sexuality, and those seeking medical and psychiatric help in connection with their sexuality and its supposed effects (people who wanted to stop masturbating because they believed it was negatively impacting their health, for instance) were obliged to speak. For instance, those who wanted to stop masturbating because they believed it was negatively impacting their health become involved in the confessional practices of psychiatry. While people seeking help for masturbation from a doctor or psychiatrist and penitents confessing sins to a priest are involved in the confessional discursive practice for different reasons and at different times, the mechanism of the confessional is the same insofar as in both cases, it consists of an asymmetrical power relation and an imperative to speak observed by the penitent/masturbator. Who is allowed to speak and when, and whose speech is useful for knowledge production, then, is a relevant consideration when thinking about discourse.

When it comes to thinking about concept formation in a Foucaultian register, then, there are two important considerations. The first is that there are a number of conditions of concept formation that are, generally speaking, not reflected in the concepts themselves, at least, not on their surface. First of all, there are internal conditions that

affect how concepts are formed and how they are related to truth claims in a given

domain of knowledge. These conditions have to do with the conditions for the possibility

of knowledge in a given *episteme*. These conditions also include how they are related to

the other concepts in a given domain within an *episteme,* bearing in mind that these

relationships will depend in part on how truth is established in an episteme. These

conditions account for the ways in which the same term may designate different concepts

in different contexts and this becomes clear when we juxtapose them. For instance, the

Aristotelian concept of 'woman' is different from the category 'woman' which is a

subject of debate in contemporary analytic feminism. So, even though we can find

instances of the term 'woman' in different contexts and across time, this doesn't mean

that the concept is the same, given that the conditions for how terms are defined and the

other objects of knowledge to which they are related differ.[55] So, there are specific

conditions internal to knowledge production practices that have an impact on how

concepts are formed. Another of these conditions is the methods by which knowledge is

produced, which can include things like observation, taxonomy, experimentation, etc.

These too have an influence on concept formation insofar as the results of these

procedures must be conceptualized in order to render the object of knowledge stable. For

instance, psychopathology, as an enterprise, would prove very difficult if it did not have a

stable conceptual field consisting of diagnostic categories (personality disorder,

paraphilic disorders, dysphoria) under which more specific disorders are enumerated.

Things like diagnosis, teaching, research, publication and academic conferences rely on a

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[55] For examples of this kind of change in connection with the categories "man" and "woman" over the
course of the history of the West, see Claire Colebrook, *Gender* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004),
1–75. .

conceptual field of relatively stable objects to which concepts refer, while these concepts derive their stability from the knowledge production practices of the field.

Second, because knowledge production practices are parts of *dispositifs* and can provide the rationalizations and justifications for specific exercises of power via the *dispositif,* concept formation, when it happens in specific knowledge production practices, is implicated in power relations. Thus, when concept formation occurs in a knowledge production practice implicated in a *dispositif,* we can ask several questions in this connection. What role do concepts play in the operation of the *dispositif*? Are they tied to practices, and if so, what is the relationship between concepts and practices in a given *dispositif* or knowledge production practice? Are there slippages or ambiguities in certain concepts, such that it makes it difficult to discern whether or how these concepts are related to knowledge production practices and *dispositifs*? Further, since knowledge production functions in connection with other practices, concepts stand in relation to practices, even if these relationships differ in specific instances.

An implication of the second of these two conditions, the relationship between knowledge production and power, means that concept formation is not always a rarified or politically neutral activity. However, the effects of concept formation have to be understood in terms of how a knowledge production practice fits into a *dispositif.* Concepts in and of themselves do not have the capacity to affect a social field. Rather, they have effects insofar as they are produced in and part of knowledge production practices that stand in relation to certain *dispositifs* and forms of power. This isn't to say that how we understand them is totally circumscribed or determined once and for all by the forms of knowledge of which they are a part. It is to say, however, that alternative

understandings of their significances are made difficult by their imbrication in knowledge production practices which are themselves inscribed in *dispositifs*.

Thus, concept formation is related to social possibilities insofar as concepts are formed in knowledge production practices, which in turn are part of *dispositifs*. They play a role, then, in subject formation via playing a role in the conditions of intelligibility for subjects and they also stand in relation to practices that shape subjects within *dispositifs*. I don't mean to suggest that concept formation only takes place in knowledge production practices that are implicated in *dispositifs*, it is clear that this is not the only place where this occurs. However, concept formation, thinking and knowledge production always occur against the backdrop of a given *episteme*, such that certain conditions have to be met in order for certain things to be intelligible according to the conditions of that *episteme*. To return to the example of astrology again, I can engage in a knowledge production practice associated with alchemy, deploy alchemical concepts and write in an alchemical style. However well I do this, though, this "knowledge production" will still occur against a background of other forms of knowledge production that appear to be more legitimate.

The same is true of concepts that are no longer part of knowledge production practices and how we understand things in an everyday way. For example, suppose I find that the old sexological category of "invert" describes my experience of gender better than any category or concept that exists currently. Even though this might be the case that this concept best captures features of my phenomenological experience, this concept has been superseded by other concepts, and it is no longer effective for helping others make sense of my experience because it is a lapsed concept. It is no longer a medical or

psychiatric category since the order of psychosexual explanation of which it was a part is no more. This concept had explanatory power, and the power to confer intelligibility on a way of life and an experience, by virtue of its relationship to a given form of knowledge. I can also create concepts that help me make sense of my experience. However, whether or not these concepts are intelligible from the standpoint of knowledge production practices or serve as possible intelligible explanations to others depends on conditions beyond my control, part of which include the *episteme* and how concepts are related to practices and *dispositifs*.

Subjection/Subjectivation

Power, as the ability to act on the actions of another, affects the shape that subjectivity takes. Further, given that *dispositifs* enable the regular application of power on subjects through a variety of mechanisms, subjectivity takes on determinate contours as a result. Foucault refers to the effects power has on the shape of subjectivity as "subjection."[56] I am taking some liberties with Foucault here, given that he says that power *produces* or *"makes"* subjects.[57] Following Heidegger, I think it becomes clear, *prima facie,* that there is some agency retained by subjects, such that the contours of subjectivity are not produced by power relations, but that is a subject of scholarly debate outside the scope of this dissertation. In any case, power produces specific effects on the subject that affect the subject's relationship to itself and to others. Further, the subject is reduced to a position, or object, within certain forms of knowledge production, or

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[56] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 782.

[57] Ibid., 777.

disciplines, something Foucault refers to as an "objectivizing" process.[58] This, I should

note, is salient for thinking about how people become problems *for* a given knowledge

production practice.

<div align="center">Note on Practices and on the Body</div>

Practices are essential to *dispositifs* because it is through practices that specific

regularities in knowledge production and in forms of behavior or conduct are produced

and reproduced. It is difficult to imagine knowledge production in the field of

microbiology without instruments for conducting experiments and tests along with

procedures for how to do so. Similarly, it is difficult to imagine how the order of a

primary school classroom. It is important to note that, in the psycho-medical power

knowledge formation around transsexuality that I'll be discussing at length in the next

chapter, practices are both a part of knowledge production and stand in relation to

discursive formations and existed in reciprocal relationships to them They also had

disciplinary and normalizing (i.e. biopolitical) functions insofar as some of them, such as

chest reconstruction surgery, reproduce normative and normal forms of sexed

embodiment.

Embodiment, specifically Foucault's views on the body and the relationship between

dispositifs and the body, is clearly relevant in this connection, but it must, unfortunately,

be passed over for the sake of time. I should note that it is particularly relevant in this

connection, however, because for Foucault, the body is a privileged site of power's

operation and is caught up in disciplinary practices, has specific functions, and is

constructed in specific ways, in knowledge production practices and it is the object of

biopolitical interventions, including those of the *dispositif* of sexuality. Thus, the reader

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[58] Ibid.

should bear in mind that, while I am not discussing the body at great length here, it is surely an important part of the knowledge production practices that formed around intersexuality and transsexuality in the early and middle 20th century, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Given the foregoing discussion of the relationship between power relations and social possibilities, and the relationship between knowledge production and power relations, it should be clear that when trans people are attempting to projecting onto non-obvious possibilities for living gender (or, to put it as I did earlier, to solve problems of existence), this happens in a world where not only are meanings and for-the-sake-of-whiches pre-given by an impersonal Other, *das Man*, but this also takes place in a context where power relations are conditioning subjectivity, relationships between people and the modes of disclosure through which subjects know themselves and their possibilities for living. So, these power relations can obscure non-obvious possibilities through normalizing and naturalizing discourses and by actually restricting who has access to what social possibilities (i.e. employment, access to the wider social world (e.g. in cases of institutionalization).

However, this is not a hopeless situation, as it is possible to engage in critique in order to reveal these contingencies and determine why and how they are contingent. In the interview entitled "What is Critique?" Foucault says that,

> critique is the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to question truth on its effects of power and question power on its discourses of truth.
> …critique will be the art of voluntary insubordination, that of reflected

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intractability. Critique would essentially insure the desubjugation of the subject in the context of what we could call, in a word, the politics of truth."[59]

Critique, in other words, is an activity that enables us to call into question the way in which truth is established and what counts as true. When one hears the word "critique", especially given the prominence of the Kantian critiques in the landscape of academic philosophy, the first thing that comes to mind is intellectual endeavors. While these are, arguably, obvious and important instances of critique, given Foucault's description of thought as not reducible to theoretical work, the scope of what counts as critique is quite broad. Thus, I want to suggest that we can read trans people's attempts to solve problems of existence as possible critiques of the way in which possibilities of living gender are disclosed in an everyday way, and the ways in which gender is disclosed in theoretical domains.[60] However, the conceptual frameworks through which we understand sex, gender, and trans ways of life are of central importance insofar as they are means by which possibilities for living gender are disclosed. They, along with practices, provide ways of projecting onto possibilities for living gender.

Since Dasein can project onto different possibilities, and receive help in doing so through the solicitude of others, it is possible to open new spaces of meaning and get into new ways of living, despite how limited Dasein's options might seem given how ways of life are disclosed by dominant power/knowledge formations. These possibilities always

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[59] Michel Foucault. "What is Critique?" in *The Politics of Truth,* trans. by Lysa Hochroth and Catherine Porter (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007), 47.

[60] For a discussion of what constitutes thought for Foucault, see "Preface to *The History of Sexuality Volume II,* trans. William Smock, in *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 333–339. In this alternative introduction to *The Use of Pleasure,* Foucault describes thought as "not…to be sought only in theoretical formulations such as those of philosophy or science" but as something that "can and must be analyzed in every manner of speaking, doing or behaving in which the individual appears and acts as subject of learning, as ethical or juridical subject, as subject conscious of himself and others" (Foucault 1984 334–335).

appear against the backdrop of *das Man's* assignation of significance (for-the-sake-of-which), and the power relations inscribed in *dispositifs* and their related to institutions and structures. So, these alternative projects will in some sense always stand in some relation to normative or standard possibilities to a greater or lesser extent, whether this relationship is resemblance, opposition, or something else.

However, I want to suggest that the projects that differ from *das Man*'s projects differ because they make new ways of life possible and do so for the following reason. One of the implications of the interrelationship between *das Man* as a mode of being of Dasein and dominant forms of power relations is that there are standard and normative ways of life that emerge on the basis of the interrelationship between the *das Man* mode, which is an *ontological* mode of Being that has specific phenomenological features (ambiguity, curiosity, tranquilization, etc.) and *dispositifs*, which produce certain social regularities and effects, and which affect the availability and distribution of social possibilities. Since *dispositifs* make it possible to act on the actions of others in regular ways that are more or less intense, depending on the mechanism through which power is flowing, they create conditions under which the actions of others can be affected in patterned and regular ways. New ways of life are possible on the basis of reworking existing meanings and significance. For instance, new ways of life can emerge through taking up practices in new ways or inventing new ones and creating new forms of embodiment through conceptualization and practice or engaging in resignification projects in connection with the body.

Chapter Three:

A Not-so-free Field:

An Analysis of Key Conceptual and Practical Developments in Connection with

Transsexuality

Introduction

In 1968, Robert Stoller published a book called *Sex and Gender: The*

Development of Masculinity and Femininity. In it, Stoller, a researcher at UCLA's

Gender Identity Research Clinic (GIRC) trained in psychoanalysis,[1] attempted to develop

an account of the etiology of transsexuality that focused on child development, and

specifically the relationship between a child and their mother. As a part of this theoretical

endeavor, Stoller used the concept *core gender identity.*[2] As I will discuss in more detail

below, for Stoller, *core gender identity* was a concept that was meant to capture the

aspect of identity that consisted of one's sense of oneself as male or female and this

concept was distinct from *gender role,* or one's gendered social role or behavior (SG 9,

29–30). This conceptual development, which effectively introduced a split between

psychological and social aspects of gender, was to have massive repercussions for later

theorizations of gender.[3] Stoller, like other sexologists, was trying to solve the problems

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[1] Germon, *Gender*, 65.

[2] Stoller attributed the creation of the term "gender identity" to himself and Richard Greenson, who used it
in a presentation in 1963 (Germon, *Gender*, 65).

[3] The theoretical possibilities this conceptual development inaugurated are well analyzed by Germon in
Gender: A Genealogy of an Idea. In chapter 2, "Stoller's Seductive Dualisms", Germon discusses how the
split between *gender identity* and *gender role* enabled Stoller to theorize about an individual's sense of
themself as a sexed being independent of their social roles (Germon, *Gender*, 65–66). In this way, sex,
understood as something biological, was split from gender, which in turn was split into a psychological
aspect (*gender identity*) and a social aspect (*gender role*). In chapter 3, "Feminist Encounters with Gender",

posed by those who showed up against the epistemological backdrop of sexology as sexually abnormal and deviant. In this particular work, Stoller's focus was on transsexual patients. The category 'transsexual', only in use since the late 1940s and 1950s, had by that time become an object of sexological investigation.[4]

Stoller's book, like other works of sexology, includes a number of case studies which he used to illustrate the points he was attempting to make about the nature of the kinds of sexual abnormalities under discussion, in this case transsexuality and transvestism. One of his case studies contains a teenaged trans boy's[5] personal narrative of his experience, an account which reveals how trans people, in seeking help from the doctors and psychiatrists at gender identity clinics, were also trying to solve a problem. I want to turn to a somewhat lengthy passage from one of Stoller's case studies in order to illustrate this point. The author is a trans boy/young trans man who began seeing Stoller at the clinic when he was 15. Here, he's describing his own experiences and attempts to understand his situation:

specifically, Germon discusses the uptake of the concept of gender as an analytic tool by feminist theorists, first in psychology and sociology, and later in other disciplines (Germon 85–120). The surprising thing about a genealogy of the concept of gender for someone such as myself who has come of age intellectually in the past 10 or 15 years, is that it has only been used as an analytic tool for thinking about social divisions based on assigned sex for a relatively short period of time. According to Germon's survey of Anglophone feminist scholarship from the period of time after Money introduced the concept 'gender role' to sexology in 1955 and Stoller further developed the concept in the 1960's, feminist scholars (in particular, feminist sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists) began referring to the concept after engagement with of Money and Stoller starting in the 1970's. They thereby introduced the concept to feminist scholarship during that time; however, it was used along with terms such as 'sex role' and 'sexual identity' (Germon 85–87). Over time, feminist scholars clarified the concept of gender through internal debates and there were calls for conceptual clarity up to 1979 (Germon 105, 119).

[4] Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 15. Hereafter, *How Sex Changed* is cited in text as HSC.

[5] Here, I'm referring to the boy in this case study as a "trans boy" or "trans man" because it is unclear from the autobiographical information how he identified. Since the term "trans" is inclusive of both transsexual ways of life and transgender ways of life, I've defaulted to it here, even though it was not in use at the time. Stoller notes that the boy ended up living as a man, but does not specify how he identified or whether or not he medically transitioned (SG 203).

Right now I have this[6] because I believe I have grown as a boy. And it is about time I start thinking about girls, which isn't right because of my body, but in my mind it is normal. I don't feel I am abnormal as a boy. Nothing about me seems abnormal, except I have the wrong body. In other words, the head is put on the wrong body. That's the way I figure it. I don't know if it is right; I don't have a medical mind. I figure when I get older, I will grow and think from boyhood into a man. I don't know whether I can be one, but I believe that's the way I am going to think. Your body is just something that holds you together; it's part of you; it's an important part–but your mind is strong; it is your will; your mind is everything. I mean as far as everything you want to be. If you had the body, the hands to play baseball, and it just wasn't in your mind, and it wasn't what you enjoyed, you might go and be a doctor. When all this was going on, I thought of God: Am I doing wrong? God created me as a girl, so maybe I should be. But I couldn't be, and which is more important, your mind or your body? God created my mind too, and if my mind is working this way, He created that. I just couldn't figure it out. I went to the priest; he didn't help me any. He got me all confused. I didn't know what to do. So I just sat down and thought. I used to pray a lot. We studied about God dying on the Cross for us, and I think if He did all that suffering, I can do this suffering for Him, but I can't suffer all my life like this; I would go crazy. I have got to have an out, a way to solve my problem, try to face up to it and solve it…And so far I have solved this much of it.[7]

This passage is illuminating for a number of reasons, one of which is the relevance of

various ways of understanding gender that the boy attempted to draw on to make sense of

his situation. It is clear that the boy drew on various frameworks in order to do this. One

of these frameworks is that of normality/abnormality. He understands himself, first of all,

as having grown up as a boy and, consequently, he understands his sexual attraction to

girls as abnormal according to one rubric, one in which he is understood as a girl. Yet, at

the same time, he is normal according to another rubric, the one according to which he is

understood as a boy. He also mentions his attempt to use a religious framework to make

sense of his life, seeking out the help of a priest in the process. Though this framework

proves more confusing than illuminating for him, it does, in this narrative, lead him to

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[6] It is unclear from the context (even taking into account the previous paragraph) what "this" refers to here.

[7] Robert Stoller, *Sex and Gender: The Development of Masculinity and Femininity* (London: Karnac, 1968), 200. *Sex and Gender* is cited in text as SG.

consider the relationship between the body and the mind. He concludes that the mind and will are ultimately more important than the body, though the body is important ("it's part of you; an important part"). By boy's estimation, though, it is ultimately the mind that makes one suited to an activity (playing baseball) or a way of life ("you might go and be a doctor"). Thus, this account can be read as a boy's attempt to understand or make sense of his situation and it is illuminating, in this connection, because the boy more-or-less transparently articulates the reasons why he found various ways of understanding his situation adequate or inadequate.

This passage is also illuminating in the boy's framing of his situation as a problem: "I have got to have an out, a way to solve my problem, try to face up to it and solve it…And so far I have solved this much of it." While the boy frames his situation in terms of a problem, it is also clear that his situation is problematic according to several of the rubrics he uses to try to understand his situation. Is his development abnormal or normal? His consideration of this question gestures to the understanding of sex, gender and sexuality in terms of normality and abnormality, an understanding that is consistent with a psycho-medical[8] understanding of sex, sexuality and gender. Further, his situation could be problematic from a religious standpoint, insofar as, according to this understanding, God created the boy a "girl", but also created his "mind", which is that of a boy.

The passage thus illustrates how the same life can simultaneously pose what I am calling "problems of existence." These are characterized by the need or desire to project

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[8] As I mentioned in the introduction, I use the term "psycho-medical" as an adjective modifying the terms "understanding", "concept", etc. in order to indicate the context in which sex, gender, sexuality, intersexuality and transsexuality were constituted as objects of scientific study by clinicians from various disciplinary backgrounds, including psychology, endocrinology, surgical medicine and sexology (which, as a discipline, can include individuals with different disciplinary training: Benjamin was an endocrinologist while Money was a psychologist by training, for example). To reiterate, I don't mean it as a technical term or concept; it's merely a descriptive shorthand.

onto non-obvious possibilities of living, and show up *as a problem* for a given understanding or framework for interpreting what the significance of this life is (normative psycho-medical understandings, religious understandings). That the boy was trying to project onto these non-obvious possibilities is evident, specifically in the lines: "I figure when I get older, I will grow and think from boyhood into a man. I don't know whether I can be one, but I believe that's the way I am going to think." However, as the inclusion of his narrative in Stoller's book indicates, his life was also part of the emerging psycho-medical problematic of transsexualism, where his situation posed certain problems for prevailing understandings of the relationship between sex, sexuality and gender. This passage thus represents, on the one hand, an attempt by a trans person to make sense of his life. On the other hand, it represents, through its inclusion in Stoller's book as a case study, an attempt to make sense of the lives of trans people within a psycho-medical context. Some practitioners, like Stoller, used the lives of trans and intersex people as material for producing knowledge about sex and gender; further, these "natural experiments" were used to produce specific concepts of sex and gender within these discourses. This psycho-medical formation around transsexuality, which included the development and standardization of medical transition and concomitant social transition, created a new social possibility for living gender. From this formation, new terms and concepts emerged through which trans ways of life became intelligible. Yet, the number of people who could access this possibility was small and the intelligibility this framework conferred on trans ways of life, and by extension non-obvious possibilities for living gender, was limited.

In this chapter, I will examine the psycho-medical construction of transsexuality that took place in the US in the 1950s and 1960s, focusing in particular on the contributions of John Money, Harry Benjamin and Robert Stoller to this enterprise. I focus on these three figures in particular not only because their theories have been influential when it comes to how we think about sex, sexuality, gender and trans ways of life, but also because their theories include very different and possibly incompatible conceptual interventions. Despite their differences, however, they each were working within the same problematic field or *episteme*. Each of their conceptual interventions thus reflect certain presuppositions about the nature of sex, sexuality and gender, and have subsequently conditioned how we think about trans ways of life.

In this chapter, I will present an overview of the developments in medicine and psychology that lead to the establishment of transsexual medical protocols, that is, the conceptual framing of transsexuality, the conceptual framing of gender, gender identity and gender role, and the establishment of university-based gender identity clinics were transsexual people participated in clinical research as a condition of being able to medically transition through these clinics. These developments shaped the wider public's understanding of transsexual lives as well. I will focus not only on the conceptual and practical developments that made the social possibility of medical transition available and gave rise to the ensuing conceptual frameworks for thinking about sex and gender, but also on the assumptions regarding social possibilities made by several key sexologists. My treatment of the landscape of sexology during the 1950s and 1960s here is far from exhaustive: rather, my aim is briefly to illustrate key theoretical and practical developments from that time period in order to contextualize the background against

which our contemporary understandings of trans ways of life emerged. In this chapter, I aim to elucidate John Money, Harry Benjamin and Robert Stoller's views on social possibilities, as evinced in their approaches to the "treatment" of transsexual and intersexed patients.

While the social possibilities for trans ways of life were conditioned by the development and limited availability of medical protocols, and that transsexuals' experiences and knowledge of their own bodies and desires for physical transformation steered them towards pursuing these possibilities of physical, as well as social, transition. What I hope to clarify is the way in which the disclosure of social possibilities in this context was constrained by: (1) the conceptual frameworks the three sexologists developed with a view to developing theories of the treatment and etiology of intersex conditions and transsexuality, (2) the practices of diagnosing individuals according to rubrics developed for differentiating transsexual people from other gender non-conforming people with a view to determining eligibility for medical transition involving the medical technologies of hormone replacement and sex-reassignment surgery and (3) the way in which these sexologist's understanding of social possibilities regarding gender informed their approaches to treatment. In order to analyze these developments, I deploy the framework I have been developing over the past two chapters so as to clarify how these developments were affected by assumptions about social possibilities for living gender, first of all. Second of all, I deploy it to clarify how they affected social possibilities for living gender given that they helped to form the psycho-medical knowledge production practices around transsexuality that, in part, made medical transition a more stable social possibility. I attend, specifically, to the ways in which

transsexuality as a problem for the psycho-medical formation of transsexuality is a different matter than trans people attempting to solve problems of existence through the social possibility of medical transition.

