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Dennis Hardy

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OHH HE LIKES THE GIRLS: A GENEALOGY OF THE “TRANNNY CHASER”

by

Dennis Hardy

Under the Direction of Juliana M. Kubala, PhD

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master Of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2023

## ABSTRACT

Research presented in this project examines how the social construction of sexuality affects cisgender (cis) men's attraction to transgender women. While mainstream discourse roots gender normative males' attraction to transgender women in heterosexuality, this project demonstrates how cis-trans pairings emerged from homosexuality in the twentieth century. This project traces the way sexologists' elaboration of the differences between sex, gender, and sexuality helped to distinguish transfeminine people from trans-attracted gender normative males using Foucauldian genealogy. Further, this project examines how researchers have adapted nineteenth-century frameworks of same-sex desires as sexual fetishes to construct gender-conforming “healthy” desires aimed at transsexual women by using the elaboration of these categories in the science of transsexualism. By doing so, this project illustrates how researchers deemphasized the body of trans people and elevated their gender to ensure a white middle-class cis-normative society.

INDEX WORDS: Trans-attraction, Tranny chaser, Trans women, Fetishism, Sexualization, Objectification

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2023

OHH HE LIKES THE GIRLS: A GENEALOGY OF THE “TRANNNY CHASER”

by

Dennis Hardy

Committee Chair: Juliana Kubala

Committee: Megan Sinnott

Jennie Burnet

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Services

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

May 2023

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to anyone who believes that something else, something more progressive, something with more nuance, more love, and greater consideration is possible.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to acknowledge Dr. Kubala, who always asked me to consider the people around me with a simple question: “what do the people around you say?” More so, I want to acknowledge the black trans women who embrace being “trannies.” And I want to acknowledge the black trans-attracted gender normative males who embrace being chasers. It’s because of them, the “trannies” and the “chasers,” who refuse compliance with the logic of white middle-class norms of trans normativity that I was able to undertake this project. After all, it is meek who shall inherit the earth, so why not start here and now.





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## 1 INTRODUCTION:

### TRANS-SPECIFIC SEXUAL LABELS AND THE DEBATE

Until we begin checking how we delegitimize the identities, bodies, and existence of trans women and stigmatize the men who yearn to be with us, we will continue to marginalize our... men who don't have the space to explore, define, and embrace their attraction to various women.

—Janet Mock from *How Society Shames Men Dating Trans Women & How This Affects Our Lives*

August 2019 — a video of Maurice Willoughby (known by many simply as Reese), a 20-year-old black cisgender man, being harassed by a group of young men about his sexual activity and his girlfriend's gender identity went viral: "You fuck what? Bro, you do what?" one of the men appears to ask. When Reese bluntly responds, "Fuck trannies. So what?" the men collectively begin taunting him. "He sucks dick!" one is heard yelling. Another chimed in, "You sucking dick and all that? That's not a girl" (Cuby). After the incident, Maurice allegedly fell into a deep depression. And sometime after, Reese reportedly threatened to take his own life and his girlfriend's (Cuby). Faith, Reese's girlfriend, left him, and it was then that Maurice overdosed and died (Cuby).

After news of Maurice's death broke, journalist and activist Ashlee Marie Preston, a black trans woman, tweeted: "When a man is confident and secure enough to openly love a trans woman, this is the bullying and harassment he gets." The activist later connected this individual incident to a larger epidemic of anti-trans violence, adding, "When trans-attracted men kill us, it's

out of fear that this will happen to them if they are outed" (Cuby). *Pose's* Indya Moore sent a call to gender normative males who may be struggling with their desires, as Reese was: "gender normative males, if there is anything you can learn from trans people, it's that no one can take your identity away from you. You deserve to love freely, openly, and without violence, and you are never alone. You are in the company of people who have been fighting to exist and love freely for generations." They capped it off by saying, "We must stop blocking pathways for love, freedom, and safety for ourselves and each other... The healing needs to begin, or we will forever be in a traumatized state of endless wars with love" (Cuby).

Neither Maurice's death nor the harassment he endured, unfortunately, is unique. In 1999, Barry Winchell, a 21-year-old white infantry soldier, was murdered asleep in his bed at Fort Campbell. The victim of constant homophobic taunts and slurs, Winchell became one of the first martyrs of the U.S. military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, President Bill Clinton's political compromise to republicans' demands for an all out ban on homosexuals (Rogin). Ironically, Winchell was probably not gay at all; he previously identified as heterosexual. But he was romantically involved with Calpernia Addams, a transsexual woman who had begun to undergo hormone therapy and had some preliminary surgery (Escoffier 268).

Similarly, in 2001, James Jerome Mack, a 17-year-old black teen, was murdered in Buffalo, N.Y. for dating a trans woman (Scott11). Mack was beaten with bottles and blunt objects. Mack was stabbed. Mack was strangled with an electrical cord. Mack was sexually assaulted with a broom handle. Mack was, then, placed face-down for a couple of hours in a bathtub filled with water while those charged with his killing played cards and watched television (Warner et al.). Afterward, Mack was tossed in a trash container, wheeled next to a dumpster, and set on fire (Warner et al.). Mack's girlfriend, Tashia Heard, 20, who was the only

eyewitness to the murder and the burning of Mack's body hours later, was jailed as a material witness to the killing. Heard had been arrested in New York City on prostitution-related charges earlier in 2001 and returned to Buffalo (Warner et al.).

There are, perhaps, many more gender normative males impacted by transphobic violence. But because of the normative construction of sexuality, these men cannot be documented. That is, if these men are understood as heterosexual, then the incident is a murder. But if these men are read as homosexual, by the logics of gayness's current construction, they and their partners are understood as two men, which, at the very least, will be documented as a hate crime. While the violence suffered by gender normative males is incomparable and far less directly deadly than the structural and everyday violence endured by black trans women themselves, this violence stifles the possibility of self-acceptance and increases violence towards black