Historical Background

In the U. S. of the 1950s and 1960s, the concept of *transsexuality* was stabilized and the concepts *of gender* and *gender identity and gender role* emerged. Before turning to an examination of these developments during that period, it is necessary briefly to fill in some historical background. This background helps to explain the theoretical context in which Money, Benjamin and Stoller were working, and the trajectory of medical research that made possible certain medical interventions, specifically hormone replacement therapy and sex reassignment surgery.[9]

People who understood themselves to be a sex different from the one they were assigned and who desired to live in ways inconsistent with their assigned sex at birth (e.g. people assigned male at birth who lived full or part time, or for periods of their lives, as women and people assigned female at birth who lived full or part time as men) have been

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[9] I'm choosing to use the term "sex reassignment surgery" or SRS in my discussion of this historical time period for a few reasons. 1) Though the terms for referring to surgical operations to change a person's sex were not standard at the time (Benjamin, for instance, referred to these surgeries as "conversion operations (Benjamin, *The Transsexual Phenomenon,* 27 and *passim*)), this term has been frequently used in the past to refer to genital surgeries as part of medical transition. 2) The term "gender confirmation surgery" did not exist at the time. It is now frequently used in popular discussions of these operations since it is intended to be less derogatory than "sex reassignment surgery" or "sex change surgery/operation" (for an example of this interpretation, see Schechter 2012). My aim here is not to weigh the relative adequacy or inadequacy of particular terms for the set of procedures that comprise sex reassignment or gender confirmation surgery; rather, I aim to avoid introducing conceptual complication where it could be avoided. While "sex reassignment surgery" and "gender confirmation surgery" could be two different terms for the same concept (insofar as they indicate surgeries that one undergoes in order to ease a sense of dissonance, to use Julia Serano's term again, or dis-ease one has with one's own body, they could easily, however, be different concepts given the switch from *sex* to *gender*. Indeed, the apparent adequacy of *gender confirmation surgery* at the present time suggests such a shift. Readers should note, therefore, that where the term "sex reassignment surgery" has been used, "gender confirmation surgery" could be substituted.

the object of scientific inquiry since at least the late 19th century. While there is plenty of

evidence that people did figure out how to live as a member of the sex to which they were

not assigned at birth, it is also true that there were not really *social* possibilities for doing

so. In other words, while people did transition, in today's language, there weren't obvious

or socially sanctioned ways of doing this. I don't mean to suggest that the psycho-

medical formation around transsexuality made transition possible *simpliciter*. But neither

do I want to elide the fact that the psycho-medical formation did create and sustain

transition as a social possibility insofar as it became something that people were broadly

aware of, through the publicity of high profile cases like Christine Jorgensen's and the

establishment of research clinics. As Meyerowitz notes in *How Sex Changed*, however,

"…technology alone provided neither a necessary nor sufficient precondition for modern

transsexuality" (HSC 21). That is, the social possibility of transsexuality also depended in

part on changes in attitudes and was bolstered by research and advocacy, including

activism on the part of transvestites and transsexuals.[10]

     In the 19th century and into the early 20th, both non-normative sexuality and non-

normative expressions of masculinity and femininity were understood in terms of

inversion.[11] Sexual inversion, during that time, referred to the deviation of sexual

instincts from their "natural" objects, the opposite sex, towards members of one's own

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[10] Importantly, trans people also advocated for a shift *away* from the medical model of transsexuality (HSC 234).

[11] For a discussion of the relationship between the concept of *inversion* and later discourses of transsexuality, see Jay Prosser and Merl Storr, "Introduction: Part III - Transsexuality and Bisexuality." In *Sexology Uncensored: The Documents of Sexual Science*, Lucy Bland and Laura Doan ed., 75–77 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 75.

sex.[12] Inversion could be constitutional or acquired. It could include forms of gender non-conformity, but non-normative sexual orientation and gender identification were not differentiated within the paradigm of inversion in a way that was analogous with later developments. At the time the conceptual distinction between sex and gender that was to emerge later did not exist. However, a normative relationship between a person's sex, their sexuality and what we now refer to as their gender (i.e. one's masculinity or femininity, along with the gendered roles they do or desire to take up in the social world) was established during this time in medico-scientific, sexological discourses. Those assigned male at birth, or men, were considered masculine and were supposed to be sexually attracted to women, whereas those assigned female at birth, or women, were considered feminine and were supposed to be sexually attracted to men. These norms did not originate in the 19th century: they were inscribed in medico-scientific discourses about sexuality at that time, however. Sexuality, as something both phylogenetic and ontogenetic, was thought to be affected by heredity (specifically heritable forms of degeneration, like madness) or by ontogenetic factors that caused development to deviate from a normal trajectory. In Richard von Krafft-Ebbing's foundational work, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, for instance, Krafft-Ebbing included subjects' marital sexual history in their case studies, along with family histories of madness and medical conditions. Inversion for early sexologists could entail either or both the deviation of the normal sexual instinct, which was geared towards reproduction and therefore

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[12] For instance, Havelock Ellis defines congenital inversion as "sexual instinct turned by an inborn constitutional abnormality toward persons of the same sex" (Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex, Vol. 2*, 1).

heterosexual in orientation[13] and/or deviations from normal expressions of masculinity and femininity (where men were supposed to be masculine and women were supposed to be feminine). The broad category of inverts, therefore, included people who would later be considered homosexual, then gay or lesbian, along with gender non-conforming people who were referred to using various terms, both by themselves and by sexologists.[14]

The lack of clear distinction between sexual orientation and what we would now understand as gender identity persisted until at least the 1940s, though it was something that sexologists would later attempt to work out.[15] An example of this lack of distinction can be found in a work written by Michael Dillon entitled *Self: A Study in Ethics and Endocrinology*.[16] In that work Dillon, a transsexual man, developed a framework for

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[13] For a discussion of the historical emergence of the terms "homosexuality" and "heterosexuality" in late 19th century sexology literature, see Jonathan Ned Katz, *The Invention of Heterosexuality,* chapter 2, "The Debut of the Heterosexual," 19–32.

[14] Prosser and Storr retroactively identify some inverts as transsexual (Prosser and Storr 1998, 76). It is outside the scope of this dissertation to discuss the question of whether or not something like transsexual experience existed in the time before the hormonal and surgical techniques that enable medical transition existed. My point in this section is not to draw parallels between diagnostic categories, but rather to point out that there has been a series of medico-scientific developments, including discursive ones, that created the conditions for the developments I'll be discussing in the next section. More specific questions about conceptual continuity and change are outside my scope here, thought they ought to be considerations in a proper genealogy.

[15] Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon* and Stoller's *Sex and Gender* attempt to distinguish between homosexuality, transvestism and transsexuality in a sustained fashion, for example.

[16] Michael Dillon, *Self: A Study in Ethics and Endocrinology* (London: William Heinemann Medical Books, 1946). Dillon's work drew on contemporary endocrinological theory and advanced a psychological theory of 'homosexuality'. The aim of the work, which also includes philosophical and ethical arguments, is to appeal for toleration of forms of sex and gender difference as well as for toleration of homosexuality. Dillon's position can be categorized as broadly liberal and humanist: at the core of his argument in this connection is the idea that the misunderstandings, mistrust and prejudice that gender non-conforming people encounter inhibits them from realizing their full potential, cultivating their talents, and pursuing projects that, if they were able to pursue them, could potentially benefit society (Dillon 1946, 53–54). For a discussion of Dillon's taxonomy of types of homosexuality, see Jay Prosser, "Transsexuals and Transsexologists: Inversion and the Emergence of Transsexual Subjectivity," in *Sexology in Culture: Labeling Bodies and Desires*, ed. Lucy Bland and Laura Doan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998b): 126.

distinguishing between types of "homosexuals"; though he did not have access to the

concept at the time, Dillon's framework now reads as an attempt to distinguish between

non-trans masculine women and feminine men, on the one hand and trans men and

women, on the other.[17] In the German speaking context, the sexologist Magnus

Hirschfeld[18] coined the term "transvestism" in his book *Transvestites* to indicate a broad

range of phenomena that included cross-dressing (as the Latin roots of the term indicate)

and the desire to change, or the feeling that one had changed,[19] sex.[20]

In 1952, the publicity around Christine Jorgensen's transition, which involved

hormone replacement therapy and two genital surgeries, vaulted the possibility of sex and

gender transition into the public consciousness in the U.S. As Harry Benjamin put it,

Jorgensen was "not the first to undergo such surgery [i.e. SRS], but the first whose

transformation was publicized so widely that the news of this therapeutic possibility

spread to the farthest corners of the earth."[21] However, the term "transsexual" was not

widely used in sexological literature until a bit later. The term "transsexual" was used in

1949 by David O. Cauldwell, a physician, in an article entitled "Psychopathia

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[17] Dillon, *Self*, 42–44.

[18] Magnus Hirschfeld (1868–1935) was a German sexologist founder of The Institute for Sexual Science in Berlin, which operated in the 1920's and early 1930's.

[19] Here, I'm referring to a particular case that was first reported by Krafft-Ebbing and later reproduced by Hirschfeld which Krafft-Ebbing referred to as a case of "metamorphosis sexualis paranoica" (Krafft-Ebbing 1908, 202–216; Hirschfeld 1991, 182–197). The case was that of a Hungarian doctor who, felt himself to have transformed into a woman after taking four times the recommended dose of hemp extract (Krafft-Ebbing 1908, 207). The doctor describes the changes in sensation and his sense of his body that ensued in great detail.

[20] Hirschfeld defines "transvestism" as "the strong drive to live in the clothing of that sex that does not belong to the relative build of the body" (Hirschfeld 1991,124). *Transvestites* was published in German in 1910 and not translated into English until 1991; therefore, it is unlikely that most sexologists in the Anglophone context had access to it, which would account for the lack of the term in Dillon's book, for instance. For a discussion of the lack of uptake of German sexology in the U.S., see Gill-Peterson 2018, 64.

[21] Harry Benjamin, *The Transsexual Phenomenon* (New York: Warner Books, 1966), 28. Hereafter, *The Transsexual Phenomenon* is cited in text as TSP.

Transexualis", calling to mind Krafft-Ebbing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (HSC 5).[22]

Magnus Hirschfeld is sometimes credited with inventing the term, according to Susan

Stryker.[23] The term was popularized by Harry Benjamin, who used the term in the 1954

article, "Transsexualism and Transvestism as Psycho-Somatic and Somato-Psychic

Syndromes"[24] and later in the influential and widely read work *The Transsexual*

Phenomenon published in 1966.[25]

The term "gender role" first appeared in two 1955 articles, one by John Money as

single author and in two articles Money co-authored with Joan and John Hampson on

studies of intersex children at John's Hopkins University.[26] The term "gender identity"

was used by Robert Stoller in the 1960s to distinguish between a person's biological sex

and their sense of themself as male or female, masculine or feminine. I will discuss the

conceptual developments of gender, gender identity and gender role in more detail below.

This overview, though cursory, hopefully serves as an adequate picture of the

background against which the conceptual developments that are the object of my analysis

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[22] Cauldwell's original term "transexuality" included only one "s". Subsequently, spelling the term with two "s"s became standard. See David O. Cauldwell. "Psychopathia Transexualis," in *The Transgender Studies Reader,* ed. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (New York: Routledge: 2006), 40–44.

[23] Stryker, *Transgender History,* 18.

[24] Benjamin says of transsexualism in this earlier article that, "It denotes the intense and often obsessive desire to change the entire sexual status including the anatomical structure. While the male transvestite, *enacts* the role of a woman, the transsexualist wants to *be* one and *function* as one, wishing to assume as many of her characteristics as possible, physical, mental and sexual" (Harry Benjamin, "Transsexualism and Transvestism as Psycho-Somatic and Somato-Psychic Syndromes," in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (New York: Routledge, 2006): 46, emphasis original).

[25] See Benjamin, *The Transsexual Phenomenon,* 29–30 for his own discussion of his uptake of the term "transsexualism".

[26] John Money, "Hermaphroditism, Gender and Precocity in Hyper-Adrenocorticism: Psychologic Findings," *Bulletin of the Johns Hopkins Hospital* 96, no. 3 (1955): 253–263; John Money, Joan Hampson and John Hampson, "Hermaphroditism: Recommendations Concerning Assignment of Sex, Change of Sex, and Psychologic Management," *Bulletin of the Johns Hopkins Hospital* 97, no. 4 (1955b): 284–300; John Money, Joan Hampson, and John Hampson, "An Examination of Some Basic Sexual Concepts: The Evidence of Human Hermaphroditism," *Bulletin of the Johns Hopkins Hospital* 97, no. 4 (1955a): 301–319.

here occurred. It is important to also consider, briefly, the trajectory of the medical

developments relevant here. The medical technologies that became relevant in connection

with medicalized sex/gender transition were originally developed to manage intersex

cases. The discovery of hormones in the early 20th century and the subsequent

development of the field of endocrinology made it possible to study the influence of

hormones on animal and human development and medically intervene in cases of

abnormal hormonal conditions affecting development. Intersex conditions, referred to at

the time as "hermaphroditism," had been the object of scientific study since the 19th

century, but developments in endocrinology made it possible to intervene medically in

the development of intersex children during the first half of the 20th century.[27] The

development of plastic surgical techniques in the early 20th century made it possible to

perform sex reassignment or gender confirmation operations during that time.

Now, I'll turn to the specific contributions of John Money, Harry Benjamin and

Robert Stoller. In my analysis of each of their theoretical interventions, I will deploy

elements of the framework for thinking about social possibilities I have developed in the

previous two chapters. Of particular relevance here are the following considerations:

In chapter 1, I drew on Heidegger's ontology of human life, or Dasein, in order to

articulate the way in which Dasein has access to social possibilities through its

understanding, which can be more or less theoretical and includes concepts, practices,

embodiment and other Daseins. The significance of these possibilities can be more or less

transparent to Dasein; though it finds itself in a world in which the significance of

possible ways of life is already given, it can project onto alternative possibilities for its

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[27] For a comprehensive genealogical account of these developments in the U.S., see Gill-Peterson, *Histories of the Transgender Child*.

own reasons. The range of possible ways of life it can depend on is constrained, however, by the world in which it finds itself. It simply does not have access to the significance of certain ways of life that have existed at different times and places because the worlds from which these ways of life derived their significance have passed away. While Heidegger provides a way of thinking about how others influence our access to social possibilities through the *das Man* mode of being-in-the-world and solicitude, Foucault's work provides tools for thinking about the ways in which the social world is shaped by power relations that are inscribed in formations of power and knowledge. That is, Foucault's work can be used to explain how specific social possibilities come about as the result of power's operations in the social field. This is because power flows through *dispositifs*, or heterogeneous ensembles of elements through which it is possible to act on the actions of another in regular ways. *Dispositifs* include forms of knowledge production that affect the way subjects are disclosed and, correlatively, the way in which possibilities are disclosed. *Dispositifs* produce certain possibility-effects as a result of their operation, insofar as they require certain specific components (e.g. institutions, forms of subjectivity) in order to function. Briefly, then, while Heidegger provides a framework for thinking about possibility as an ontological feature of human life, something human beings are always pursuing or getting into and the way in which Dasein has various phenomenological modes of access to getting into possibilities, power relationships shape each of the ways in which Dasein gets into these possibilities. Further, formations of power and knowledge involve theoretical enterprises, concepts and practices and power acts on the body and the formation of subjectivity in a given context. Thus, those things

through which we are given to understand possibilities produce effects on subjects that are sometimes difficult to discern.

Recall that the for-the-sake-of-which is that which determines the relevance of particular things involved in Dasein's projects. In other words, the significance of the entities Dasein encounters gain their significance from Dasein's ultimate priority. Though Heidegger does not address this explicitly, I want to suggest that concept creation and theorization also involve a for-the-sake-of-which. This is an implication of his thematization of the for-the-sake-of-which. We develop conceptual frameworks in order to achieve an ultimate goal of understanding whatever the object of inquiry is. I have argued too that we can think of trans ways of life as ways of navigating problems of existence, or how to project onto possibilities when they are not evident. Given this, I think it is reasonable to thematize trans people's thinking about gender and gender transition as geared towards the ultimate goal of figuring out how to live and access non-obvious possibilities. This is, importantly, a different ultimate goal from the ultimate goal of theoretical investigations into the nature of sex, gender and their development. We can think of the latter as something being a *problem for* a particular theoretical approach or orientation. I do not mean to suggest that the two are always mutually exclusive; rather, I mean to point out that the for-the-sake-of-which of theoretical investigation is constrained, in part, by the ways in which the object of investigation has been disclosed within the field. Given that these investigations are part of formations of power and knowledge, the outcomes of these investigations produce effects that are not merely theoretical. In this particular context, I hope to demonstrate, these theoretical developments affected people's access to the new social possibility of medical transition,

and were tied to normalizing practices that, though not developed for the purpose of enabling transsexual people to access new ways of living gender, proved to be a mode of access for some people to the exclusion of others.

The development of a diagnostic framework for determining who was transsexual and who was not, along with an attempt to identify an etiology for forms of non-normative ways of living gender (which included but was not limited to transsexuality) clearly falls within the purview of a Foucaultian analysis. In this connection, I will be attending specifically to the ways in which assumptions about social possibilities (or lack thereof) of living gender informed knowledge production and recommendations for treatment. In short, normative assumptions about the relationship between sex, gender and sexuality meant that clinicians attempted to impose conservative standards for gender presentation and comportment onto participants in the research clinics. However, what I want to attend to is the way in which this appears to have been informed by the researcher's own views about what was socially possible.

This power-knowledge formation around transsexuality affected the way in which possibilities for living were disclosed, as well as provided a way of getting into a wider, but still limited range of gendered ways of life. The way that the concepts of *gender*, *gender identity* and *transsexuality* were formed in this context is worth considering, since these concepts disclose gendered existence in a particular way, as a particular kind of thing.

John Money

John Money was a sexologist, a psychologist by training, who played a key role in the establishment and development of research on transsexuality. He helped establish the

Gender Identity Clinic at Johns Hopkins in 1966 (HSC 218–219). In 1969 he, along with

co-editor Richard Green, edited a volume entitled *Transsexualism and Sex Reassignment*

that included articles on various aspects of transsexualism, three of which were authored

by Money. Prior to his research on transsexualism Money was involved in research on

intersex conditions at Johns Hopkins as part of what Money called the "Psycho-

Hormonal Research Unit" beginning in the early 1950's.[28] As Nikki Sullivan notes in an

article on Money's research on transsexualism, "Reorienting Transsexualism: From Brain

Organization Theory to Phenomenology", Money is rarely referenced in trans studies

literature.[29] Sullivan thinks that it is likely due to the fact that Money's role in the

development of Intersex Case Management or ICM, which recommended non-consensual

sex assignment for intersex infants, has, understandably and with good reason, come

under scrutiny.[30] As Sullivan's work shows, Money evinced misogynistic and

transphobic views in at least one of his published articles, making it justifiable, in my

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[28] Lisa Downing, Iain Moreland and Nikki Sullivan, "Introduction" in *Fuckology: Critical Essays on John Money's Diagnostic Concepts,* ed. Lisa Downing, Iain Moreland and Nikki Sullivan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 4.

[29] Nikki Sullivan, "Reorienting Transsexualism", in *Fuckology: Critical Essays on John Money's Diagnostic Concepts,* ed. Lisa Downing, Iain Moreland and Nikki Sullivan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 133–134.

[30] Ibid. For the sake of time, I refrain from discussing this issue in detail. Critiques of the ICM are numerous and have been made both by intersex activists and academics working on issues in connection with intersex conditions. I want to flag that there is an extensive literature on intersexuality with which I am not engaging with in this dissertation. For a historical reconstruction of the development of ICM, as well as an important feminist critique of it, see Ann Fausto-Sterling, "Of Gender and Genitals: The Use and Abuse of the Modern Intersexual" and "Should There Only be Two Sexes?" in *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 45–114. For a critical assessment of ICM that includes analysis interviews with physicians, see Suzanne Kessler, "The Medical Construction of Gender: Case Management of Intersexed Infants," *Signs* 16, no. 1 (1990): 3–26. For an overview and contextualization of critiques of ICM within feminist science studies over time, see Iain Moreland, "The Injustice of Intersex: Feminist Science Studies and the Writing of a Wrong," in "Toward a Critique of Guilt: Perspectives from Law and the Humanities, ed. Matthew Anderson, special issue, *Studies in Law, Politics, and Society* 36 (2005): 53–75.

view, to regard his work with a hermeneutics of suspicion for that reason as well.[31] To be clear, then, my purpose here is not to legitimate Money's work by including it in a dissertation on trans issues. Rather, my goal is to analyze Money's concept of gender role and its relationship to the psycho-medical formation of transsexuality.

In what follows, I discuss John Money's conception of gender, the relationship between gender, sex and sexuality, as well as how this conceptualization of gender was related to the ICM. I will also discuss Money's implicit view of social possibilities in one of his early articles co-authored with Joan Hampson and John Hampson.[32] The goal of this section is not to interrogate Money's view of gender identity/role (G I/R) a holistic fashion, given that this poses a substantial scholarly challenge, something outside the scope of this dissertation.[33] Rather, I aim to show how the concept of gender came about as part of a power-knowledge formation organized around the treatment of intersex

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[31] Nikki Sullivan, "Reorienting Transsexualism," 143–150. The article Sullivan discusses is an article Money co-authored in 1970 with John G. Brennan entitled "Heterosexual vs. Homosexual Attitudes; Male Partners' Perception of the Feminine Image of Male Transsexuals". I learned about this particular article too late to include it in my research for this chapter, and I consequently do not discuss it. Sullivan discusses the article in the chapter, however, and quotes from the article at length which, in my view, provides sufficient evidence to support the claim that Sullivan makes, namely, that the views in this article were sexist, misogynistic and transphobic.

[32] Specifically Money, Hampson, and Hampson, "Hermaphroditism."

[33] As Lisa Downing, Nikki Sullivan and Iain Moreland note in the introduction to their co-written volume on some of Money's concepts, *Fuckology: Critical Essays on John Money's Diagnostic Concepts,* Money wrote over five hundred articles and over forty books (Downing et al. 2015, 1). Nikki Sullivan's two excellent articles from the above collection, "The Matter of Gender" and "Reorienting Transsexualism: From Brain Organization Theory to Phenomenology" have proved invaluable in orienting my view of Money's work on G I/R. I should note, too, that Sullivan is drawing on a larger body of Money's works than I am in this dissertation. Given that, in my view, more research into Money's corpus on my part is ultimately necessary to fully substantiate the claims I make here, this section should be read with a view to the provisional nature of these conclusions. While I think that the research I have conducted positions me to make the claims I have made, subsequent research into Money's corpus may complicate or call into question certain claims or conclusions. While this is, perhaps, a constitutive feature of all research, I wanted to be explicit about it in this connection because I am aware of the way in which the scope of my research here has been limited due to time constraints.

children, initially, and was later carried over in to a context in which transsexuals were the object of inquiry.

According to Money, he coined the term "gender role" in the first of series of articles about hermaphroditism,[34] articles that would contribute to the clinical protocols for treating intersex conditions referred to later as Intersex Case Management or ICM.[35] Money, working as part of a team with John and Joan Hampson who were coauthors on some of the articles, aimed to determine 1) how gender was formed in early childhood and 2) how it could be made consistent with the sex assignment of the child. They thought this was possible due to the way in which Money and the Hampsons thought gender was formed: by the child's perception of their own genitals and the perceptions of their caregivers.[36]

The concept of *gender role* came about, according to Money, due to a need to isolate the social dimension of sex when investigating how to medically manage intersex children in order to ensure normal developmental trajectories. In the article "Hermaphroditism: Recommendations Concerning Assignment of Sex, Change of Sex, and Psychologic Management," Money, Joan Hampson, and John Hampson defined

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[34] The use of the term "hermaphroditism" here is consistent with the terminology in common use at the time. In contemporary discussions, the term "intersex" or "intersexuality" is preferred. Though I switch back and forth between terms, I do occasionally use the term "hermaphroditism" or "hermaphrodite" in order to be consistent with the terminology used in the works I'm referring to. All other things being equal, I use contemporary language due to the pejorative connotations of the term "hermaphrodite." When I do use the latter term, I do this in order to avoid terminological confusion. Money defines the term "hermaphrodite" in the following way: "By the term, hermaphrodite, is meant a person who congenitally possesses an atypical mixture of male and female elements in the reproductive system, so that their somatic status as male or female is ambiguous" (Money 1955, "Hermaphroditism, Gender and Precocity", 253).

[35] John Money, "The Conceptual Neutering of Gender and the Criminalization of Sex," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 14, no. 3 (1985): 280; Downing et al., "Introduction: On the "Duke of Dysfunction". Germon cites the 1955 articles as containing "the first published expression of the protocols known as intersex case management (ICM)" (Germon 2009, 43–44).

[36] Money, Hampson, and Hampson, "Hermaphroditism," 292–294.

gender role as "all those things that a person says or does to disclose himself or herself as having the status of boy or man, girl or woman, respectively. It includes, but is not restricted to sexuality in the sense of eroticism."[37] According to Money, Hampson and Hampson, gender role was not inborn, but rather acquired.[38] The acquisition of a gender role was like that of a native language: it was acquired during a critical period, and that in order for a child to be well adjusted, an unambiguous gender role ought to be acquired during the critical period and not disrupted.[39] They believed that children became aware of gender around eighteen months, and that the critical period of gender role acquisition was between 3 ½ and 4 ½ years of age, after which changing an intersex child's sex assignment would prove too disruptive to the child's development; this justified, in his view, surgically intervening in an early stage of a child's development.[40] These interventions were necessary, according to them, due to the fact that gender role is established very early in life.

Gender role for Money was one element in a complex developmental picture consisting of chromosomes, fetal gonads, fetal hormones, genital appearance, "neural pathways", other people's behavior towards the child, the child's "body image/schema", juvenile gender identity/role, pubertal hormones, pubertal eroticism, pubertal morphology, all of which culminated in an individual's eventual adult gender

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[37] Money, Hampson and Hampson, "Hermaphroditism", 285. An identical definition of *gender role* can be found in Money's single-author publication from the same year, "Hermaphroditism, Gender and Precocity in Hyper-Adrenocorticism: Psychologic Findings", p. 254.

[38] Money, Hampson and Hampson, "Hermaphroditism," 285.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., 289–290.

identity/role.[41] The development of gender role and genital appearance were connected insofar as a child's gender identity was formed in large part on the basis of how other people perceived the child's sex, and how the child perceived their own sexed status. Thus, as far as the ontogenesis of gender identity/role was concerned, gender for Money was tied to sex, and part of a larger developmental picture that included various biological components of sex (like chromosomes and hormones) and erotic orientation or sexuality. Money specifically did not conceive of gender as something separable from sex and sexuality. Moreover, he was vocally opposed to conceptually decoupling gender from sex, something that he believed had occurred over time due to the split Robert Stoller introduced between *gender identity* and *gender role*.[42]

In an article provocatively entitled "The Conceptual Neutering of Gender and the Criminalization of Sex", Money explains the circumstances that brought him to coin the term "gender role" and voiced his displeasure at the trajectory of the use of the concept of gender in the years after it was coined; he objected, specifically, to a separation between sex and sexuality, on the one hand, and gender role, on the other (i.e. the "desexualization" of gender role).[43] Money explains that he could not use a unified concept of sex in the context in which he coined the term *gender role*, given that intersex patients had atypical sex organs and that clinical intervention into intersex development

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[41] This list is a more or less verbatim transcription of the diagram found in Money, "The Conceptual Neutering of Gender," 1985, 286. This diagram, Money notes, is a reproduction of the one found in John Money and Anke Ehrhardt, *Man and Woman, Boy and Girl: The Differentiation and Dimorphism of Gender Identity from Conception to Maturity,* John's Hopkins University Press, 1972.

[42] Money, "The Conceptual Neutering of Gender." 282–283.

[43] Ibid., 279 and 283.

required that the various variables of sex be talked about separately.[44] He writes of his intention that he, "wanted to be able to investigate each variable independently as a possible determining influence in the hermaphroditic person's existence in society as a boy or girl, man or woman."[45] Money rejected the term "social sex" because it, in his view, elided the role of sex organs in sexual activity with other people.[46] Similarly, the term "sex role" did not have the erotic connotation Money wanted to build into the term. So, he writes:

> I could not use the term sex role to mean the genitoerotic sex role, since it already had been preempted to mean nongenitoerotic, social sex role. I might have made due with complex expressions like "social sex exclusive of genital sex," or "social sex inclusive of erotic imagery as male or female." To avoid this pedantry, I decided not to further overburden the word *sex*, which already must do service as a civil status as well as an activity in bed. Instead, I borrowed *gender* from it sequestered place in grammar and philology, and used it in the term *gender role.*"[47]

For Money, the term "gender role" and the concept of *gender* were not meant to exclude sex from the picture. Money attributes the conceptual drift of gender from his intended meaning to two different splits or partitions. The first was the separation of gender identity from gender role.[48] The second split was a separation of sex from gender. Money argues that this partitioning had the effect of reinscribing the well-known metaphysical separation between mind and body.[49] I will discuss this conceptual partition

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[44] Ibid., 280.

[45] Ibid., 281.

[46] Ibid., 281

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid, 282. Money attributes the term *gender identity* to Evelyn Hooker in connection with "homosexual studies" (ibid.).

[49] Ibid.

in section 4, where I discuss Stoller's conceptualization of *core gender identity,* the split between *gender identity* and *gender role*, and their relationship to sex.

As I noted previously, the concept of *gender role* emerged in the context of attempts to develop medical protocols that would eventually become intersex case management or ICM. It was necessary, in this framework, to make gender role an object of analysis in order to determine how it was formed, so as to be able to predict the trajectory of a child's development. The goal of this projection was to ensure that children developed into heterosexual subjects who would not be dissatisfied with their gender role later on and desire to change sex.[50] Money, of course, was not interested in only predicting the development of intersex children's gender roles, but also with intervening to ensure that they would neither desire to change sex or gender later on, and would develop as heterosexual subjects.[51] The acceptability of medical, psychological and social intervention in order to normalize intersex children, in other words, was presupposed by Money.

Money was later involved in research on transsexuality, as I mentioned at the beginning of this section, at the Johns Hopkins Gender Identity clinic which operated from 1966–1979. In two articles appearing in the 1969 edited volume *Transsexualism and Sex Reassignment* which Money co-edited with Richard Green, it becomes clear how the concept of gender identity enabled him to pursue specific inquiries in connection with transsexuality.[52] There, he and Primrose, his co-author for one of the articles, write that,

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[50] Money, Hampson, and Hampson 1955, 290. For a discussion of the biopolitical aspects of this project, see Repo, *The Biopolitics of Gender*, chapter 1: "The Birth of Gender", 24–48.

[51] Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body,* 72.

[52] More genealogical research is needed to track the uptake of the term "gender identity" in the literature during this time. As noted here, Money used the term "psychosexual status" interchangeably in this article,

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"A masculine or feminine gender identity is a global concept or entity which has to be

analyzed into components. These components then can be used as cumulative indicators

of an individual's psychosexual status or gender identity."[53] In what follows, the authors

summarize a series of tests administered to eight male-to-female[54] transsexual patients at

the clinic in order to gather data on five criteria with a view to better understanding

transsexuality, and specifically "sexual dimorphism" in connection with transsexuality.[55]

Although Money thought that genetic and hormonal factors played a role in the

development of sex and, consequently, gender, he believed that "postnatal" factors,

specifically sex assignment and sex of rearing, ultimately determined gender identity or

"psychosexual status."[56] However, in the case of transsexualism, here he speculated that

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which suggests that he was not wholly comfortable with using term "gender identity" exclusively. Money does not define the term "gender identity" in these articles. The volume includes a glossary listing relevant medical terms, explanations of psychological tests administered to subjects and a few concepts from psychology like paranoia. Interestingly, although the glossary includes entries for "homosexuality", "transsexuality" and "transvestism", it *does not* include an entry for "gender" or "gender identity".

[53] John Money and Clay Primrose, "Sexual Dimorphism and Dissociation in the Psychology of Male Transsexuals," in *Transsexualism and Sex Reassignment,* ed. Richard Green and John Money (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969): 115.

[54] I've chosen to use the term "male-to-female transsexual" here because it is close to the terms Money and Primrose used in the article, but is less confusing. The terms they used, "male transsexual" and "female transsexual," are confusing, and the contemporary language of "transsexual woman or "trans woman" was not used at the time.

[55] The five criteria Money and Primrose identified as being salient were "physical expression of aggression in childhood, genitopelvic functioning, imagery during masturbation and/or sexual intercourse, evidence of a penis phantom [sic] postoperatively, and degrees of maternalistic feeling" (Money and Primrose, 1969, 116). Money used the same five criteria to analyze "female transsexuals" or FTM transsexuals in a second article, coauthored with a different author, which appeared in the same volume. The list was identical aside from the following important exceptions: 1) "penis phantom" was changed to "phantom breast and womb" and 2) "maternalistic feeling" was changed to "degree of parentalism" (Money and Brennan, 1969, 138). Much can be said about what these criteria, as well as the subtle differences between these sets of criteria, evince about Money's conservative attitudes about gender roles and gendered behavior, attitudes which were not unusual at the time. However, this analysis is, unfortunately, outside the scope of the current discussion.

[56] Money and Primrose, "Sexual Dimorphism," 115 and 128.

prenatal hormonal factors could possibly play an etiological role,[57] while noting that "maldevelopments" at any point during the developmental trajectory culminating in gender identity could contribute to the development of transsexualism.[58]

Now, I'll turn to a consideration of how gender is disclosed in these articles. First of all, gender is disclosed as part of a developmental picture that includes sex and sexuality, and adult gender identity is the terminus of a developmental process that includes many interacting factors. Gender was originally identified as a theoretical object in order to intervene in the development of intersex infants and it later enabled Money to attempt to identify constitutive features of transsexuality in transsexual women and transsexual men. The way in which gender fit into a developmental picture including biological, social and sexual elements informed this investigation and provided grounds for him to speculate about possible etiologies. Gender, for Money, shows up as something that is malleable and influenced by a number of factors; however, at the same time at an early stage of development, gender identity becomes fixed, lending an urgency to interventions into intersex children's sex and gender development. As something malleable, its development could be potentially controlled insofar as various components of sex and gender development could be identified, isolated and subjected to modification.

Money and the Hampsons were pessimistic about the possibility of intersex infants being treated as unequivocal members of one sex or the other.[59] They thought that

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[57] Ibid., 128.

[58] "The process of achieving a complete gender identity is a developmental progression, beginning with genetic foundations and terminating with social learning. A weakness or maldevelopment at any one stage of the progression need not directly induce a specific defect in the final identity. It does, however, introduce an instability in the structure, making each subsequent developmental level more vulnerable to defect" (Money and Primrose, "Sexual Dimorphism," 127). The idea that appeals to biological explanations of the etiology of transsexualism was common at the time is suggested by Stoller's remarks on etiological speculations in connection with transsexualism in his article in the same volume, "Parental Influences in Male Transsexualism", 153).

because "the public construes an hermaphrodite as being half boy, half girl", the parents of intersex children had to be "disabused of this conception immediately."[60] Money's pessimism implies, I want to suggest, that he assumed certain view of social possibilities, namely, that surgical intervention on intersex infants and children in order to facilitate the development of a stable gender role or identity was necessary because there were a lack of other means for integrating intersex children into society in such a way that they would be well-adjusted children and adults.[61] The development of the medical, psychological and familial interventions that comprised Money and the Hampson's therapeutic recommendations can be read as attempts to control and eliminate aleatory elements introduced into a normalized field of sex, sexuality and gender. The for-the-sake-of-which of these procedures, then, was to bring about social adjustment in children in a way consistent with normative pictures of what normal sex, sexuality and gender entailed. The normalizing function of the ICM has been frequently discussed.[62]

What I want to point out here is the way in which the medical for-the-sake-of-which in this case was oriented towards the ultimate goal of maintaining the current relationship between sex-sexuality-gender and the social possibilities assigned to the two genders it presupposes. Further, the for-the-sake-of-which of Money's theoretical enterprises at this time was geared towards producing a picture of the developmental

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[59] Money, Hampson, and Hampson, "Hermaphroditism," 291.

[60] Ibid.

[61] It is necessary to note that there are several intersex conditions that require medical interventions. Specifically, there is a form of congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH) that causes salt losing that is potentially life threatening (Gill-Peterson 2018, 103). Fausto-Sterling also notes that, in addition to salt losing in cases of CAH, higher frequencies of gonadal tumors and hernias also sometimes accompany intersex conditions (Fausto-Sterling 2000, 101). I do not mean to call into question the necessity medical interventions in these cases.

[62] See Kessler, "The Medical Construction of Gender"; Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body*; Gill-Peterson, *Histories of the Transgender Child*.

relationship between sex and gender so that it would become possible to intervene in ways that would ensure normal development. As such, it is a conceptual framework geared, in a way, towards the disclosure and management of social possibilities. This normalizing medical for-the-sake-of-which is quite different, of course, from one in which the ultimate priority would be given to (1) retaining sensation in the patient's genitals and (2) refraining from medically intervening when not medically necessary until children reach a point where they can make decisions about their own treatment. This alternative for-the-sake-of-which is geared towards a different set of social possibilities, and is projecting onto a world in which it is unnecessary to assign infants to one of two binary sexes without their consent. In *Sexing the Body,* Fausto-Sterling sketches out an alternative, what she calls her "utopia."[63] In this scenario, medical interventions would only be considered necessary in cases where the life of the child is at stake, genital surgeries would *not* be performed "before the age of reason" and "[s]uch technological intervention would be a cooperative venture among physician, patient, and gender advisors."[64]In Fausto-Sterling's utopia, in other words, the for-the-sake-of-which of medical interventions for intersex people would be organized around *their* autonomy and their physical and psychological well-being.

Money's research into transsexuality at the Johns Hopkins Gender Identity Clinic contributed to a power knowledge complex that was forming around transsexuality and transvestism. This power knowledge formation made available certain social possibilities for living gender via protocols for medical and social transition. During the 1960's a number of university-based clinics were established that conducted research into

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[63] Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body,* 101.

[64] Ibid.

transsexualism and performed SRS (HSC 222–223). After the institutionalization of

transsexual surgery, a model for medical treatment emerged for evaluating candidates for

surgery (HSC 224). By protocols for social transition, I mean this model for medical

treatment that begins with psychotherapy and ends with surgery. The model consisted of

several prerequisites for surgery: psychological evaluation, a period of time spent living

as the "other" sex (sometimes referred to as the "real-life test") and hormone replacement

therapy (HSC 224–225, 273; WG 119–120).[65] The practice of sex reassignment surgery,

in combination with the publicity around certain high-profile cases, such as Christine

Jorgensen's, helped to influence public opinion about gender variance. In that sense, it

was a kind of "social therapy" that convinced the public "of the seriousness of gender-

identity disorders", which ought to be under the purview of medical management,

according to Money.[66] That these protocols relied on stereotyped notions of femininity

and placed demands on potential candidates for medical transition that were difficult to

meet has been noted.[67]

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[65] Julia Serano's *Whipping Girl* is hereafter cited in text as WG. Benjamin outlined this treatment protocol in *The Transsexual Phenomenon,* following the recommendations regarding hormone replacement therapy (HRT) as a prerequisite for surgery Christian Hamburger and his team in their 1953 article "Transvestism" (TSP 119; Hamburger, et al. 1953). These protocols were later codified as the Standards of Care (SOC) published by the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association (HBIGDA) beginning in 1979 (Riggs et al. 2019, 919). HBIGDA was later renamed the World Professional Association for Transgender Health. The current standards of care (the 7th edition of the SOC) include psychological evaluation as a prerequisite for surgical procedures and recommends that those considering surgery live "in a gender role that is congruent with their gender identity" (WPATH 60) for at least twelve months, though the SOC emphasizes individualized approaches to treatment in other areas, such as psychotherapy and HRT (WPATH 30, 34–35, 59–60, 104–105).

[66] Money and Brennan, "Sexual Dimorphism," 151. "The sex-reassignment procedure is not only an individual therapy, but in a sense a social one also. It is a dramatic example, for the general public, of the seriousness of the gender identity-disorders. The very existence of so radical a procedure, as well as its newness, has helped, therefore, to change the social and legal climate regarding the "social offender disorders" of sex. It will help to bring these disorders within the purview of science and medicine, where they belong, instead of under the jurisdiction of the police and prosecuting attorney."

[67] See Serano, *Whipping Girl,* pp. 116–126 for an excellent overview and discussion of these gatekeeping mechanisms and the way in which those clinicians evaluating potential candidates for medical transition

In addition to this consideration, it is important to attend here to the point that for Money and Stoller the ultimate goal of research into transsexuality appears to have been transsexuality's eventual elimination. In one of the 1969 articles Money and Brennan write, "The sex-reassignment procedure for transsexualism mobilizes the energies of many different specialists in research. Herein lies its true significance. Its promise to the future is that it will be responsible for those very discoveries by which sex reassignment will be displaced as superfluous". [68] Taken in the context of Money's work on intersex conditions and gender identity development, I read this passage to suggest that the ultimate aim of research involving transsexual subjects will be to figure out a way to intervene such that sex reassignment surgery or SRS is obviated, perhaps through interventions at an earlier point in development. Although Stoller and Money differed in their views regarding the possible etiology of transsexuality, on this point they appear to be in agreement, as I will discuss later when I analyze Stoller's comportment towards this field.

Lastly, Money, like Stoller, regarded those with atypical sex and gender features to be "experiments of nature."[69] As experiments of nature or natural experiments, intersex and trans lives were used as the material to produce truths about sex and gender *in general*. It was through these abnormal cases that truths about sex and gender were obtained. This, I want to suggest, set a precedent for how trans ways of life are disclosed in research

operationalized sexist stereotypes about femininity in their evaluations. Serano also notes, importantly, that gatekeeping measures were aimed at reducing discomfort for cissexuals (non-transsexuals): "At every turn, the gatekeepers prioritized their concern for the feelings of cissexuals who were related to, or acquainted with, the transsexual over those of the trans person" (WG 125).

[68] Money and Brennan, "Sexual Dimorphism," 151.

[69] John Money, "Gender-Transposition Theory and Homosexual Genesis," *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* 10, no.2 (1984): 79.

contexts (i.e. as material), which is something that continues to characterize the treatment of trans lives in academic contexts at present, though trans people are often the ones using their own lives as this material. While it is outside the scope of this dissertation to adequately develop a position on how trans lives have been used as material for theorizing, and the extent to which this is analogous and/or disanalogous to the way in which trans lives served as material for psycho-medical theorizing about sex and gender, this issue is indicated by several analyses in trans theory of academic treatments of trans issues (specifically transsexuality). This is indicated by at least two theoretical trends. The first is a critique works in feminist theory and queer theory. For instance, scholars such as Henry Rubin and Viviane Namaste have argued that the academic discourses of queer theory and feminism use trans lives as material for proving points about the social construction of gender, something both of the contest due to the way in which these analyses elide transsexual experiences.[70] The second is the trend of using one's personal experience as material for theorizing, something that is true of all three of the works of trans theory I discuss in chapter 4.

The way that transsexuality was disclosed in the psycho-medical context also puts gender, along with sexuality, within an *episteme* in which it is something subject to rules of truth and falsity. There is something called gender, its features can be disentangled, measured and known. It is something that can be said to be normal and abnormal. All of these developments, I want to suggest, had extensive impacts on the way in which we

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[70] Henry Rubin, "Trans Studies: Between a Metaphysics of Presence and Absence," in *Reclaiming Genders: Transsexual Grammars at the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Stephen Whittle and Kate More (London: Cassell, 1999): 178–186; Viviane Namaste, "Undoing Theory: The "Transgender Question" and the Epistemic Violence of Anglo-American Feminist Theory," *Hypatia* 24: no. 3 (Summer 2009): 11–32. Namaste critiques, specifically, the way in which violence against trans people has been conceptualized in such a way such that the gendered nature of violence against trans women, some of whom engage in sex work, is elided (Namaste, "Undoing Theory," 18).

understand ourselves and our lives as gendered, though these developments were particularly relevant for intersex and trans people in particular.

Attention to the theoretical framing of gender as a piece of a particular knowledge production project geared towards understanding, as part of the means of ensuring, normal sex and gender development in intersex cases reveals how those with abnormal sex and gender characteristics posed a problem for this theoretical endeavor. The way in which intersex children, and later, transsexuals, posed a problem for Money was due to the fact that they did not conform to the model of development in which sex, gender and sexuality were normatively linked together and unfolded along normal developmental trajectories. This model simultaneously assumed a commonsense understanding of the relationship between sex, gender and sexuality and attempted to isolate components of this developmental model that could be subjected to interventions like sex assignment surgeries. Money also implicitly assumed a lack of social possibilities for those who do deviate from this normative alignment: this is evinced by the justification for sex assignments that potentially produce sterility as a result. Money, Hampson and Hampson argue that sex assignments producing sterility in cases where children may, one day, be fertile is justified because whether or not people end up having children depends on their sexual orientation and their social adjustment in addition to their fertility.[71] They assume that reproduction will not be possible in cases where children grow up to be "considered homosexual and maladjusted by society."[72] The solution to the problems of possible maladjustment and sexual deviance was to intervene at a physical level in order to align the child's sex and gender, operationalizing the developmental picture in which the

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[71] Money, Hampson, and Hampson, "Hermaphroditism," 290.

[72] Ibid.

child's perception of their own genitals, along with the perceptions of care givers and others, would solidify the child's understanding of themself as belonging to one sex and not the other; the possibility that a child could be well adjusted with ambiguous genitalia did not seem likely on their account. Gender is considered a part of a developmental picture that enables individuals to form heterosexual relationships that lead to reproduction. ICM thus functions to stabilize and maintain the narrow range of possible alignments between sex, gender and sexuality. In other words, its aim is to reproduce those gendered ways of life it assumes are the only possible ones. Other possibilities of embodiment and of development threaten to create situations for which the social world is ill equipped to cope, according to the assumptions underpinning the ICM. Money, Hampson and Hampson tacitly assume that the social world will not accommodate sex and gender difference, such that assigning a sex is necessary not only for normal psychological development but also normal social adjustment; assigning sex, in turn, insures that different ways of socially accommodating the difference of intersex children will not develop, since this is preempted by medical management.[73] The way that this discursive and practical formation produces in the field of social possibilities is obvious: if sex and gender are linked, then in cases were an individual's sex is ambiguous or where one's sex and gender do not conform to normative expectations about their future romantic relationship, the solution to this is not to change the way in which this affects how one can be in the world through fostering social change, for instance, but rather the solution is to modify one's body in order to obviate this lack of fit. In the case of intersex children, Money, Hampson and Hampson recommended this be done without the child's consent. It leaves intact the way in which sex and gender organize the social world and

[73] Money, Hampson and Hampson, "Hermaphroditism," 294–295.

are tied to sets of different social possibilities designated "for" one sex (and now gender) or the other. This formation seeks to control the aleatory dimension introduced into the field of sex, sexuality and gender by individuals whose sex, sexuality and/or gender deviated from the norm and therefore posed problems not just for sexologists, but also for the social order.

Harry Benjamin

Though Harry Benjamin was not the first to coin the concepts of transsexuality and transvestism, he did put them to extensive use in his influential 1966 book *The Transsexual Phenomenon*. In that work and in an earlier article from 1954, "Transsexualism and Transvestism as Psycho-Somatic and Somato-Psychic Syndromes", he proposed a diagnostic rubric for thinking about the difference between homosexuality, transvestism and transsexuality. Benjamin, a sexologist trained as an endocrinologist, was an advocate for transvestites and transsexuals (HSC 5–6). Benjamin's impact on knowledge production around transsexuality was substantial and the Harry Benjamin association, which was later renamed the World Professional Association for Transgender Health or WPATH established the standards of care for transgender patients that is still referred to by clinicians today (WP 119). In both *The Transsexual Phenomenon* and the earlier article, Benjamin makes statements that imply a certain understanding of social possibility. I want to suggest that, at times, this understanding of social possibility appears to have informed his recommendations to transsexuals seeking his help. His pessimistic attitude towards the amount of resistance transsexual people would face is evinced in an advice column he wrote to people considering surgery,

something I'll discuss a little later in this section. In virtue of this stance, a reasonable interpretation of Benjamin's role in the development of the psycho-medical protocols for medical transition was that he was involved in the management of social possibilities in connection with gender, while he also contributed to a certain horizon of social possibility insofar as he was involved in advocacy and research in connection with transsexuality and transvestism.

When thinking about the way in which Benjamin's concepts fit into the power-knowledge formation around transsexualism, it is important to consider the concepts *transsexualism* and *transvestism* together. Benjamin is remembered as a sexologist who distinguished the complex of phenomena called "transsexualism" from "transvestism".[74] While Benjamin's definition of transsexualism in terms of a desire to modify one's sexed morphology to bring it in line with one's sense of self has been emphasized,[75] what does not receive sufficient attention is the fact that he conceptualized transvestism and transsexuality as phenomena existing along a continuum. Benjamin created a scale to reflect this continuum and he based his scale on Kinsey's seven-point sexual orientation scale (S.O.S). According to the Kinsey sexual orientation scale, a value of 0 was assigned

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[74] Benjamin's obituary from 1986 in the *New York Times* says of Benjamin that, "He was widely considered to have been the first student of transsexualism to discern that it was different from homosexuality or transvestism – phenomena with which it was often confused" (Pace,1986). This is not an entirely accurate characterization, depending on one's interpretation of transsexualism as a phenomenon. If one takes the view that what was later called transsexualism can be discerned in earlier sexology accounts, then this process was a long one that Benjamin ultimately solidified with his terminological interventions. Benjamin wrote that prior to his work on transsexualism transvestism was a "well-known entity" [i.e. a medical entity], and that his contribution to research regarding transvestism and transsexualism was to identify "the related but much more severe syndrome of a reversed gender-role orientation" (Harry Benjamin, "Introduction," in *Transsexualism and Sex Reassignment*, ed. Richard Green and John Money (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969): 4).

[75] Benjamin says of the difference between transsexualism and transvestism that, "True transsexuals feel that they *belong* to the other sex, they want to *be* and *function* as members of the opposite sex, not only to appear as such…This attitude appears to be the chief differential diagnostic point between the two syndromes (sets of symptoms)—that is, those of transvestism and transsexualism" (TSP 29, emphasis original).

to people who were exclusively heterosexual, and a value of 6 assigned to people who were exclusively homosexual. The scale permitted a range of values indicating degrees of hetero- and homosexuality between these two values. Benjamin used the sexual orientation scale (often now referred to as the "Kinsey scale") to devise his own scale to track the differences he saw between transvestism, which he characterized as a desire "to dress in the clothes of the opposite sex" and transsexualism, a term which for him "denotes the intense and often obsessive desire to change the entire sexual status including the anatomical structure."[76] For Benjamin, transsexuals were characterized by unease and dissatisfaction with their sex and/or gender assignment (TSP 27).[77] However, the reason why transvestism and transsexualism could exist on a continuum for him was that both transvestism and transsexualism involved what he called "sex role disorientation" and "sex and gender indecision" (TSP 31 and 35). Individuals were located along the continuum based on the intensity of their distress and the measures that were sufficient for alleviating their sex and gender distress. Transvestites fell at the end of the scale represented by lower numeric values (1–3) and these values corresponded to a lower degree of emotional distress. Patients with a high degree of distress were assigned to the transsexualism end of the scale, represented by higher numeric values (3–6). Benjamin assigned a value of 0 to people "of normal sex and gender orientation for whom ideas of "dressing" or sex change are completely foreign and definitely unpleasant, whether that person is hetero-, bi-, or homosexual"; in contemporary language, the value of 0 was assigned to non-trans people (TSP 39).

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[76] Benjamin, "Psycho-somatic and Somato-psychic Syndromes," 46.

[77] "The transsexual (TS) male or female is deeply unhappy as a member of the sex (or gender) to which he or she is assigned."

Benjamin did, for the purposes of his analysis in *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, distinguish between types; however, he also thought that there was overlap between types, writing that, "[a]n overlapping or blurring of types is certainly frequent" (TSP 38). Although Benjamin thought that the desire for genital surgery could serve as a differential criterion, he also acknowledged that sharply differentiating between transvestism and transsexualism was not possible (TSP 35).

Several things are notable about Benjamin's conceptualization of transvestism and transsexuality on a scale intended to track the degree of one's sex and gender discomfort. The first is that transsexuality is not disclosed as a discrete phenomenon reducible to the "trapped in the wrong body" stereotype. While discomfort with one's body is a factor, it is one among several factors that Benjamin used to locate individuals along the scale. The scale thus discloses trans phenomena in such a way as to make a range of ways of life intelligible: for some people, wearing clothing consistent with their gender is enough to alleviate their discomfort, others need surgery in order to achieve this (TSP 35). Benjamin makes room for this kind of variation and discusses it in his model. Thus, it becomes clear that not all early conceptualizations of trans ways of life were as simplistic and reductive as the now commonplace notion that transsexuals are "trapped in the wrong body" suggests. The genealogical question then becomes what factors (discursive practices, political forces, social and media forces, etc.) contributed to the dominance of the "wrong body" idea. Given the framework I've proposed, one possible answer to this question is that, given the way that *das Man* discloses things as readily understandable and ambiguous in an everyday manner, it makes sense that Benjamin's position, which had the potential to disclose a more nuanced view of the variations between possible trans

ways of life, was watered down to a "trapped in the wrong body" picture over time

because this was the easiest way of making sense of how he conceptualized the difference

between transvestism and transsexuality.[78] The number of possible solutions to the

problems of existence trans people encountered that were disclosed in Benjamin's text

are also more numerous than medical transition. What this suggests, then, is that this

more nuanced picture of trans ways of life was likely subsequently ignored and largely

forgotten about, such that we tend to think of medical thinking about trans ways of life at

this time as revolving around transsexuality and a medical transition exclusively.

   The normalization of medical transition does not appear to have been an inevitability,

even with the predominance of medical authority around the mid-century (here, I am

using "normalization" in a general, non-technical sense). That is, there was debate about

what the best "treatment" for transsexualism consisted in, something that Benjamin

addresses in *The Transsexual Phenomenon*. He writes that many physicians were

skeptical of medical treatment and thought that psychological treatment was a better

course of action[79] and that transsexual people encountered hostility and misunderstanding

from physicians (TSP 115). Benjamin argued that surgery ought to be available to

transsexual people on therapeutic grounds:

> Since it is evident, therefore, that the mind of the transsexual cannot be adjusted to
> the body, it is logical and justifiable to attempt the opposite, to adjust the body to the
> mind. If such a thought is rejected, we would be faced with a therapeutic nihilism to
> which I could never subscribe in view of the experiences I have had with patients

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[78] Stone also notes that this was an oversimplification of his view, albeit one that was operationalized by clinicians (Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back", 228).

[79] He writes that even after the publication of a journal article by Christian Hamburger detailing transsexual medical treatment in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) in 1953, "many physicians were critical of the use of any treatment other than psychotherapy in a condition apparently of a psychopathological nature" (29). He notes that hospital boards would not grant permission for surgeries (TSP 74). Benjamin also rejects androgen therapy for MTF transsexual people as a therapeutic option (TSP 119).

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who have undoubtedly been salvaged or at least helped by their conversion (TSP 116).[80]

Benjamin appears to have been primarily motivated by the suffering of the trans people who sought his help. It is reasonable to interpret what he was doing as advocating for what he thought was the most effective solution to the problems transsexual people faced in a context where it was not obvious that medical transition that utilized hormone replacement therapy and surgery would be the best solution. This is a for-the-sake-of-which that is, arguably, a bit different from those of Money and Stoller, who appear to have been more motivated by scientific interest, and it is closer to the for-the-sake-of-whiches of the transsexual people who sought out his help. Since Benjamin is working in a context where the power-knowledge formations of medicine and psychology can be leveraged in ways that have serious consequences for those trans people who became involved in them, Benjamin's leveraging of his medical authority was no small matter. Thus, in the very complicated development of the emergence of stable and relatively accessible social possibilities for medical transition,[81] Benjamin's advocacy appears to have played a key role. This is notable, given the "turf war" between medicine and psychiatry over the proper "treatments" for transsexualism and transvestism during that time (HSC 107).

Benjamin was clearly sympathetic to the situation of transsexuals and transvestites (HSC 107). I want to suggest that, when it comes to the difference between the clinical

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[80] In this book, Benjamin uses the term "conversion operation" to refer to surgery to alleviate gender dissonance. It is unclear to me from where he derived this term, though he appears to have taken it from elsewhere and not devised it himself: he refers to it early on in the text as "a so-called 'conversion operation'" (TSP 27). In the passage above, it unclear if by "conversion" he means "conversion operation" or conversion in some more general sense.

[81] A thorough discussion of the medical developments that made medical transition possible is outside the scope of this dissertation.

and scientific for-the-sake-of-whiches of these sexologists, the difference between Benjamin's and that of his patients appears to be the smallest. There are at least two reasons supporting this conclusion. The first is that *The Transsexual Phenomenon* itself can be read as a bid to convince people that trans ways of life ought to be tolerated and can, therefore, be interpreted as contributing to the making-possible of trans ways of life through appeal. A particularly striking line makes this intention plain: "It is my hope that this volume may induce doctors as well as laymen who may come across the transsexual phenomenon to assume a tolerant and rational attitude and let the light of facts replace the ever-present twilight of prejudices" (TSP 115).

That being said, his advice to people seeking out medical interventions in order to transition in *The Transsexual Phenomenon* evinces a paternalism and a pessimism about the extent to which trans people would meet with social resistance to their transitions, evincing something about Benjamin's view of social possibilities. An advice column that was originally published in *Sexology Magazine* and included in the volume is particularly instructive in this regard. In the column, Benjamin advises people considering medical transition (or, conceivably, transition *per se*) to take a number of factors into account including: whether or not one's features will make it difficult to pass, family acceptance and attitudes, religious beliefs, how one's work life will be affected and the time and/or effort required to change one's body comportment in order to pass (TSP 134–136). Benjamin also recommends seeking out "more conservative" psychiatric treatment first so that the patient can determine whether or not it is possible to adjust to life as a member of their assigned sex (136). Benjamin is explicit about his concern about whether or not the patient's life as a member of the sex to which they are transitioning will be a

"successful" one, where "success" is measured, for him, in terms of the patient's ability to pass.[82] Despite this being a very relevant consideration for him, however, he does note that when someone's physiology is not favorable when it comes to passing, people may still be happy with their transitions none-the-less (137).

Benjamin's advice to people looking to medical transition as a possibility in the 1960s can be read with a more or less generous eye. Several interpretations, however, seem plausible. This range of plausible interpretations is brought into focus when the way in which an everyday or commonsense understanding of the relationship between sex and gender ought to be presupposed when trying to predict the kinds of hardship people pursuing trans ways of life will face. One way of reading this advice, then, is that Benjamin is trying to be realistic about the quality of life people will have given the intolerance people were likely to face, if their appearance was gender non-conforming. This makes sense if one's view is that social change on a large scale is required, such that people who end up appearing to be gender non-conforming are not met with constant hostility or mistrust from others. Another way of reading this is that his conservative view about the kinds of gender non-conforming lives that were possible lead him to be overly cautious in his advice, something that had the potential to dissuade people from projecting onto the possibility of medical transition (or perhaps even transition *per se*). Read this way, Benjamin evinces a deficient form of solicitude insofar as he operationalizes a commonsense understanding of what is possible with respect to gender such that he discloses the possibility of medical transition as something fraught.

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[82] In this connection, Benjamin only discusses his concerns about the ability of trans feminine people or trans women to pass due to things like physical build. He does not mention, for instance, concerns about trans men's ability to pass based on body size or build, for instance.

Taking Benjamin's work into consideration illuminates, I think, the complex nature

of the emergence of medical transition as a social possibility. First of all, Benjamin's

arguments in favor of medical transition over other forms of treatment make it clear that

the availability of this form of transition, and trans ways of life that included it, was far

from an inevitability in the U.S. Rather, medical procedures to alleviate sex and gender

dissonance were situated in a field that included other "treatments" such as aversion

therapies (TSP 112–113). At the same time, the work's emphasis on medical transition

reinforces the medicalization of trans ways of life and the relationship between medical

interventions and gendered social possibilities. Yet, as I have aimed to show, Benjamin's

scalar conceptualization of transvestism and transsexuality did not reduce trans

phenomena to "being trapped in the wrong body" and he had a nuanced view of the

various factors that contributed to the social possibility of trans ways of life and

acknowledged that a "cross-dressing" as a practice could alleviate gender discomfort in

some cases. Rather than posing a problem for Benjamin's sexological theories or

research, Benjamin's work appears to have been largely oriented around trans people's

attempts to solve problems of existence. His medical recommendations and advocacy can

be understood, using this framework, as projects that helped some trans people access

possibilities of living gender that would make their lives livable.[83] Thus, the contribution

Benjamin's efforts made to the availability of social possibilities for trans ways of life is

complicated and multifaceted. On the one hand, his approach indicates that his values

were often in line with those of his patients. On the other, his work contributed to the

medicalization of trans ways of life and the standards of care based on the protocols he

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[83] In particular, Benjamin mentions that some trans people engage in self-mutilation and attempt or commit suicide, evincing that these deleterious effects of *not* being able to access alternate gendered possibilities were informing his advocacy and approach to treatment (TSP 66–67).

developed included gatekeeping measures that would later be considered objectionable due to the way in which gatekeepers operationalized sexist norms in order to determine who was eligible to transition and the way in which gatekeepers prioritized the feelings of cissexual (i.e. non-transsexual) people, for instance (WG 119–126).

Robert Stoller

Early on in Stoller's 1968 book *Sex and Gender*, Stoller makes a distinction between sex and gender, and between *gender identity* and *gender role*. In what follows, I'll briefly discuss these concepts, with the caveat that it is possible and perhaps desirable to conduct a much more thorough analysis of Stoller's conceptual framework for thinking about sex, *gender identity* and *gender role*. Stoller begins by defining sex as biological. The fact that his conceptualization of sex, gender identity and gender role is amenable to more sophisticated conceptual analysis will be clear from the passage I include below.

As others did, Stoller understands sex to consist of a number of different components: chromosomes, external and internal genitalia, gonads, hormones and secondary sex characteristics (SG 9). He considers an individual's sex to be determined by the "algebraic sum" of these factors: "One's sex, then, is determined by an algebraic sum of all these qualities, and, as is obvious, most people fall under one of two separate bell curves, the one of which is called 'male,' the other 'female'" (SG 9). Stoller then defines gender in psychological and cultural terms, first defining gender, then gender identity and gender role as its subdivisions. Here, it is worthwhile to quote the text at length:

> Gender is the amount of masculinity or femininity found in a person, and, obviously, while there are mixtures of both in many humans, the *normal* male has a preponderance of masculinity and the *normal* female has a preponderance of femininity. *Gender identity* [italics original] starts with the knowledge and

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awareness, whether conscious or unconscious, *that one belongs to one sex and **not the other***, though as one *develops*, gender identity becomes much more complicated, so that, for example, one may sense himself as not only a male but as a masculine man or an effeminate man or even a man who fantasies being a woman. *Gender role* [italics original] is the overt behavior one displays in society, the role which he plays, especially with other people, to establish his position with them insofar as his and their evaluation of his gender is concerned. While gender, gender identity and gender role are almost synonymous in the usual person, in certain *abnormal cases* they are at variance. One problem that arises to complicate our work is that gender behavior, which is for the greatest part learned from birth on, plays an essential part in sexual behavior, which is markedly biological, and at times it is very difficult to separate aspects of gender and sex from a particular piece of behavior (SG 9–10 emphasis added unless otherwise noted).

The first thing to note is that Stoller defines both gender and the relationship between sex, gender, gender identity and gender role in terms of normality and abnormality. In normal cases, males will have a "preponderance of masculinity" and females, of femininity. In normal cases, too, an individual's gender, gender identity and gender role will be aligned, with gender aligned with sex, given the definition of gender and the relationship between gender and sex. The next thing to note is that sex is included in the concept of gender identity, along with masculinity and femininity (via the "gender" part of "gender identity"). Although gender is defined in terms of masculinity and femininity and is therefore plausibly interpreted as being, potentially, purely psychological, cultural and/or social, the concept of *gender identity* includes sex within it, because as it is determined by an individual's "conscious or unconscious awareness" of belonging to a sex.[84] This is somewhat strange given that, for consistency's sake, Stoller

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[84] Although Stoller is often noted for his development of the concept of *gender identity,* a number of terms existed at the time that referred to a very similar concept, if not the same one. The term "psychosexual identity", for instance was used by Money in a 1965 paper, "The Influence Hormones in Sexual Behavior", p. 76: "Before onset of spontaneous pubertal feminization, the patient developed as a transvestite, with a feminine psychosexual identity and desire for sex change." The term "psychogender", which appears *prima facie*, to be the same concept as gender identity and psychosexual identity, was used by at least one research team. Cf. Cappon, et al., "Psychosexual Identification (Psychogender) in the Intersexed," 1959. As

could have defined *gender identity* as the awareness of how masculine or feminine one is, for instance. It could be that because masculinity and femininity are normally aligned with belonging to the male sex and female sex, respectively, it makes sense to switch out sex for gender in the definition. Or, perhaps Stoller was worried about circularity.

In any case, this definition of gender identity reinscribes the link between sex and gender that the split between them is supposed to produce. It ends up producing a rigid conceptual split between sex and gender (if *gender* is understood as containing both *gender identity* and *gender role*), then, only if this particular definition of gender identity is ignored. That is, in order for gender to be understood as being something separate from sex, where sex is understood as biological and gender is understood as something social and cultural, this separation depends on *gender* not including *sex.* But, if *gender* is understood as being comprised of *gender identity* and *gender role* and sex is included in the definition of gender identity—as the sense that "one belongs to one sex and not the other"—then gender is not separate from sex because sex is included in one of the components of gender as a concept (i.e. gender identity). So, *gender,* because it includes *gender identity*, as a concept, includes the sex one does or ought to belong to within it; it is not simply about the extent to which one is masculine, feminine or both. While *gender role* is, given Stoller's definition of it here, reasonably understood as social and not biological, it is unclear when, in everyday or technical discourse, we mean *gender role* only (as opposed to gender identity and gender role) when discussing the distinction between 'sex' and 'gender.'

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discussed above in section 1, Money used the term "psychosexual status" as the apparent functional equivalent for "gender identity".

On the conceptual level for Stoller, then, sex and gender are ambiguously disclosed as separate and separable, but also definitionally related to one another and aligned in normal cases. Stoller further refined the concept of *gender identity*, as *core gender identity*. The concept of *core gender identity* comes up in a discussion of the development of gender identity in intersex children. He writes that

> The child's awareness – "I am a male" or "I am a female" – is visible to an observer in the first year or so of life. This aspect of one's over-all sense of identity can be conceptualized as a *core gender identity*, produced by the infant-parents relationship, by the child's perception of its external genitalia, and by a biologic force that springs from the biologic variables of sex. […] The first two factors are almost always crucial in determining the ultimate gender identity" (SG 29–30).

Stoller thought that core gender identity also included a sense that one is masculine or feminine, but he thought that this developed after a child developed a sense of being male or female (SG 40). The possible decoupling of one's sense of oneself as a sex, on the one hand, and the sense of one's masculinity or femininity, on the other enabled Stoller to differentiate between transvestites and transsexuals. This was because, according to his assessment of the difference between the two, transvestites had core gender identities that were feminine (that is, in the sense of being masculine or feminine), but none-the-less male (in the sense of being male or female) while transsexuals did not (ibid).[85]

Stoller's separation between sex and gender undoubtedly created a conceptual space where a person's sexed biological features, their masculinity and femininity or their sense of themselves as members of a sex and gender (their gender identity), and the social roles and functions expected of them (their gender role) are, theoretically, separable and can, therefore, be considered independently of one another. This conceptual space, as

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[85] Like Benjamin *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, Stoller's primary focus is on feminine transvestites and transsexuals, some of whom we would now characterize as trans women or trans feminine people.

others have noted, had a huge impact on feminist theorizing both in the social sciences and the humanities, such that the current intellectual landscape in the US has been profoundly influenced by this conceptual innovation.[86] It has also had a huge impact, I want to suggest, on the ways in which we think about gendered subjectivity. Indeed, the term "gender identity" is readily intelligible to many people: it is not just a technical term from sexology that only specialists are familiar with. Insofar as it has made it into popular discourse, it has influenced the way in which we understand ourselves: we understand ourselves as having a sex and a gender and we often understand these as being integral to our identities.

It is important to remember, however, that this concept emerged in the context of a psycho-medical power knowledge formation around transsexuality as an object of investigation. However, it is important to remember that these distinctions track the ways that some trans people disclosed their relationship to their sexed status. The quote from the boy at the beginning of this chapter illustrates one way that someone articulated this. Recall that he said,

"Nothing about me seems abnormal, except I have the wrong body. In other words, the head is put on the wrong body. That's the way I figure it. I don't know if it is right; I don't have a medical mind. I figure when I get older, I will grow and think from boyhood into a man" (SG 200). Here, the boy's understanding of his relationship to his body and to his current and projected gender role tracks Stoller's conceptualization of a transsexual person's sex, gender identity and gender role. So, it was not as if sexologists like Stoller,

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[86] See Germon's overview of the uptake and application of the concept of gender in chapter 3, "Feminist Encounters with Gender" of *Gender: A Genealogy of a Concept*, as well as Jemima Repo's *The Biopolitics of Gender,* chapter 3: "Feminist Deployments of Gender" (75–104) for detailed discussions of the uptake of the concept of gender by feminist theorists. For an example of an argument for the deployment of gender as an analytic concept, see Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" (1986).

along with other clinicians, somehow produced the phenomena that comprised 'transsexuality', the object of the psycho-medical formation. Rather, what I want to foreground is the fact that the conceptualization of gender identity and gender role, along with transsexuality, occurred in this formation, something that, for that reason, makes them different from the ways that trans people had devised for making sense of their own lives. This is not to say, either, that the two were always distinct: recall, too, that the boy thought of his situation in terms of normality and abnormality (ibid.).

Thus, gender was disclosed in terms of normality and abnormality in a way that reinscribes the association between sex, gender, gender identity and gender role. On this view, abnormal cases reveal features of this picture that might otherwise remain obscure, but they do not fundamentally disrupt or challenge the underlying assumption that there is a truth of the matter of sex and gender. Everyone, on Stoller's view, has a core gender identity: it develops before the phallic stage, at a time before most people can remember. It is, functionally therefore, an unchangeable property of individuals. While not on par with something like a substance, it is still something about which true and false things can be said. It is for this reason that the development of gender as a concept by Money and its elaboration by Stoller place it within a realm of truth and falsity. It remains, too, within the *dispositif* of sexuality, even if it isn't a *dispositif* in its own right, as Repo argues.[87]

Stoller attempted to provide an etiology of transsexualism that was based on his psychoanalytic theory of psychosexual development, a project that he continued in a later

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[87] C.f. Jemima Repo, *The Biopolitics of Gender*, 25

volume entitled *Sex and Gender volume II: The Transsexual Experiment.*[88] As the title

suggests, he, like Money, viewed trans people as natural experiments. He appears to have

been motivated less by trans people's suffering as a result of being unable to access

alternative possible ways of living gender than by a motivation to understand how gender

identity formed as a consequence of the relationship between parents (primarily mothers)

and children. While he did work at UCLA's Gender Identity Research Clinic (GIRC),

thereby helping some people access the means to medically transition since this clinic

contributed to a body of research on transsexuality, he was opposed to the use of surgery

as a "treatment" for transsexualism except as a means of conducting research, and even in

that case he recommended strict gatekeeping measures (SG 251; HSC 267).[89]

So, while Stoller's conceptualization of gender identity did open up possibilities

for thinking about the relationship between sex and gender and their (de)coupling,

practically speaking Stoller appears to have been conservative when it came to trans

people accessing surgery. I do not mean to imply that there necessarily was such a

relationship between Stoller's theorization of transsexuality and his skepticism about

medical transition; rather, I want to point out that on the level of theorizing about trans

ways of life and their disclosure via the text of *Sex and Gender,* transsexuality, in

particular, shows up as something that is in need of further research, rather than as a form

of life that warrants tolerance, understanding and compassion. Stoller's position, then,

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[88] Robert Stoller, *Sex and Gender volume II: The Transsexual Experiment* (London: Hogarth Press, 1975).

[89] Stoller writes, "I would suggest because these procedures may be disastrous if used with the wrong patient, that they not be used except as research techniques. This would mean that they should not be done simply because the patient has the money to afford bootlegging. They should not be used unless the patient has been studied in depth for at least six months by a team of psychiatrists, psychologists, endocrinologists and urologists" (SG 251).

contrasts with that of Benjamin, who appealed for toleration and advocated for research into transsexuality in order to improve the lives of trans people.

Conclusion

In focusing on Money, Benjamin and Stoller in this chapter, I do not mean thereby to occlude the way in which trans people helped to make medical transition a social possibility. Trans people have done so not only by serving as research subjects, but also through collaboration with researchers. A frequently mentioned example of this kind of collaboration was the collaboration between Reed Erickson. Erickson was a wealthy and eccentric trans man who, through the Erickson Educational Foundation, provided the grant funding that made it possible for Benjamin to write *The Transsexual Phenomenon* (HSC 210–211, TSP, no page number, "Preface and Acknowledgements"). Further, trans people seeking out new ways of living gender participated in research on transsexualism during the years in which the university based gender identity clinics were operational, thus contributing to its stabilization as a social possibility, despite the obvious power asymmetries in the research situation. Thus, it is misleading to think of the social possibility of medical transition, and the transsexual ways of life this made possible, as being made available in a top-down fashion from clinicians and gender clinics.

However, the way in which trans ways of life were disclosed through the *dispositif* of sexuality, of which the gender clinics and the literature on transsexuality was a part, has conditioned the way we think about possibilities for living gender. This is something over which trans people looking for ways to solve problems of existence *did not appear to* have had control. Since trans people's access to medical interventions is still mediated

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by the psycho-medical protocols developed in this period, the power relations inscribed and maintained through the psycho-medical formation around transsexuality continue to affect people's access to possibilities of medical transition and trans ways of life that include them through the clinical protocols established at this time and their implementation in medical gatekeeping.

The framework I'm proposing, if convincing, has the potential to analyze the nuances of the relationship between clinicians and trans people more adequately than a framework that either overemphasizes the psycho-medical formation's role in producing these social possibilities or one that overemphasizes continuities from the period before this period to the time after the advent of "transsexuality" as an object of psycho-medical research. I have sketched a provisional set of generalizations about this period on the basis of my research so far, which is limited. A more thorough genealogical analysis is required to establish these claims more firmly, and can be conducted with this problematic in view, namely, a problematic that emphasizes (1) the difference between the aims and goals of clinicians and the trans people who participated in research, (2) the way in which this opened a relatively narrow set of social possibilities, and (3) the way in which the discourse produced at this time circumscribed possibilities for thinking otherwise about the relationship between sex, gender and sexuality, though it doesn't necessarily foreclose them. That being said, I think that a few general upshots are worth noting.

The relationship between trans people and clinicians, clearly, is not simply one of trans people demanding surgery after they became aware it was possible and surgeons who willing to oblige for economic reasons.[90] Rather, a more reasonable interpretation is

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[90] Contra Billings and Urban, "The Socio-Medical Construction of Transsexualism: An Interpretation and Critique," *Social Problems* 29, no. 3 (1982): 269.

that some trans people were seeking out new ways of living gender through the aperture of medical transition and that they sought out medical transition specifically to alleviate the dissonance they felt with their bodies. After the Jorgensen case was publicized, trans people were made aware of this possibility of medical transition and sought the help of doctors who were willing to help them project onto this possibility. Further, the establishment of gender identity clinics such as the John's Hopkins Gender Identity clinic led some trans people to see surgery as a possibility, even though most of the applications for surgery were denied (HSC 221).

Clinicians, through developing the psycho-medical protocols for medical transition did help trans people access this possibility, something that people desperately wanted and needed. Even though the publicity around the Christine Jorgensen case, along with an article on procedures for medical sex reassignment published in 1953 in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* made the world aware of the possibility of surgical transition, it did not necessarily follow that this would become a stable social possibility that more than those who could afford to seek surgical help outside the US could access.[91] Money, Benjamin, Stoller and others contributed to a field in which a regularized form of medical and psychiatric intervention became normalized and intelligible. As I have attempted to show, they did so in different ways, through different conceptual interventions and with different orientations towards trans people and to their research on transsexuality. At the same time, that this social possibility became available through the power-knowledge formation of medicine and psychology had specific consequences. One of these consequences, I want to suggest, was that transvestism and transsexuality were disclosed as being properly within the purview of medicine and

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[91] Hamburger et al. 1953.

psychology and because transsexuality subsequently became the object of medical and psychological scrutiny this consequently placed constraints on thinking about transsexuality as a phenomenon. This is because, I think, we tend to understand transsexuality in an everyday way as being characterized as something related to medical diagnosis; indeed, the WPATH Standards of Care still foregrounds dysphoria in its explanation of why medical interventions are medically necessary.[92] This is not to say that hormone replacement therapy and surgical interventions are not sometimes medically necessary, since, indeed, they sometimes are. Rather, what I mean to point out is that understanding trans ways of life in terms of dysphoria is one way of doing so among different possible ways.

Part of the reason for this, I think, is due to the fact that the disclosure of transsexuality in the context of medicine and psychology occluded the contingency of understanding it as something potentially medical or psychological first of all, rather than as something social. In saying that this understanding was contingent, I mean to indicate that, although understanding transvestism and transsexuality as objects in the fields of medicine, psychology and sexology made sense given the history of sex and sexuality as scientific objects, this development was not necessary nor was it inevitable. This also produced, as a kind of byproduct, a set of problems that were ultimately different from the problems of existence people seeking out trans ways of life were trying to solve. For instance, the problem of how to alleviate one's sense of bodily or gender dissonance is a different problem from how to determine the etiology of a complex of symptoms called "transsexuality." Though the for-the-sake-of-whiches of trans people and clinicians converged at the point of medical transition, they diverged again when it came to their

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[92] WPATH 2012, *passim*.

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respective ultimate goals and priorities, Benjamin being a notable exception. In the first case, the for-the-sake-of-whiches of trans people seeking to solve problems of existence have the ultimate goal or priority of figuring out how to access non-obvious possibilities of living gender, including possibilities of bodily modification that will ameliorate discomfort and dissonance. In the second, the ultimate goal or priority of understanding the developmental trajectory of sex and gender, the etiology of atypical forms of sex or gender and/or distinguishing between homosexuality, transvestism and transsexuality. Being able to solve a problem of existence does not necessarily require the latter, though one may devise a complicated conceptual schema in the process, as Dillon did in *Self*.

While their approaches to explaining trans phenomena and trans ways of life differed, one thing that unifies all of these sexological accounts of transvestism and transsexuality is that they all posited transsexuality and transvestism within a nosological domain. This domain was necessarily nosological due to its contiguity with medical and psychiatric practice and it involved cataloguing and ordering *types of people* with a view to differentiating between types. Therefore, even though different clinicians had, for instance, different views about the etiology of transvestism and transsexualism, one of the definitive features of the power knowledge formation around transsexuality, and the kind of intelligibility this inaugurated, concerns at least two things. The first is that there is a truth or falsity with respect to gender. For Stoller, for example, it is false to say that transvestites had a gender identity that was female *and* feminine. What establishes the falsity of this claim was the conceptual split Stoller introduced between *gender identity* and *gender role.* Since transvestism, for Stoller, was characterized by people having a sense of themselves as male (gender identity) while having a feminine gender role, this

meant that, according to this framework, it would be false to say that someone was a transvestite if they had a female gender identity and feminine gender role. Instead of being a transvestite, that person would be categorized as transsexual in Stoller's framework. This was not merely a theoretical matter: the point of these taxonomies was, in part, to determine what set of clinical features characterized transsexualism so that it could be accurately diagnosed. According to his framework for establishing sufficient differences between types of gender variant people, if one was a transvestite, then one knew or believed oneself to fall into the category 'male'. If one agreed with Stoller's framework, then one had a set of criteria they could use to define their identity in the terms he laid out. As a *general structural feature,* the idea that everyone falls within some kind actual or potential typology of gender categories *still conditions the way we understand gender, the way we think about it, and the way we talk about it.*

I think that this kind of thinking about gender—namely, that it admits of categorization and that criteria can be devised to determine one's membership in a particular gender category—

conditions the way we think about gender in an everyday way as well at present. It is possible, however, that the assumption that it is possible to place people in discrete categories of sexual orientation and gender identity might not have come into existence, however, had it not been for the *dispositif* of sexuality and the psycho-medical investigations carried out by sexologists looking for the truth of the transsexual phenomenon. Had the concept *gender* not come into existence, we might still be thinking of masculine and feminine human difference in terms of sex and sexuality. What I mean to say is this development was by no means necessary, despite the fact that now, more

than sixty years after the concept emerged and came into use, we tend to think of gender in transhistorical terms.[93] Further, the assumption that gender identity is *fundamental* to identity and identity formation is, I think, still part of our everyday way of thinking about gender and gender identity, and this was an assumption that can be seen in this power knowledge formation as well.[94] My points are that (1) while it is likely that we do not think today about gender in the same way that Money, Benjamin or Stoller did, the concepts they formed during this time conditioned the way gender is disclosed; and (2) these concepts were related to a psycho-medical project aimed at understanding and "treating" trans people through a psycho-medical power/knowledge formation. This disclosure via specific kinds of conceptualization produced a certain kind of intelligibility and produced certain apparent regularities.

I do not deny that having an array of gender categories—many more now than Christine Jorgensen and Reed Erickson were working with—has proved helpful for people when it comes to making sense of their lives and coming to understand their sexed and gendered status in salutary ways. However, as long as the attention is to what one is, and whether or not one or anyone else "is" a particular gender, this deflects thought away from the potentially more pressing matter of *how* one ought to live one's life and *what* one ought to do in order to become what they want to or need to become. Recall that the

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[93] C.f. Ephraim Das Janssen, "Gender in its Historical Situation," in *Phenomenal Gender,* 43–66. While Janssen is using a very different conceptual framework from the ones we tend to use (i.e. Janssen is using a Heideggerian framework in order to argue for gender as a transhistorical phenomenon), I take this work to be indicative of a larger trend. Several sexologists made the case that transsexuality was a transhistorical phenomenon, for instance. For a representative account of this view, see Richard Green, "Transsexualism: Mythological, Historical and Cross-Cultural Aspects," (New York: Warner Books, 1966): 206–221.

[94] John Money and Patricia Tucker claim in the book *Sexual Signatures*, for instance, that the formation of gender identity is essential because gender identity is integral to identity formation *per se*: "It is practically impossible for a person to develop any sense of identity at all without identifying as either a male or a female…" (Money and Tucker 1976, 87–88).

disclosure of possibilities is characterized by a tension between individual projection onto possibilities and the disclosure of possibilities in an everyday way through *das Man*. In this particular connection, what that means is that there is a potential conflict between: (1) our tendency to want to know where one falls in a system of gender categories (whether or not one is cis or trans, non-binary, agender, etc.) and (2) what these categories are supposed to disclose about trans existence, and (3) each trans person's own understanding of their existence and their own for-the-sake-of-whiches or ultimate priorities. In principle, what kind of life someone wants to lead and those things that make up a possible life are separate from how one is gendered by *das Man* and/or by significant others (including but not limited to romantic partners). Yet, assigned sex and gender are still associated with different and separate social possibilities to the extent that in everyday terms, I think, we consider knowing someone's gender as a prerequisite for being able to understand the possible kinds of life they can lead.

Thinking about the new social possibilities for living gender that emerged in this context, which included, indeed, the concepts *transsexuality, gender* and *gender identity*, cannot be easily thematized in terms of transgression or conservatism as is sometimes done, I suggest. The reason for this is that transsexual people did participate in the emergence and stabilization of the social possibility of medical transition. This was not a completely top-down affair, as clinicians were responding to people's requests for medical transition after it had become medically possible. However, since the evidence of the possibility of medical transition and, therefore, the mutability of sex, threatened to transgress the link between one's assigned sex and the social roles associated with that sex and, indeed, the assumption that sex could not be changed, clinicians involved in the

knowledge production practices which established the medical protocols for medical transition created a narrow, heavily norm-laden set of conditions individuals had to meet in order access this possibility. This reduced the potential for these ways of life to appear transgressive, since these protocols encouraged passing, gender conformity, and silence. The norm that is being transgressed is a major one, since it is the normalized link between sex and gender. But this transgression *as transgression* got covered over or concealed. Still, social change occurred despite this concealment, since the media attention to transsexuality meant that it could not be completely occluded as a social possibility.

Further, the kinds of gender conformity medical gatekeepers required meant that access to this possibility medical transition, then, came at a cost. That cost was trans people being used as the material to produce forms of knowledge that reinforced a normalized picture of sex, sexuality and gender, such that transsexuals were *made to appear* conservative. This is not to say that there might not have been some people who completely agreed with the adequacy of the psycho-medical discourse to disclose the truth of their experiences. The point, rather, is that it appears to have become very difficult to know the extent to which people looking to medically transition agreed with the picture the clinicians were constructing.[95] This is a situation that is not well served by thinking of the emergence of this possibility in terms of conservation and transgression. For one thing, given the assumptions about social possibility that some of the researchers

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[95] Though, I should note, it might be possible to clarify this point by reading autobiographies written by trans people from that period of time, which I have not done. Hausman's treatment of transsexual autobiography in *Changing Sex* should not be regarded as reliable in this connection, in my view, given that she uses parts of autobiographies as material in the service of an argument about the resistance of the body to inscription. Thus, she does not have a solicitous position with respect to transsexual people whose lives she is discussing, and should therefore be regarded with a hermeneutics of suspicion.

ascribed to, the possibility of medical transition-as-transgression didn't occur to them: they assumed that people would have a difficult time living in a gender that was, on their terms, inconsistent with the ones they were assigned at birth unless they met a very narrow range of criteria. Thus, one way of thinking about medical gatekeeping is that it happened in response to a social world in which transgression would not be tolerated and it therefore aims to eliminate transgression as a possibility. The for-the-sake-of-which it supposes people will have is *medical transition for the sake of living a normal life,* rather than living one's current, abnormal life (abnormal from the perspective of the psycho-medical formation, of course). The result of this positing of a specific for-the-sake-of-which is the disclosure of transsexuality-as-conservative.

As is relatively well known to students of trans history and trans studies, trans people helped one another navigate medical gatekeeping by doing things like passing around medical literature.[96] For this reason, it is clear that individual trans people's lives did not always conform to the pictures that clinicians produced of the characteristics of different forms of trans life. Still, the picture of transsexuality that emerged from medical literature became a kind of everyday picture; although it is an oversimplification by *das Man* of what it means to live a trans life, it is an everyday picture that is arguably still true today, though it is changing.

Let's return, at last, to the boy who introduced the chapter, the one trying to solve a problem. The boy laid out the problems he was facing; some of these problems had to do with figuring out how to live as a boy or man when it wasn't clear that he could, and some had to do, relatedly, with how to think about his situation. It is not obvious, nor was

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[96] Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back", 228. Stone mentions Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon,* specifically.

it necessary, that the solution to his problems would have been clarifying existing taxonomic categories in sexology (that of transvestism) and adding a new category, transsexuality. That this did occur, given the participation of the boy and others like him in clinical research on people seeking trans ways of life, is of course true and it might seem obvious and inevitable to us now. What is hopefully sufficiently clear on the basis of this chapter, however, is that the boy's problems were not the same as those of the clinicians who used his life and others like his to thematize transvestism and transsexuality, creating a conceptual and taxonomic legacy that trans theorists were to problematize a few decades later.

Chapter Four:

New Indications:

Trans theory's disclosure of trans existence and trans possibilities

Introduction

Since the 1990's, trans theorists pushed back against the dominant picture of trans

ways of life based in part on the medicalized disclosure of transsexuality. As I discussed

in the previous chapter, this medicalized picture of trans ways of life had its beginnings in

the mid-20th century. It was during the 90s that the term "transgender" began to be widely

used as an umbrella term that included a wider range of gender variant and gender non-

conforming people than the category 'transsexual'.[1] Beginning with Sandy Stone's

foundational essay "The Empire Strikes Back: a Posttranssexual Manifesto,"[2] transgender

theory began to take shape as a discursive formation both inside and outside the

academy.[3] Trans studies in the academy has been heavily influenced by queer theory;[4]

however, some trans theorists pushed back against the emphasis queer theorists placed on

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[1] Susan Stryker, in her introduction to *The Transgender Studies Reader,* "(De)Subjugated Knowledges" notes that "the term "transgender" seems to have increased exponentially around 1995" and she thinks that this surge was caused, in part, by the expansion of the internet around that time (Stryker 2006, 6). Leslie Feinberg's use of the term in "Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come" is a paradigmatic instance of "transgender" as a political umbrella term.

[2] Sandy Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto."

[3] For accounts relating to the formation of trans studies as an academic area at this time, see Stryker, "Transgender Studies: Queer Theory's Evil Twin", the introduction to the Transgender Studies Reader, "Desubjugated Knowledges," and Henry Rubin, "Trans Studies: Between a Metaphysics of Presence and Absence." For a personal account of a trans person's relationship to queer theory and to the academy, see Markisha Greaney, "A Proposal for Doing Transgender Theory in the Academy," 1999.

[4] The term "queer" is necessarily difficult or impossible to define, something that is taken as foundational in the field of queer theory. However, it typically refers to anything that challenges, contravenes or calls into question normal and normalized forms of life, in the Foucaultian sense. Queerness is sometimes construed as something that calls into question hegemonic forms of knowledge production or ways of knowing as well as in, for instance, Jack Halberstam's book *The Queer Art of Failure* (Halberstam 2011).

gender transgression and instability.[5] Trans studies also includes texts that are intended for a wider audience and published outside of academic publishing channels.

In this chapter, I will attempt to apply the framework for thinking about social possibility I have developed in order to shed new light on the work several trans theorists have done. I turn to these works because they demonstrate one or more of the following: (1) they propose conceptual interventions that open new possibilities for thinking differently about trans ways of life, or, to put it differently, are alternative modes of disclosing trans ways of life; (2) they foreground the way in which specific practices close off or allow access to non-obvious possibilities for living gender; and/or (3) they are representative of important theoretical positions within trans theory. The texts I will be discussing are Kate Bornstein's book *Gender Outlaw*[6], C. Jacob Hale's article "Leatherdyke Boys and Their Daddies: How to Have Sex without Women and Men", and chapters from Julia Serano's book *Whipping Girl.*

Gender Outlaw and *Whipping Girl* are both examples of trans theory texts that were published for a readership inside and outside the academy. While the books are alike insofar as they are geared towards providing accessible, non-technical explanatory frameworks for thinking about trans ways of life, they represent different theoretical positions within trans theory. A tendency emerged within queer theory to represent certain trans ways of life as subversive and trans ways of living gender as conducive to social change given that as trans ways of life have the potential to challenge and upset hegemonic, normalized alignments of sex, gender and sexuality. In this discourse,

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[5] For critiques of queer theory, see Rubin, "Trans Studies" and Namaste "Undoing Theory."

[6] Kate Bornstein, *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women and the Rest of Us,* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995). Hereafter, *Gender Outlaw* is cited in text as GO. I'll be discussing the version of *Gender Outlaw* published in 1994. I am aware that a revised and updated version of the book was published in 2016.

transsexual ways of life were thematized as conservative, while transgender ways of life were thematized as subversive or transgressive. The reason why transsexual ways of life were figured as conservative had to do with the idea that these ways of life were gender conforming insofar as they were aligned with the dominant conception of the relationship between sex and gender; similarly, transgender ways of life were thematized as subversive because they were thought to pose a challenge to the assumption that sex and gender will be aligned according to a normative picture of this relationship.[7]

Bornstein's text is representative of the transgender-as-subversive position. Serano's text, by contrast, is representative of a position that critiques the "transgender-as-transgressive/transsexual-as-conservative" binary, arguing that certain theoretical discussions of trans ways of life elide the lives and experiences of transsexual people (WG 109–110). Both Bornstein and Serano construct conceptual frameworks that disclose trans life in a different manner than that of the medicalized theoretical and diagnostic frameworks through which trans ways of life were disclosed during the mid-century. According to the framework I'm proposing, their conceptual interventions can be read as aiming at a more conceptually adequate framework for disclosing trans ways of life than the previous medicalized framework. Their conceptualizations are not based in a psycho-medical discursive or theoretical framework, but are rather organized around elucidating and addressing problems that trans people face, due in part to reductive ways of thinking about trans lives inherited from past conceptualizations. They can also be read as demonstrating forms of solicitude. This solicitude has two dimensions. One dimension is the solicitude between the author and non-trans readers of the works, because the

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[7] For an excellent discussion of this issue, see Riki Lane, "Trans as Bodily Becoming: Rethinking the Biological as Diversity, Not Dichotomy," *Hypatia* 24, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 136–157.

works can be read by non-trans people in order better to understand ways of life to which they do not have phenomenological access. Another dimension of this solicitude is the solicitude the authors show toward other trans people, since their books can provide alternatives for thinking about what it means to be trans and give trans people access to more adequate conceptualizations of trans problems of existence. In this sense, they point out inadequate understandings of trans life, on the one hand, and point to more adequate understandings that can be used by trans people to make sense of their lives. Importantly, these conceptual frameworks are open and flexible enough so as not to require total agreement with a particular position. They can thus be characterized as solicitous because they invite the reader to think further about the issues they lay out while giving them the conceptual tools to do so. Thus, the for-the-sake-of-which of these texts is not the explication of trans ways of life for a particular theoretical goal or aim, but rather the ultimate aim is to make a more adequate understanding of trans ways of life possible for a wide audience.

Hale's article both includes an extensive discussion of the relationship between a specific discursive and practical context, those of a BDSM[8] community, and access to non-obvious possibilities for gendered life. He discusses the way in which projecting onto non-obvious possibilities for living gender is made possible by the structure, discourse, practices and forms of relationality in BDSM contexts. Drawing on his own experiences in Los Angeles leather communities, Hale identifies a form of solicitude made possible in this context as integral to his transition from female to male. Hale's article is more technical and is representative of academic trans theory.

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[8] The acronym BDSM stands for bondage, discipline, dominance/submission and sadism and masochism and refers to a range of sexual practices involving these elements.

Though my review of the trans theory literature has not been comprehensive and exhaustive, I think that these texts are helpful for my purposes here insofar as they are representative of various important positions. Bornstein's and Serano's conceptual frameworks can serve as alternatives for thinking about trans ways of life and, by extension, possibilities for living gender and since they serve as more adequate frameworks for disclosing trans ways of life. Hale's elucidation of a practical context reveals the ways in which power can be and is deployed to block or allow the projection onto certain possibilities for living gender, thereby maintaining or blocking access to the formation of non-obvious social possibilities. I have read the pieces under discussion here, too, with a view to whether or not they reveal limits to my own account or potential problems with it. I think of the four works, Serano's foregrounding of the relationship between different kinds of sexism and the ways in which this affects trans people's lives, particularly trans women and trans feminine people's lives, reveals a possible shortcoming of my view, which I attempt to address in this chapter.

Bornstein's *Gender Outlaw* as a Work of Solicitude

Bornstein's book *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women and the Rest of Us,* is complex text for a number of reasons. The work is part memoir, theoretical treatise on trans ways of life, and instructional manual on how to reflect on gender. It also includes a play Bornstein wrote as a piece of "Third Space" theater or revolutionary theater (GO 164). Bornstein thus draws on a number of literary, rhetorical and theoretical tools and combines them in one work, a work that is difficult to classify as squarely belonging to a particular category of literary or theoretical production. Thus, on the level of structure as

well as that of content, *Gender Outlaw* is a very queer text. Given its multifaceted nature, it is possible to discuss a number of its features in connection in order to explain how, as a way of disclosing trans existence, it functions to challenge the ways that this has been done historically, that is, through medical literature, popular media and trans autobiography.[9] Here, I will keep my analysis narrowly focused on Bornstein's approach to concept formation, an example of the way in which they use conceptualization to contest preexisting ways of understanding trans ways of life, and how the book can be read as a form of solicitude.

Bornstein has an approach to definition that is strikingly similar to formal indication. Recall from the first chapter that formal indication is a term Heidegger uses to refer to a method of concept formation that produces concepts that indicate a range of possible phenomenal fulfillments, but does not posit determinate contents for the concept. Bornstein explains their approach to definition in the following way: "Definitions have their uses in much the same way that road signs make it easy to travel: they point out the directions. But you don't get where you're going when you just stand underneath some sign, waiting for it to tell you what to do" (GO 21). Bornstein makes two points here 1) on the one hand, there is a positive claim about what definitions are for: definitions point out directions, or indicate something about how one goes about things, and 2) on the

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[9] I think its prudent to note in passing, however, that the work poses a hermeneutic challenge because Bornstein uses different kinds of discourse in order to articulate their views, in addition to the fact that the work is not a work of philosophy *per se*. Specifically, the book includes autobiography interspersed with analysis, theory, theater and poetry and each part makes more sense in relation to the others. So, while the work contains a theory portion that is, in principle, able to be read in isolation, reading the other kinds of writing lend a fuller sense to the concepts developed in this portion of the work. This poses a methodological difficulty for the practitioner of philosophy. Because we are not trained to annotate poems, for instance, or in how to treat a work of theater in its written form rather than as a performance, we are at a hermeneutic disadvantage. Absent such training, however, it is plain that Bornstein's appeal to different kinds of writing in the service of developing a theoretical apparatus that can both be deployed academically and practically is significant.

other hand, there is a negative claim about what definitions ought not to be used for: definitions are not definitive in the sense that they ought not to circumscribe what one ought to do. Further, definitions can point towards something ("where to go"), but are ultimately useless unless the person looking for direction follows a direction, which would be similar or equivalent to fulfilling the indication on a Heideggerian account. In other words, I don't *know* what it means to have a definition apply to me unless I am familiar with the aspect of life or existence it indicates. In a given case, how one appeals to or uses definitions can vary. By situating this passage at the beginning of their chapter on definitions called "Naming All the Parts", they make clear that they are using definitions in the first of these two ways, namely, they are using definitions to point out how one can travel. They also use definitions to point out what is going on in a given case; this is something that is demonstrated often in the text. Bornstein is not making metaphysical claims about the status of the things they are discussing. Though not explicit, this comes across through the structure of the text, the way in which definitions are used, and through Bornstein's solicitous tone towards the reader.

Many of Bornstein's concepts direct the reader towards an aspect of trans life that is in need of illumination due to the deleterious effects the phenomenon produces for trans people. One of the poles around which the book is organized is Bornstein's argument that gender is oppressive. In this connection, "gender" refers to the what they call the "bi-polar gender system", which is a class system that distributes power in an asymmetrical fashion that benefits non-trans men and harms everyone else (GO 113–116). For Bornstein, the gender system is specifically a class system; it underpins patriarchy, and therefore the oppression of women as a class. Given that the gender

system is bi-polar, it oppresses those who fail to fit into one of its two classes. Bornstein thus advocates a form of gender abolition, but, importantly, not necessarily the abolition of *genders* or *types of gender*. Rather, the kind of eliminativism they advocate is the elimination of gender as an oppressive system for social division. Because Bornstein's framework is oriented around oppression as a problem, their concept formation is geared towards pointing out things that, in their view, contribute to trans oppression or help to better elucidate trans life. In what follows, I will discuss an example of a concept that points out a feature of trans oppression and, consequently, something that limits trans people's possibilities.

Bornstein develops the concept of the *therapeutic lie* in order to discuss the way in which transsexual people were sometimes required to construct plausible non-trans histories for themselves after transitioning. The *therapeutic lie* is a complicated notion: it refers to the way in which lying about one's past after transition was once encouraged by counselors and peers, reinforcing a silence around transsexuality because it simultaneously erased the trans histories of trans people and prevented trans people from disclosing them. Of the *therapeutic lie,* Bornstein writes, "Transsexuality is the only condition for which the therapy is to lie. This *therapeutic lie* is one reason we haven't been saying too much about ourselves and our lives and our experience of gender; we're not allowed, in therapy, the right to think of ourselves as transsexual" (GO 62).

However, the silence around gender non-conformity was not caused by the therapeutic lie, but rather the therapeutic lie appears to be a result of an imposed silence around gender produced by the bi-polar gender system. In their biographical reflections earlier in the book, Bornstein describes a silence around the possibility of gender non-

conformity in childhood, the result of which was that Bornstein's gender conformity in childhood was a lie (8–9). Bornstein suggests that (1) silence *about* transsexuality and (2) the silence *of* transsexual people themselves are related and mutually reinforcing. The therapeutic lie thus shows up at a critical historical juncture when these therapeutic protocols were being developed, a juncture at which there is a threat that trans people will disclose their trans histories and reveal the possibility of sex and gender transition.

The concept of the *therapeutic lie*, therefore, discloses something about social possibility; it indicates that, on Bornstein's view, the therapeutic lie prevents people from disclosing trans histories, something that, in turn, maintains the stability of the bi-polar gender system. This is due in part to the fact that it allows people to continue to assume that there are two and only two sexes and genders and, consequently, the phenomenological background against which people perceive gender in the social world remains undisturbed. In other words, if it were apparent that there are people who do move between genders, then this would destabilize the bi-polar gender system, which rests, in large part, on a robust phenomenological background.[10] Thus, the therapeutic lie presents trans ways of life from becoming apparent through disclosure by trans people, which according to Bornstein is a truth telling. It can be read as a contestation of the psycho-medical disclosure of transsexuality as a kind of thing, because the truth, for Bornstein, is that the bipolar gender system is an oppressive structure that *produces* an illusion of diachronic stability where there is transition and change. Bornstein's concept, therefore, indicates how a component of the psycho-medical formation around

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[10] My views on the phenomenology of gender variance are heavily informed by Sara Ahmed's book *Queer Phenomenology*. See chapter 2 of that work for Ahmed's detailed analysis of the phenomenology of gender and gendered orientation towards the world and others in the world.

transsexuality ends up producing conditions under which transsexuals were induced to lie, and how this lie functions to conceal the possibility of a certain trans way of life (transsexuality).

The concept thus turns the tables on the psycho-medical mode of disclosure. The psycho-medical formation around transsexuality disclosed transsexuality and transvestism in medicalized terms and did so in such a way that the truth of gender could be established on its terms, while at the same time producing a systematic inducement to *silence* in the form of the therapeutic lie.[11] Thus the *therapeutic lie* ironically indicates that while the psycho-medical discourse had an ostensible truth producing function, it really functioned to produce lies by prohibiting speech about what it was making possible. This reveals that, while this formation had an enabling function, it also effectively disabled the production of other, alternative discourses about transsexuality, maintaining a dominant position when it came to disclosing truths about trans ways of life while also limiting trans people's possibilities of self-disclosure and speech.

This concept also indicates something about how Bornstein's project in *Gender Outlaw* can be read, namely, as a work of solicitude. The *therapeutic lie* is an example of a concept that helps the reader think differently about what the psycho-medical power knowledge formation that produced transsexuality as a psycho-medical object is actually doing. It thus potentially helps the reader to think otherwise than psycho-medically about trans lives, and to reconsider why trans people might keep their histories hidden. The

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[11] I'm using the phrase "inducement to silence" here deliberately: I mean to call to mind Foucault's characterization of the *dispositif* of sexuality as including a "polymorphous incitement to discourse" (HS1 34). While there was an incitement to discourse in clinical contexts and in the form of transsexual autobiography, Bornstein is indicating that transsexual ways of life were also characterized by a kind of keeping-silent. I mean to note that the continuities and discontinuities between the subject formation of transsexuality and those of other formations within the *dispositif* of sexuality deserves further scrutiny.

concept, however, does not present itself as being able to describe an aspect of trans ways of life in a definitive fashion.

Bornstein's book can be read, given the way they form concepts and engage with the reader, as a project characterized by solicitude. This is evident, I think, in the book's structure. For instance, Bornstein structures the chapter in which they discuss gender and what the bi-polar gender system does around a series of questions (GO chapter 12, 112–140). In the same chapter, she proposes a series of exercises intended to help the reader reflect on gender, something that they think will open up possibilities in connection with gender identity:

> Instead of imagining gender as opposite poles of a two-dimensional line, it would be interesting to twirl that line in space, and then spin it through several more dimensions. In this way, many more possibilities of gender identity may be explored.
> Exercise: Make a list of all the genders you observe in a week
> Exercise: Make a list of all the genders you've been in a week.
> Exercise: Make a list of all the genders you can imagine in a week. (GO 115–116).

Given that this exercise is found in a book, it is of course up to the reader whether or not they actually engage in the exercise. Should they choose to, however, Bornstein has provided a framework for thinking about gender that could serve as an alternative to received views. In this way, the book can be read as an exercise in solicitude: its theoretical apparatus is not primarily geared towards making a series of theoretical points about what transsexuality *means* in some abstract sense, nor is it a systematic attempt to make a case against the evils of the bi-polar gender system, though it could have easily gone in these directions. Rather, the work is an invitation to the reader to call gender into question and think about what gender does. Bornstein leverages their biography in order to elucidate the way in which gender functions, but they do not use it in such a way so as

to establish a kind of oppositional authority between themself and the reader. The work is thus simultaneously an exercise in truth-telling, while being instructional and invitational.

Considering the text as a work of solicitude reveals, I think, something about solicitude that Heidegger does not explore. It is this: disclosing facts about one's own life, or about how one was able to do something or realized something was possible for them or came to understand something differently, etc. can serve an indicative function for someone else and can, therefore, be considered a kind of solicitude. Bornstein's extensive discussion of their autobiography and their interpretation of their gender transition is indicative in this way, I think. It is important to add the caveat that, in order for talking about one's own life to have a solicitous function, it ought to be clear that the one talking about their own life does not think that the other person *necessarily* has to be like them. Rather, talking about one's own experience can disclose something about how something like gender might be an issue for someone else in a similar way. In this instance, if a trans reader recognizes something that is true of their own life in Bornstein's story, then the way Bornstein made sense of their life points to the possibility of the reader doing the same and gives the reader a framework for doing that. However, since Bornstein is not claiming that this is the only possible way of understanding trans life and has built in opportunities for reflection into the work itself, it is an instance of "leaping-ahead" rather than "leaping-in".

Serano's Conceptual Revisions

Julia Serano, in her book *Whipping Girl,* likewise combines personal narrative and theory building in one work. Serano, like Bornstein, uses accessible language to

communicate her ideas; however, this accessible language should not mislead readers into thinking that her conceptual interventions are not robust. There are, of course, significant differences between the two works. While Bornstein's book is representative of an orientation towards trans theory that is very queer and/or rooted in queer theory,[12] Serano's book is representative of a counterpoint to trans theory of a more queer orientation. Specifically, Serano is concerned with the erasure of transsexual experiences and ways of life in academic discussions about trans people and trans ways of life, as well as in in-group thinking about trans ways of life (WG 109–113, 190–193). Serano is concerned that theories that disclose gender as something socially constructed and/or performed end up eliding the psychic tension that transsexual people experience as a result of their sense of their sex or gender (what Serano refers to as "subconscious sex") and the sex and gender others perceive them to be (WG 78).[13] My goal in this section is circumscribed: it is to show how Serano's conceptual framework is geared towards solving several problems that she sees with the way that trans ways of life are discussed, on the one hand, and towards developing a conceptual framework that can be used to analyze two different, but related, forms of sexism which she calls "traditional sexism" and "oppositional sexism" (WG 104). In my discussion of Serano's project, I do not include a full reconstruction of her view for the sake of time. I also am not comparing my own view to Serano's, except insofar as to discuss the extent to which the framework I

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[13] I've characterized Serano's concept of *subconscious sex* slightly differently than she does on the page referenced here, as I'm taking into account what she says about sex and gender later on in this chapter. She writes a little later on that, "I am sure that some people will object to me referring to this aspect of my person as subconscious "sex" rather than "gender." I prefer "sex" because I have experienced it as being rather exclusively about my physical sex, and because for me this subconscious desire to be female has existed independently of the social phenomena commonly associated with the word "gender"" (WP 82). Here and elsewhere, Serano makes it a point to maintain theoretical space for talking about sex *and* gender, rather than, for instance, talking about gender only, or explaining sex in terms of gender.

have developed can be used to analyze the way in which sexism affects the social world and social possibilities.

Whipping Girl is notable for the fact that Serano develops a new conceptual framework for theorizing trans ways of life, a framework that is more structured than Bornstein's. Serano is critical of the psycho-medical formation around transsexuality, yet finds it necessary to retain language that enables her to talk about how, in her view, some trans people's lives are characterized by the presence of what she calls "intrinsic inclinations", which are tendencies with respect to sex, gender and sexuality (which are all independent of one another) that "remain intact despite social influences and conscious attempts by individuals to purge, repress, or ignore them" (WG 99). Briefly, Serano is trying to maintain a theoretical space in which it is possible to think about transsexuality, but she does so in a way that does not appear to recapitulate the assumptions of the psycho-medical formation, for the most part.[14] Her work in this book can perhaps be read, I want to suggest, as a kind of conceptual recoding of the discourse of transsexuality inherited from the discursive formation over which trans people had little control. At the same time, Serano's conceptual framework attempts to avoid what she takes to be problems with gender theories that are organized around a view of gender as socially constructed or performed. Though Serano does not jettison everything from the psycho-medical framework—retaining a concept of gender identity that has a

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[14] I say "appear" here because, as I mentioned, I'm not conducting a reconstruction and analysis of Serano's view here. Her analysis appears to recapitulate the split between sex, gender and sexuality (which can be more broadly construed as distinctions between the biological, social and sexual aspects of sexed and gendered phenomena), which appears to be, *prima facie*, a schematic feature of the sexological theories I discussed in the previous chapter. A proper analysis would confirm or disconfirm this supposition, however.

psychological component, for example[15]—she does lift the concepts from their medical and pathologizing context, effectively denaturing them. I have used two of Serano's concepts that fall into this category so far in the dissertation: "intrinsic inclinations" and "gender dissonance". These terms describe some trans people's experience of their own bodies and tendencies towards certain gendered ways of life. These terms indicate these phenomena, however, in a manner that does not pathologize them since these terms are not part of a psycho-medical diagnostic framework, like the term "dysphoria" is.

Serano distinguishes between two different kinds of sexism in *Whipping Girl* in order to analyze the impact that sexism has on trans people and trans women in particular. Serano makes a conceptual distinction between *traditional sexism*, or "the idea that maleness and masculinity are superior to femaleness and femininity", and *oppositional sexism* (WG 104–105). She says of oppositional sexism that, "the idea that women and men are 'opposite' sexes automatically creates assumptions and stereotypes that are differentially applied to each sex" (WG 104). Serano thus creates a conceptual distinction in order to produce analytic tools that are suited to thinking about trans oppression; the reason why this is helpful, in this connection, is that trans women are oppressed as women (via traditional sexism) and along lines of oppositional sexism as well; this is due to the fact that oppositional sexism privileges those who conform to, while marginalizing those that diverge from, gender norms that are based on the assumption that there are two opposite sexes. Thus, Serano attempts to produce more adequate concepts for analyzing sexism, concepts which are helpful for thinking about trans experience, but which can also be used in feminist theory more generally. I read

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[15] Of gender identity, Serano writes, "This intersection of subconscious and conscious sex is what I prefer to think of as gender identity" (WG 82).

Serano's project as an attempt to solve a problem that exists at the level of various academic discourses *about* transsexuality. These are discourses that fail adequately to disclose transsexual experience, elide certain trans ways of life and/or distort trans experience.

Serano's account may constitute a potential objection to my view, namely, that my account is ultimately inadequate for addressing things like the two kinds of sexism Serano identifies and the way in which this sexism affects people's access to gender-differentiated social possibilities. My response to this objection is that I consider the framework I propose to be largely schematic in nature. More work remains to be done to determine whether or not specific analyses of sexism, racism or transphobia can be assimilated into this framework. A provisional answer, however, is that given (1) these vehicles for marginalization and oppression, in both their instantiations in individual comportment and in their institutional forms, involve meanings and values disclosed by *das Man* and (2) they are inscribed in power relations, it seems, at first blush, that this assimilation would be possible. It would require, however, a review of literature devoted specifically to the question of whether or not Heidegger and Foucault's frameworks are useful for thinking about these issues. Another provisional response to this objection is that the relationship between these two projects, my project and a project like Serano's, can be thought of in terms of levels. Serano's project includes analyses that apply to a political level, insofar as she is dealing, specifically, with the relationship between concepts and political issues within the trans community (WG 109–110). My analysis, on the other hand, is not dealing with politics and political issues *per se*, but rather is dealing with a social level and I tend to foreground, specifically, interpersonal relationships as the

site through which possibilities are disclosed. This shouldn't be taken to mean, however, that political considerations are irrelevant for thinking about social possibilities: rather, dealing with the political dimensions of social possibility is outside the scope of this dissertation.

<div align="center">Hale and Situated Solicitude</div>

I think its important to begin my discussion of Hale's article "Leatherdyke Boys and their Daddies: How to Have Sex without Women or Men" by foregrounding the role this article played in my inquiry into the question of social possibility in connection with trans ways of life. I read Hale's article as an account of how certain social possibilities for navigating gender transition emerge in the context of BDSM relationships and practices. Hale also mentions in a note at the end of the article that the article fits into a larger project "concerned with widening the conditions of possibility for transsexual and genderqueer discursive agency and cultural creation."[16] To my knowledge, this larger project has, unfortunately, not been completed. However, my work in this dissertation can be read as an attempt to understand the everyday conditions that block or allow access to possibilities for living gender in a social world in which the hegemonic model of sex/gender/sexuality conditions, something that Hale critiques in this piece. My project, therefore, follows a direction that Hale pointed out here. In other words, Hale indicated a line of inquiry for me in this piece and helped make my own thinking about this topic possible.

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[16] C. Jacob Hale. "Leatherdyke Boys and their Daddies: How to have Sex without Women and Men," *Social Text* 52/53 (1997): 235.

In this article, Hale explains how he and others were able to access a range of masculine gender performance through BDSM practices in his Los Angeles community. Hale's account is based on his own experiences as a leatherdyke boy and those of a leatherdyke daddy named Spencer Bergstedt, who transitioned from female-to-male while being a daddy.[17] Hale explains that, "'leatherdyke boys' are adult lesbian (dyke) females who embody a specific range of masculinities intelligible within queer leather (BDSM) communities [i.e. SM communities where participants wear leather]; their 'daddies' may be butch [i.e. masculine] leatherdykes, or, less frequently, gay leathermen.[18] The daddy/boy relationship is one of sexual or non-sexual role-play where the roles of partners are differentiated in terms of age (often referred to as "ageplay") where the ages of the participants for the purposes of role playing need not reflect actual differences in age. In this piece, he points out the way in which these BDSM practices and the kinds of relational gender play they enable, "can facilitate female-to-male transitioning paths."[19] Specifically, the age differences between roles I the daddy/boy relationship allows for a kind of mentorship between daddy and boy, something Hale found helpful when he was exploring different ways of being masculine in this context.[20] He explains how this is possible and that the conditions for the possibility of this kind of projection onto non-obvious gender possibilities rely on a number of things.

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[17] Ibid., 226.

[18] Ibid., 224.

[19] Ibid, 226.

[20] Ibid., 228. Hale notes that he found a daddy for whom, "daddying…was about love, support, nurturance and guidance, about helping and teaching, more than it was about punishment." Throughout the article, Hale makes it clear that here are a variety of ways in which partners can engage in this and other kind of SM practices, both sexual and non-sexual ones.

The first is that leather play allows for people who would in the non-BDSM world be coded as women to be recoded as boys in BDSM context through things like clothing styles and through their relationships with their daddies. Here, by "coding", I mean the everyday perceptual schemas according to which gender is ascribed to individuals on the basis of embodiment; specifically, according to these schemas, gender is ascribed to people on the basis of sexed features of the body, including genitals and breasts, where the relationship between someone's sexed status and gender has a socially given or shared meaning.[21] "Recoding" is a process by which the link between body parts and socially ascribed meanings (i.e. "codes") are broken and new meanings assigned.[22] Not only does role-play enable people to project onto possibilities for masculine ways of life, then, it also affords possibilities for recoding the culturally imposed relationship between genitals and gender (i.e. that the presence of a penis indicates that one is a man and its absence, that one is a woman, according to the "natural attitude").[23] Hale recounts that attempts to recode his body revealed the limits to the mutability of the social and personal

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[21] Here, specifically, I have in mind Kessler and McKenna's analysis of the process of gender attribution in connection with how gender coding works given sexed features. To review, they list four features of gender attribution, writing that, (1) "Gender attributions are based on information whose meaning is socially shared. Not just any information will inform a gender attribution, and certain information (biological and physical) is seen as more important than other information (role behavior). (2) Once a gender attribution has been made, almost anything can be filtered through it and made sense of. (3) Gender attribution is essentially genital attribution. If you "know" the genital then you know the gender. (4) In some way, knowledge about penises may give people more information than knowledge about vaginas" (Kessler and McKenna, "Toward a Theory of Gender," 167–168).

[22] Hale, "Leatherdyke Boys," 230. Hale explains recoding in the following way: "Sexual interactions, along with public restrooms and medical settings, are some of the sites at which dominant cultural connections between genitals and gender are the tightest, so many transpeople must remap the sexualized zones of our bodies if we are to be sexually active." For a thorough analysis of recoding and a discussion of the phenomenological aspects of recoding, see Bettcher, "When Selves Have Sex."

[23] See Kessler and McKenna, "Toward a Theory of Gender", 173 for a discussion of the relationship between genitals and the natural attitude.

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significance assigned to certain body parts, alerting him to where changes to his embodiment needed to be made.[24]

The form of relationality this context makes possible, specifically, the daddy/boy relationship is another condition for the possibility of this kind of projection. Hale remarks that the daddy/boy dyad forms a "culture of two"; within this culture of two, it becomes possible for the boy to practice performing masculinity in ways that are legible to at least one other person.[25] Hale's role playing as a boy enabled him to inhabit a context in which he was gendered masculine and his daddy gave him "'reinforcement and acceptance' for being a boy."[26] Acceptance in the circumscribed context of BDSM enabled Hale to project onto the possibility of performing masculinity in a wider sphere of life. This proved very helpful for Hale because, he recounts, "I needed to know that my gender identification could be enacted legibly to at least one other person for it to be convincing enough to me that it could transform from a self-identification fully contained within my fantasy structure to a self-identification with a broader social sphere of enactment."[27] Hale's remarks here about the need for another person to recognize his gender as legible calls to mind the example Beauvoir gives in *Pyrrhus and Cineas* of the child's drawing.[28] Recall that according to Beauvoir, it is through the acknowledgement of others that our projects take on a degree of reality that they lack when they go unacknowledged. The reason why a child shows a drawing to their parents, according to

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[24] Hale, "Leatherdyke Boys," 231.

[25] Ibid., 229.

[26] Ibid. Here Hale is quoting Bergstedt.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Beauvoir, *Pyrrhus and Cineas*, 116.

her, is that the figures in the drawing change their character once the child's parents point

out what the figures are. Hale is pointing to a similar phenomenon here: it is through his

daddy's solicitude that he is able to understand his gender as legible to others, and his

enactment of his gender with his daddy, his first other in this regard, enables him to

understand that it is possible to enact this new gender in the wider world. For Hale,

indeed, gender *is* relational, something his experiences made clear to him.[29]

Hale's discussion of the differences between Hale's own interpretation of the

significance of beginning his transition through the BDSM context and those of Spencer

Bergstedt reveal that although there are particular conditions that make this kind of

projection onto non-obvious possibilities for living gender possible in this world,

individuals assign multiple meanings to this process. Hale explains the differences in

their interpretations:

> For him [Bergstedt], SM as gender technology allowed him to explore, more fully
> than he could in other areas of his life, "who I really am," as he put it. For me, SM
> as gender technology allowed me to experiment with masculinities as part of a
> process of self-construction in which I became more masculine, in embodiment,
> in self-presentation, and in identification. In my self-conception, who I "really"
> am is a matter of social/cultural facts about my categorical locations; there is
> facticity here, but it is not natural or essential and is continually changing as
> culturally available categories change and as I change relative to them.[30]

Hale explains that while Bergstedt is interpreting his experience in terms of exploring

who he really is, Hale's interpretation of his experience is much different, given the way

in which his understanding draws on concepts and ways of thinking about identity and

experience from a broadly postmodern register. However, the fact that he and Bergstedt

don't have the same interpretation of their similar experiences doesn't preclude each of

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[29] Hale, "Leatherdyke Boys," 230.

[30] Ibid., 229.

them from accessing this social possibility in the SM context. It also shows that this relational and practical context can make possible forms of self-transformation that are not assigned fixed interpretations.

Hale's account reveals how solicitude takes place in a context where there are pre-given significances to roles and practices. Unlike the gendering that occurs in everyday life, gendering which places limits on individual self-making insofar as it exerts a force over individuals that must be actively resisted before they are able to engage in different forms of projection, the context Hale describes enables participants to more-or-less stipulate what kinds of gendered subject positions they will occupy and how they will be affected in these positions. His account is illuminating because he highlights how hierarchical power relations (the daddy/boy relationship in this case) can be leveraged to produce varying effects on subjects, and open up new possibilities for negotiating subjectivity (subjectivation) if they are inscribed in a context in which practices and ways of signifying things about the subject and the body are sufficiently different from everyday contexts. In BDSM in particular, rules and structure are required in order for this kind of subjection/subjectivation to be possible. Unlike the wider world in which the relationship between sex/gender/sexuality is difficult to call into question and alter, such that it is difficult to phenomenologically access how it is to be differently sexed and gendered when one doesn't successfully pass, the BDSM context was a place where this kind of experience was possible for Hale and others. This enabled him to engage in a practice of self-making that eventually led to his transition from female to male. It is a place where a kind of counter-power can be exercised by daddies over boys in order to facilitate this self-making in a way that is consensual.

Hale's account of the daddy/boy relationship and the way in which it enables the projection onto possibilities of living gender perhaps shows limitations in my account of intersubjectivity and solicitude. At present, I do not think my account can be used to adequately analyze the relationship between solicitude and a context of practices and significance that is not the dominant context. As it is, my account can explain instances where solicitude entails expanding dominant meanings or ways of understanding a project and letting someone determine their own. However, it cannot explain, I think, how a particular hierarchy or structure *facilitates* certain kinds of solicitude. Foucault's work on the care of the self may be helpful in this connection.

Conclusion

While Bornstein and Serano's texts can be read as works of solicitude suggesting more salutary frameworks for understanding trans ways of life, Jacob Hale's article provides an account of how trans people can project onto possibilities of gender transition in the context of BDSM. Bornstein's account reveals something important about solicitude in this connection, namely, that disclosing the events of one's own life can serve as a kind of solicitude and can help others project onto possibilities. Serano's account challenges both psycho-medical conceptual frameworks, reworking them in order to be more adequate, and accounts of trans ways of life that elide or erase transsexual ways of life through insistence on the social construction of gender in such a way that this occludes transsexual people's experiences of gender dissonance. All three of these accounts can be read as presenting more adequate forms of disclosure for trans

ways of life than those inherited from the psycho-medical formation around

transsexuality.

Conclusion

This project ultimately concerns the extent to which we constrain or enable people from projecting onto or pursuing different ways of life is related to the disclosure of what ways of life *mean* and what is possible *for someone else* through concepts, practices and embodiment. In connection with trans ways of life, it is particularly salient to look at various ways of disclosing trans existence and possibilities for living gender. In this dissertation, I have chosen to focus on the psycho-medical formation around transsexuality, which produced certain concepts that have proved influential for how we understand trans ways of life and ways of living gender in general. I also analyzed several works of trans theory in order to demonstrate how they prove to be more salutary than the conceptual frameworks produced in this psycho-medical formation when it comes to disclosing trans ways of life.

Here, I have tried to show how social possibilities are ontologically grounded in the fact that possibility is something that characterizes human life, or Dasein, in Heidegger's terms. Further, possibilities for living are only found in a world with pre-given significance, significance that, though we might come to contest it, serves as the background of the intelligibility of our lives, actions and projects. Social possibilities are, therefore, contextually dependent and not limitless. Not only are they not limitless, but we also think of certain ways of life, which *eo ipso* involve possibilities, as being "for" certain people, in particular, people who have been assigned one sex or the other at birth.[1] Thus, when it comes to disclosing, or pointing out, which possibilities are for whom, we obscure the ways in which specific gendered ways of life are possible for people assigned

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[1] There are, of course, more than two sexes; here, I'm referring to the social convention of assigning people to one of two sexes.

certain sexes. When someone wants to pursue a certain gendered way of life, or needs to pursue one due to one's "intrinsic inclinations", to use Serano's term, in a context where it is not disclosed as being for that person, this forces one to take up living gender explicitly as a project. I suggest that it is salutary to think of the way in which gendered existence becomes a project when one wants or needs to project onto non-obvious possibilities for living gender as "problems of existence". I suggest that trans people are attempting to solve problems of existence when they attempt to project onto these non-obvious possibilities for living. Solicitude, or care for others, can be one way that non-obvious possibilities for living are disclosed if they are not disclosed socially by the impersonal other, *das Man*. Solicitude involves appeal and acknowledgement of action, as well as a refraining from taking over another's project and/or assigning one's own significance to it.

While Heidegger's work provides a framework for the basis of social possibility (as Dasein-as-possibility-which-understandingly-projects-and-discloses-in-a-world-with-*das-Man*-and-solicituous-others), Foucault provides us with tools for thinking about how specific social possibilities emerge as the result of forms of power circulating through the social field. I have suggested that *dispositifs*, or heterogeneous ensembles that produce certain regularized applications of power, produce possibilities as effects of their operations. Foucault also provides a framework for thinking about how knowledge production practices establish a domain of truth and falsity through which subjects are disclosed. Dominant knowledge production practices, insofar as they are part of *dispositifs*, affect how subjects and possibilities are disclosed. In other words, through their operations power relations can affect not only who has access to what possibilities,

but they can also affect the intelligibility of subjects, something related to the problem of possibilities being "for" people falling into particular categories. Further, subjects can become objects for forms of knowledge production and disciplinary practices through subjection.

It might be possible for me as an individual to do something, but my action will not disclose a social possibility, i.e. something that is possible for others, without some measure of intelligibility and willingness on the part of others to acknowledge the reality of my project. This not only depends on the willingness of others to see my project as meaningful or help me in my endeavor, but Foucault's work shows that power relations that circumscribe how subjects relate to one another and how they are able to act on one another, can affect my project and my ability to take up social possibilities. With whom is something possible, when is it possible, and how is it possible in a given context or milieu? Jacob Hale's work shows that these are all relevant questions for thinking about social possibilities: it may be that, while something is not a widely available possibility, an avenue towards a new way of life can open, none-the-less, in a very small culture.

This project is not about attempting to arrive at an ontology of gender. It is, hopefully, evident why I have not done this from the arc of my analysis in this dissertation. Inquiring into the ontology of gender ought, in my view, to begin with a critical evaluation of our concepts in a Heideggerian vein. I have attempted to do this here in a rudimentary fashion, but I think that a more thorough analysis of these concepts might reveal how they imply metaphysical or ontological entailments that might prove misleading if they are uncritically deployed in an ontological investigation into gender. For example, the assumption that gender identity is integral to the formation of identity

per se, an view that Money had, could be misleading, perhaps, if it turns out that there is phenomenological evidence to the contrary.[2]

In this project, I have approached social possibilities in connection with gender and, specifically, trans existence, in a schematic fashion. As work like Serano's indicates, it is also necessary to interrogate more specific factors, like sexism, that differentially affect people's access to social possibilities along gender lines. Specifically, the way in which sexism, as something pervasive in the social world, affects women and feminine people's access to social possibilities and has done so historically. More work is necessary to determine the extent to which analyses of things like sexism, racism and transphobia, among other things, are compatible with this framework. All told, however, I have attempted to provide a schematic account that can explain (1) how we understand certain possibilities as being possibilities "for" us in a given social world and how we end up pursuing them; and (2) how the formation of social possibilities depends both on our relationships with others and on how we stand in relation to specific formations of power and knowledge.

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[2] Money and Tucker, *Sexual Signatures*, 87–88.

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Appendix to Chapter 1:

Using Heidegger to Indicate Possibilities and Trans Ways of Life

Heidegger's project, to provide an analysis of Dasein's fundamental ontology, departs from traditional ontology in important ways. He is careful to make clear that the ontology of Dasein differs from that of other entities and his complicated vocabulary is deployed in the service of explicating the specificity of Dasein's ontological characteristics. In this appendix, I have provided a selection of important terms from *Being and Time* and elsewhere accompanied by brief descriptions. German terms appear in italics and in brackets. While these descriptions do not exhaust the possible interpretations of these terms, they may serve as reference points for those less familiar with early Heidegger's conceptual repertoire.

ANXIETY [*Angst*]

Anxiety is a fundamental mood or attunement of Dasein. Unlike fear, where Dasein is afraid of some determinate entity within the world (a storm, an illness), Dasein is anxious about Being-in-the-world *per se* (BT 231–232 [187–188]). Anxiety reveals Dasein to itself and exposes its uncanniness; that is, that it is primordially "not at home" in the world (BT 231 [186–187]). As thrown, Dasein is not at home in the world, but this generally gets concealed by its involvement with everyday concerns and its fallenness into *das Man* and *das Man's* disclosure of possibilities. In anxiety, Dasein confronts itself as possibility, as possibly authentic or inauthentic: "…anxiety discloses Dasein *as Being-possible*, and indeed as the only kind of thing which it can be of its own accord as something individualized in individualization" (BT 232 [188]).

AUTHENTICITY [*Eigentlichkeit*]

Dasein exists as *das Man*: it does not take responsibility for its own existence; in other words, Dasein is typically inauthentic, "'fleeing' in the face of itself" (BT 230 [185]). As fallen into *das Man*, it does not usually determine the significance of its projects, project onto its possibilities for its own reasons and challenge the way in which things have been publicly disclosed. Individuation, or "self-constancy" [*Selbst-ständigkeit*] is a fundamental possibility of Dasein (BT 369 [322]). "Authenticity" refers to Dasein's individuation from out of *das Man* through resolutely comporting towards its possibilities by taking up certain possibilities as projects. Authentic Dasein's "way of existing" or its "Self" is a modification of its inauthentic Self, *das Man* (BT 312 [267]).[338] How does this happen? Though Dasein is often absorbed into the world —into the objects of its concern and the way in which the world has been disclosed by *das Man*—there are times where Dasein is faced with what it is, i.e. that it is something finite and free, something that is fundamentally undetermined. Dasein is *no-thing*; it is a being which, as something that has possibility at its basis (i.e. as something which is *free*) Dasein is not a determinate kind of thing like a stone or a chair. Its facticity, the fact that it has been thrown into a world it has not made, can sometimes appear determinate; it might seem as though Dasein 'has' to be this or that kind of thing given the context or how *das Man* has disclosed Dasein's own existence to it. Thrownness, or facticity, rather, provides the basis for Dasein to be what it will become, it determines the range of possibilities open to Dasein in a given context. Individuation, or authenticity, for Heidegger involves Dasein's becoming responsible for projecting onto the possibilities

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[338] "Authentic Being-one's-Self takes the definite form of an existentiell modification of the "they"…" (BT 312 [267]).

available on the basis of its thrownness into a factical situation (BT 329–330 [284]). As individuated, Dasein becomes free for its own existentiell possibilities in a given situation (BT 331 [285]). There are a number of ways Dasein may become individuated, arguably, but Heidegger mentions individuation via moods explicitly. Anxiety is mood that, though rare, forces Dasein to confront its "nature" (i.e. that it is not a determinate kind of thing, but rather has been thrown into a world and must continue to exist in it); anxiety causes the world to show up as uncanny, because it reveals to Dasein that Dasein is ultimately the basis for things in the world to mean anything in the first place (BT 233–234 [188–190]).

 The mood of anxiety individuates Dasein, drawing it out of its absorption in concern and forcing it to face up to its facticity, the fact that the only thing determinate about it is its existence and that it will die. While Heidegger focuses on death at what primarily individuates Dasein, in principle other aspects of Being-in-the-world can make it feel "not-at-home", forcing it to face up to the contingency of the world and the fact that determining how it is going to be is ultimately up to it (BT 234 [189]).

BEING-IN-THE-WORLD [*In-der-Welt-sein*]

Throughout the work, Heidegger uses the term "Being-in-the-world" to refer to the way in which Dasein always finds itself in a world in which it is able to engage, have projects and understand with little or no reflection (BT 107 [76]).[339] Dasein's world includes entities (non-living things, animals) and other Daseins, as well as the contexts of meaning and significance that are founded on and conditioned by materiality of Dasein's

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[339] In Heidegger's language: "Being-in-the-world, according to our Interpretation hitherto, amounts to a non-thematic circumspective absorption in references or assignments constitutive for the readiness-to-hand of a totality of equipment."

environment and by its sociality. It is in this world that Dasein has access to certain possibilities and has goals or projects. Things that Dasein undertakes as its projects, or the activities that make up these projects have a "for-the-sake-of-which" [ein Worumwillen]; there is a reason why Dasein does what it does, even if it is not always conscious of this reason and is not the one who understands the reason to be one it has chosen and assented to (BT 116 [84] and *passim*). Worlds are tied to the practices and meanings generated by Daseins who live in that world; in other words, worlds are tied to Daseins' existence and a particular Dasein's existence is tied to its world (BT 432 [380]). Consequently, worlds come into and go out of existence as well and are contingent on the possibility of meaningful access to, and engagement with, what constitutes a world (i.e. its practices, its significances, the modes of understanding and interpretation that disclose the world to Dasein). Worlds are, then, contextually specific, either historically, culturally or sub-culturally (as in the case of the worlds of specific practices (the fashion world) or groups of people (a world characterized by a form of queer sociality at a specific time and place).

BEING-WITH [*Mitsein*]

Dasein does not encounter other Daseins in the way it encounters other entities. Rather, Dasein understands that other Daseins have the same character it does. Although others are encountered in a world with equipmental nexuses, this does not mean that Dasein encounters others as present-at-hand (BT 155 [119]). Being-with, like readiness-to-hand, is a constitutive feature of Being-in-the-world (BT 157 [121]). While concern* characterizes Dasein's comportment towards objects (Dasein always has an

understanding of what can be done with objects and for what purpose or ends) solicitude*

characterizes Dasein's comportment toward other Daseins (ibid.). Although other

Dasein's are different from the objects Dasein encounters in the world, solicitude often

occurs in the context of some concernful project (BT 159 [122]). The implications for

Being-with, and the role that the existentiale of Being-with plays in the constitution of the

world is somewhat underdeveloped in the text, apart from Heidegger's extensive analysis

of *das Man*.

CARE [*Sorge*]

Things can matter to Dasein: it can find things significant or insignificant and it

can take up certain attitudes towards the other Daseins it finds itself living among.

Heidegger uses the term "care" to refer to the fact that the world always matters to

Dasein, in one way or another, and that this relationship to the world is part of Dasein's

ontological constitution. Care can be understood as the manner in which Dasein "live[s]

out of the world" into which it is thrown (HF 66 [86–87]). In other words, care refers to

all of the aspects of the way in which a particular Dasein orients itself within a situation

and takes up determinate possibilities, thereby becoming something determinate.

Heidegger defines the structure of the *existentiale* of care as "ahead-of-itself—Being-

already-in (a world) as Being-alongside (entities encountered within the world)" (BT 364

[317]; see also BT 263 [220]). Care is the existentiale that captures Daseins ontological

constitution as a whole and each of the parts of care Heidegger mentions in the above

passage are related to on of the three moments of Dasein's temporal structure, the future,

the past and the present. He identifies two modes of this existentiale, that of *concern*

[*Besorgen*] and *solicitude* [*Fürsorge*]. *Concern* describes Dasein's relationship toward

entities within the world and their involvement in Dasein's projects while *solicitude*

describes Dasein's attitude towards, and relationship to, other Daseins. Lastly, concern is

always forward-looking; Dasein always projects into the future, considering how its way

of life will, indeed, be a way.

CONCERN [*Besorgen*]

Heidegger uses the term "concern" to describe how we are involved in projects in the

world, how we take up a certain kind of attitude towards them and have a kind of

understanding of them that we do not arrive at through concerted thought or reflection

(BT 95 [67]).[340] Concern is an *existentiale* and is part of Dasein's structure as "care"; it is

a specific kind of comportment Dasein has towards objects in the world and their

involvement in Dasein's projects (BT 237 [193]). When we consider objects in the world

from the standpoint of concern, this kind of seeing can be described as "circumscription"

[*Umsicht*] (BT 98 [69]). We are involved in "dealings" with our environment: there are

things which we want to accomplish and things we need to do in order to make it possible

for something else to happen (BT 95 [66]). These "dealings" are characterized by the

circumspection of concern. Often, we go about activities characterized by concern in an

unreflective way. For instance, I am unreflective, for the most part, about making tea in

the morning, unless this activity is somehow disrupted (the stove fails to turn on, I am out

of tea, etc.).

See also CARE.

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[340] "The kind of dealing which is closest to us is as we have shown, not a bare perceptual cognition, but rather that kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use; and this is its own kind of 'knowledge'."

DASEIN

"Dasein" is Heidegger's term for a human being. A literal translation of Dasein is "there-being", which indicates something important for Heidegger. What is definitive about Dasein, or human being, is that we are beings that exist in a particular world and are able to inquire into what it means to exist. Dasein has a "nature" insofar as there are certain structural features of it, ontological features, that explain its existence. These are the existentialia. However, what a given Dasein *actually is* is something that only gets determined through existing. So, it is not as if the existentialia are meant to capture essential predicates, for instance, like 'legless' and 'cold-blooded' and 'covered in scales' being essential predicates of a snake. Dasein is so called because it is the being that finds itself there in a world—the manner in which it lives in a world is what gives its existence a definitive or determinate character.

DISCLOSEDNESS [*Erschlossenheit*]

Disclosedness refers to the way in which the world shows up, including what is possible within the world, for Dasein. Disclosedness is conditioned by Dasein's moods, its understanding and discourse, as well as by it's Being-with other Daseins; in short, disclosedness is conditioned by the way in which Dasein has access to the meanings and significances given in the world (BT 263 [220–221]). The world and Dasein (as Being-in-the-world) are disclosed equiprimordially. Disclosure, for Heidegger, is not the same as knowing that Dasein is a determinate kind of thing (BT 173 (134).[341] Rather, it has to do with how Dasein has access to the meanings and significances present in the context in

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[341] "'To be disclosed' does not mean 'to be know as this sort of thing'."

which it finds itself. The world is disclosed, all the time and both theoretically and pre-theoretically. Coming across a piece of equipment discloses something about the world to Dasein, but so does reading a religious text.

See also DISCOURSE, STATE-OF-MIND, UNDERSTANDING

DISCOURSE *[Rede]*

The world is disclosed to Dasein through discourse[342], along with understanding and states-of-mind (BT 203 [161]). As such, it, along with Dasein's moods and Dasein's understanding (and its derivative, interpretation) is how the world, things and other Daseins show up for Dasein. The significance things have, significance that is largely unarticulated in our engagement with equipment, may be articulated in discourse and thereby made explicit. Also, clearly, discourse is one of the primary ways in which sociality, or Being-with, is possible for Dasein. Discourse is, of course, expressed by language (BT 204 [161]). It is through discourse or talk that the world has intelligibility [*Verständlichkeit*].

EQUIPMENT [*das Zueg*]

'Equipment' is a term Heidegger uses to refer to entities that we encounter and use in our day-to-day life, in the context of our concern*. For Heidegger, we do not find ourselves in a world surrounded by bare objects; we do not encounter the things in the world around us without having already understood (even if this understanding is not reflected upon [i.e. is prereflective]) that objects have uses, purposes and significances. Heidegger refers to the way in which objects show up for Dasein as having uses,

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[342] "*Rede*" is also sometimes translated as "talk".

significances and their occurrence as part of a system of other, mutually referencing objects with their own significances as "readiness-to-hand" [*Zuhandenheit*]. He designates objects that show up this way as "equipment" [das *Zeug*] (BT 97–98 (68–69) and *passim*). For example, a chair is equipment for sitting, or a "thing for sitting", a pen, equipment for writing, etc. We can easily see that equipment is involved in a system of mutually related objects that we use to accomplish particular things. The "totality of involvements" in which items of equipment are situated is part of the worldhood of the world (BT 116 [84])

See CONCERN

EVERYDAYNESS [*Alltäglichkeit*]

Heidegger begins his analysis of Dasein from Dasein's everydayness. For the most part, Dasein exists in an undifferentiated manner, which Heidegger calls "average everydayness" (BT 69 [43]). Typically, Dasein does not feel the full weight of its existence, nor does it take up the responsibility of determining its own existence through authentically relating to itself and its temporality and of projecting onto possibilities for its own reasons. In his analysis of everydayness, Heidegger is building from the phenomenological insight that, typically, Dasein does not need to reflect on the world it inhabits or the things it does: the significances of various pursuits, along with an understanding of how to pursue things, are given in the world in which it finds itself. In "going about its business", so to speak, Dasein is seldom challenged to confront itself, its existence, its finitude. Thus, everyday Dasein seldom questions the pre-given significances and relevances that have been assigned to the features of the world in which

it finds itself: it is steeped in them, we could say, and is able to unreflectively be on its way.

EXISTENTIALE

In traditional ontologies, the term "category" is often used to describe an entity's ontological characteristics or features. Heidegger avoids this language also, instead employing the term "existentiale" (plural: "existentialia") to refer to fundamental characteristics of Dasein's being. Categories can be used to describe entities, as they describe "what" things are, while existentialia characterize Dasein, describing "who" it is (BT 71 [45]).[343] The existentialia that characterize Dasein are "equiprimordial" [*Gleichursprünglich*]: they all characterize Dasein from the outset and it is not the case that some existentialia always characterize Dasein and some are acquired, for instance. Given this, they ought not be thought of as qualities, though this might be tempting. It is also not the case that a relationship of foundation or constitution pertains between them. The existentialia always characterize Desein even if, ontically, they appear to be lacking. Apparently lacking an existentiale, lacking a mood, for example, is rather a "deficient" mode of that existentiale.

EXISTENTEILL

Heidegger uses the term *existenteill* to refer to features that characterize particular Daseins; in other words, *existenteill* is a term that refers to Dasein's *ontic* characteristics.

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[343] Heidegger writes, "*Existentialia* and categories are the two basic possibilities for characters of Being. The entities which correspond to them require different kinds of primary interrogation respectively: any entity is either a "*who*" (existence) or a "*what*" (presence-at-hand in the broadest sense)" (Heidegger's emphasis).

Existenteill, as a term that refers to the ontic, can be contrasted with the *existentialia,*

which refer to Dasein's structural *ontological* features. When Heidegger refers to

"existenteill modification", this means that an existentiale takes on a determinate

character and, indeed, must have a determinate character. This does not mean that a

particular existentiale must have a specific content, though it must always have a content.

For example, discourse is an existentiale: for most Daseins, the world is disclosed to them

in large part through discourse. The particular discourse a Dasein has access to, however,

is not determined in advance. For instance, Dasein my know English or French; English

and French are existentiell modifications of the existentiale of discourse. Dasein and the

existentialia that characterize it must take on determinate forms in every case, but these

forms are not *determined* in advance. Thus we can think of the ontic as being based in the

ontological and referring to the way in which modifications of these structures give a

Dasein particular contours, or "concretize" it (BT 294 [251]).[344]

FACTICITY [*Faktizität*]

       While we think and talk about entities as being characterized by "facts", this term

does not properly capture the way in which Dasein is different from other entities. Unlike

other entities, being is an issue for Dasein: it is the kind of thing that is able to ask

questions about its own existence. Heidegger thus uses the term "facticity" to refer to the

fact that Dasein is always living in a world and finds itself involved in it; as such, has

certain possibilities open to it and has certain projects in which it is engaged. In other

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[344] For example, Heidegger describes care as having "its most primordial concretion" through Being-towards-death. When Dasein understands itself in terms of the fact that it is going to die, and when it allows death to individuate it, rather than thinking of death in general terms (in terms of 'one dies'), this enables a particular concretization of care. As Being-towards-death, how things matter for Dasein are recast in light of its relationship to its own death.

words, Dasein always finds itself in a concrete situation with which it is engaged. Dasein's facticity is different from facts about objects: Dasein is not "in" the situation like water is "in" a jar; instead, the concrete and contingent elements of the situation matter to Dasein, whereas the jar does not matter to the water or vice versa.

FALLENNESS [*Verfallenheit*]

Typically, Dasein is absorbed in its concerns and understands itself in *das Man*'s* terms. Heidegger uses the term "fallenness" to designate the tendency that Dasein has to be absorbed into what is most proximate, i.e., its immediate concerns and the publicness, ambiguity and idle talk of *das Man*. Fallenness is something that Dasein cannot avoid: it is an existentiale (BT 221 [176]). In fallenness, Dasein avoids confronting itself (i.e. its existence), its own mortality and the fact that it is ultimately the one responsible for its own projects. Some may hear Christian overtones in this term and these overtones provide a clue about fallenness. Rather than describing an estrangement from God, however, Dasein's fallennes describes an estrangement from its Self, which for Heidegger, means that fallen Dasein is estranged from its existence and its responsibility for becoming whatever it will be.

See also: *DAS MAN,* THROWNNESS

FOR-THE-SAKE-OF-WHICH [*Worumwillen*]

Items of equipment always have an involvement, i.e. they are always found in a referential context with other items of equipment. Dasein engages concernfully with equipment for some reason or purpose, a "for-the-sake-of-which". The ultimate "for-the-

sake-of-which" is Dasein itself, i.e. its projects (BT 116–117 [84]. Dasein, as care, always has projects characterized by the "for-the-sake-of-which". This ultimate goal or purpose can be disclosed by *das Man* or disclosed by authentic Dasein.

See also: CONCERN, EQUIPMENT

FORMAL INDICATION [*formal Anzeige*]

Heidegger uses the term "formal indication" to refer to metaphysical concepts, but in a way that is meant to eschew what Heidegger identifies as a "basic tendency" of philosophy toward "universal classification" [HF 46]. I take Heidegger to mean that formal indications point towards a phenomenon that needs further philosophical explication in a manner that does not unduly constrain what can be thought about it in advance (because the concept already has various metaphysical implications, for instance). The existentialia of *Being and Time* are meant to be formally indicative; that is, they are not meant to express ontological characteristics of Dasein that have determinate content, but rather, as designating open structures, their content gets filled in the course of a life. In other words, they point to the way in which Dasein's existence takes on determinate contours, or becomes "concretized" without thereby positing a specific concretion (FCM 296). For instance, to say that state-of-mind is an existentiale says nothing about *which moods* will characterize a particular Dasein. The existentialia of Being-in-the-world tells us that to exist is to exist in a world, but it does not tell us anything determinate about the features of a specific world. For Heidegger, these are ontic matters that require ontic, rather than ontological, investigation and it is necessary that we grasp the ontological before moving on to ontic determinations.

INTERPRETATION *[Auslegung]*

Interpretation is a derivative mode of the understanding. Heidegger discusses interpretation after giving an analysis of understanding and its relationship to Dasein's structural features. Interpretation is a "development" of the understanding (BT 188–189 [148]).[345] In other words, it is founded on understanding, which is primordial. Interpretation, for Heidegger, has a wider range than we might expect, given that much of the philosophical attention to interpretation as an activity focuses on textual interpretation. While textual interpretation, or hermeneutics more traditionally construed, is one possibility of interpretation and one Heidegger mentions, the possible objects and contexts of Dasein's interpretation extend far beyond texts. Whenever we use equipment, for the purposes of repairing something, for instance, we are understanding something and interpreting something. In the equipmental context, something shows up *as* something useful in order to accomplish something (BT 189 [149]). The hammer shows up *as* something for driving nails into the wall, for example. Seeing a hammer as something for driving in nails is to have already interpreted this piece of equipment. It is important to note, then, that Dasein has often already interpreted something (seen something as something) before making assertions about it or talking about it. We needn't say, "This is a hammer for driving in nails" in order to have already interpreted the hammer as a tool useful for this purpose.

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[345] "In interpretation, understanding does not become something different. It becomes itself. Such interpretation is grounded existentially in understanding; the latter does not arise from the former. Nor is interpretation the acquiring of information about what is understood; it is rather the working-out of possibilities projected in understanding." What Heidegger means by understanding "becom[ing] itself" in interpretation is somewhat mysterious. He could be suggesting here that interpretation is a kind of actualization of a potential the understanding has to be directed towards particular things or engage in a specific hermeneutic process. There is a question about whether or not the understanding, in so doing, is able to "see" more possibilities than are typically disclosed and how this would come about.

All of our interpretations, therefore, are grounded in something we have in advance: the way in which the world is disclosed in a material nexus with significance. Heidegger calls this a *fore-having* (BT 191 [150]). Interpretation also involves a *fore-sight*, a view that Dasein has towards the thing to be interpreted (ibid). When we use equipment, this fore-sight is quite obvious, as we have to look at the items we are using, at least in the first instance when we must first locate them in order to begin a project. Finally, interpretation involves *fore-conception*, or "*something we grasp in advance*" (ibid, Heidegger's emphasis). What this amounts to is that the elements that provide the conditions for our interpretation, whether this be objects, texts or the possibilities open to us in our given situation, will be largely determinate in the first instance: we always have a fore-having, a fore-sight and a fore-conception. Things show up 'as' something determinate and matter in certain ways against a pregiven field or background of significance. This does not mean that our possibilities of interpreting something, our situation, for instance, are completely *determined*, but there are determinate conditions that constrain the kinds of interpretations that we can make in the first instance.

See also: UNDERSTANDING

DAS MAN [*"the they"*]

Das Man (translated as "the they") is a term Heidegger uses to describe "who" Dasein is, for the most part. What does this mean? When Dasein understands itself, has projects, pursues various activities, and interacts with others, Dasein usually understands itself as "one does", does things as "one does", etc. The German pronoun "man" can be roughly translated as "one" or "they" in English, but is used much more frequently than

"one" is. What Heidegger has in mind here are the kinds of claims about what people do in general that we often appeal to in order to explain or justify our actions. "Everyone smokes", "they say its better not to eat wheat", "you should not leave your car unlocked" are all examples of the kinds of impersonal statements we often make in English that do not have a determinate subject. In these sentences, "everyone", "they" and "you", respectively, refer to people in general, rather than a specific individual or group of individuals. *Das Man* has its own way of being, characterized by averageness, publicness and everydayness (BT 164–165 [127]). Heidegger thinks that Dasein typically understands itself and its possibilities in these terms; these possibilities are "leveled down" (i.e. presented in such a way so as to promote a kind of averageness) (BT 165 [127]). We could also think about the average, public understanding of what "one does" in terms of norms: as *das Man*, Dasein understands itself in terms of social norms and its possibilities in terms of these norms. In the first instance and generally speaking, Dasein exists in the mode of *das Man*, that is, inauthentically; Heidegger refers to this as "lostness in the they-self" (BT 311 [266]), BT 365 [317]; see AUTHENTICITY). Since possible ways of life are disclosed by *das Man*, and disclosed simply as "what one does", this allows Dasein to avoid taking up responsibility for its own existence; that is, it can avoid establishing its own projects with their own "for-the-sake-of-which", interpreting itself and giving meaning and significance to its life. Instead, it can inauthentically take up the pregiven meanings, possibilities and projects disclosed by *das Man* and flee from its facticity. *Das Man* prescribes the intelligibility that things have and has its own mode of discourse, "idle talk" [*Gerede*] (¶ 35) and its own mode of understanding, characterized by ambiguity

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MOOD/ATTUNEMENT [*Stimmung*]

Dasein's *Befindlichkeit* is always characterized by moods; they are "modes" of Dasein's state-of-mind (BT 172 [133/134]). Dasein always has a mood. Moods disclose features of Dasein's being-in-the-world to it in a non- or pre-thematic way. Heidegger does not describe every mood, though he describes fear and anxiety in some detail in some detail (¶ 30, ¶ 40, ¶68 (b)). The mood of anxiety (*Angst*) is the mood Heidegger describes most extensively. Anxiety is the mood that attunes Dasein to its existence: that is thrown into the world whose meanings and significances exceed it, that it must exist and that it is not an entity with a pre-determined nature or significance (¶ 40). In the mood of anxiety, Dasein is confronted with the possibility of its authenticity or inauthenticity; Dasein either faces the possibility of being authentic or flees from it (BT 229 [184]). Dasein's comportment towards what anxiety discloses, namely, that Dasein must exist, and is finite, plays a definitive role in the extent to which Dasein is authentic or inauthentic (¶ 68 (b)). Heidegger mentions equanimity in connection with authenticity and mentions other moods, such as hope, joy, melancholy and desperation, in passing (BT 395–396 [345]). Heidegger discusses the mood or attunement of boredom extensively in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (Part I).

See also: STATE-OF-MIND, UNDERSTANDING

POSSIBILITY [*Möglichkeit*]

Possibility is an existentiale and the way in which possibility characterizes Dasein is different from logical possibility, as well as a metaphysical conception of possibility which is opposed to actuality or necessity:

> Dasein is in every case what it can be, and in the way in which it is its possibility. The Being-possible which is essential for Dasein, pertains to the ways of its solicitude for Others and of its concern with the 'world', as we have characterized them; and in all these, and always, it pertains to Dasein's potentiality-for-Being towards itself, for the sake of itself. […] As a modal category of presence-at-hand, possibility signifies what is *not yet* actual and what is *not at any time* necessary. It characterizes the *merely* possible. Ontologically it is on a lower level than actuality and necessity. On the other hand, possibility as an *existentiale* is the most primordial and ultimate positive way in which Dasein is characterized ontologically (BT 183 [143–144]).

Dasein is different from other kinds of entities insofar as it is characterized (among other things) by possibility. Unlike an object, Dasein can direct, to an extent, what it will become. In other words, Dasein is "essentially potentiality-for-being" (BT 360 [312]) As possibility and as Being-in-the-world, Daseins possibilities arise in a determinate context, one that is historically contingent and situated. Possibility is an existentiale and "Dasein always understands itself factically in definite existenteill possibilities…"(BT 360 [312]). This does not mean Dasein is completely determined by its context, but rather that the world in which Dasein finds itself conditions the possibilities onto which Dasein can project itself. "Projection" itself is an existentiale, and it describes the way in which Dasein is always oriented towards some possibilities, possibilities with which it is concerned (REF). Often, given that Dasein exists in the mode of *das Man*, possibilities are disclosed in an everyday, common sense way that privileges a kind of averageness and ready intelligibility. Thus, Dasein's possibilities and its projects are often not its own, but rather "anyone's" or "one's" projects or possibilities.

PRESENT-AT-HAND [*Vorhandenheit*]

Objects are typically manifest to Dasein as ready-to-hand; that is, they do not show up as bare objects, but rather they show up in a nexus of relationships to other objects. When breakdowns occur in an equipmental context, where a piece of equipment fails to be ready-to-hand, it shows up as present-at-hand or as a mere object. Phenomenologically speaking, if objects always showed up to Dasein in the first instance as present-at-hand, everyday life would be quite difficult because grasping the use or function of the object would be something that is grasped after apprehending the object as mere object. In other words, it is certainly possible to perceive objects as present-at-hand, but for the most part, Dasein encounters objects and comports itself towards objects insofar as they are ready to hand. For instance, it is possible to perceive a hand crafted, aesthetically interesting chefs knife as present at hand, where Dasein pays attention to the object's physical features (color, grain patterns on the blade, the material of the handle, etc.). However, it is difficult to do this in the middle of chopping vegetables!

SOLICITUDE [*Fürsorge*]

Dasein's comportment toward other Daseins is called "solicitude". Solicitude, like concern, is a mode of care: it characterizes how Dasein *is toward* other things that are not Dasein. Heidegger discusses two kinds of solicitude, "leaping-in" and "leaping-ahead" (BT 158 [122]). When Dasein leaps-in, it takes over another Dasein's project for it; when it leaps-ahead, it helps the other Dasein with its project by helping the other to pursue their own ends. Solicitude, in its deficient mode, is indifference (BT 159 [123]).

See also: CARE

STATE-OF-MIND [*Befindlichkeit*]

Dasein always finds itself in a world it has not made, a world that exceeds it. State-of-mind is the existentiale that refers to this fact. State-of-mind is always characterized by a mood [*Stimmung*] or an attunement (BT 172 [134]). Depending on Dasein's state of mind, things show up as relevant or irrelevant (¶29). Heidegger's example of a particular state-of-mind and the mode of access to the world it gives Dasein is that of fear. When Dasein is afraid, it is afraid of a particular thing within the world which it finds threatening, either an entity or another Dasein (BT 179 [140]). Fear thus gives Dasein a certain mode of access to the world in which it finds itself, and a specific way of encountering things in the world; it encounters them as threatening, and they show up for it as threatening in light of the mood of fear that it has. In other words, Dasein's state-of-mind dictates the way in which things show up as "mattering" for Dasein (BT 177 [137]).[346] Alternatively, things can fail to show up as things that matter through Dasein's moods as well. Specifically, the state-of-mind of anxiety is a an important mood to consider when thinking about Dasein's existential constitution, Heidegger thinks, because it is through the state-of-mind of anxiety that the significances disclosed by *das Man* and *das Man*'s interpretation of what matters and what does not can fail to be relevant for a particular Dasein (BT 393 [343]).[347] Anxiety forces Dasein to face up to its 'there'; in other words, it makes it face its facticity, that it finds itself in a

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[346] *"Existentially, a state-of-mind implies a disclosive submission to the world out of which we can encounter something that matters to us"* (Heidegger's emphasis).

[347] "Anxiety discloses an insignificance of the world; and this insignificance reveals the nullity of that with which one can concern oneself—or, in other words, the impossibility of projecting oneself upon a potentiality-for-Being which belongs to existence and which is founded primarily upon one's objects of concern."

world that it has not made with a limited, but not completely determined, range of possibilities that are open to it. Dasein has anxiety *about* Being-in-the-world *per se*; we can contrast the way in which anxiety has an indeterminate object (Dasein's existential situation in general) with the mood of fear, which has a definite object. Through moods, the "that-it-is" of Dasein is disclosed to it, even if Dasein typically avoids confronting the fact of its existence (BT 173 [134]). Dasein always has a state-of-mind, along with an understanding of itself and its world. State-of-mind and understanding are part of fallenness, and understanding is articulated in discourse. Thus these four existentialia, state-of-mind, understanding, fallenness and discourse are all interrelated and have specific modes of temporality that correspond to them (BT 385 [335]).[348]

See MOOD, UNDERSTANDING, DISCOURSE, FALLING

TEMPORALITY [*Zeitlichkeit*]

Dasein exists in time: it is finite and must move linearly though time. It's existence is bounded by birth and death and Heidegger, notoriously, places more emphasis on the latter than the former.[349] Heidegger calls the modes of Dasein's temporality, past, present and future "ecstasies". Each of the existentialia are characterized by a mode of temporality, either past present or future (c.f. BT II. 4).[350] The extent to which Dasein is authentic is determined through Dasein's relationship to its own

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[348] Heidegger describes the relationship between these four existentialia in the following way. I have done my best to interpret what he means here, but it is far from the only interpretation:

> Every understanding has its mood. Every state of-of-mind is one in which one understands. The understanding which one has in such a state-of-mind has the character of falling. The understanding which has its mood attuned in falling, Articulates itself with relation to its intelligibility in discourse.

[349] For an analysis of the significance of birth, or natality, c.f. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (8–9, 247).

[350] For instance, the existentiale of understanding has the future as its temporal mode, while state-of-mind has the past as its temporal mode (BT 390 [340]).

temporality, including its finitude (i.e. its own death). When Dasein is more authentic, in

each of the ecstasies of temporality, "temporality temporalizes itself as a whole", this

enables Dasein to comport itself to itself as a whole or as a unitary phenomenon (BT 401

[350]). Inauthentic temporality is characterized by a deficient mode of comportment

towards temporality in which the ecstasies are regarded as discrete or separate and Dasein

does not resolutely anticipate its own death or finitude.

THROWNNESS [*Geworfenheit*]

Heidegger uses the term "thrownness" [Geworfenheit] to describe the way in

which Dasein finds itself in a world that it has not made, a world that already includes

equipmental contexts and significances that make the world show up in particular ways

for it (BT 174 [135]). There are structural features of Dasein itself that give it access to its

thrownness into its world. These features are what Heidegger calls *state-of-mind*,

understanding and its derivative mode, *interpretation,* and *discourse*. Through these

modes of access, Dasein is able to "get itself into" determinate possibilities. Through

these existentialia, Dasein is more or less aware of its thrownness, they can either conceal

or reveal Dasein's thrownness and the world into which Dasein is thrown.

SEE also: STATE-OF-MIND, MOOD, UNDERSTANDING, DISCOURSE

UNDERSTANDING [*Verstehen*]

Understanding for Heidegger is a broad concept that includes a wider range of kinds of

apprehending things than epistemology typically considers. Understanding is an

existentiale that describes the way in which, as Being-in-the-world, Dasein has already

grasped the "for-the-sake-of-which" of that which it encounters within the world (BT 184 [144]). Understanding encompasses pursuits that require a pre-theoretical grasp of what Dasein is up to, pursuits like pottery or cooking or carpentry. Dasein can have an understanding of how to throw pottery without having propositional knowledge about what it is up to. As being in the world, Dasein has also already understood itself and what it is capable of doing: "Dasein is such that in every case it has understood (or alternatively, not understood) that it is to be thus or thus. As such understanding it "knows" *what* it is capable of—that is, what its potentiality-for-Being is capable of" (ibid). Understanding always involves projection onto possibilities in the world. Theoretical understanding which involves theoretical interpretation and assertion, the pursuit of theoretical knowledge in a particular domain like history, for instance, is founded on the more primordial understanding through which the world is disclosed to Dasein. Thus, theoretical pursuits are tied to the context in which they emerge, a hermeneutic issue that Heidegger addresses in (BT ¶ 32).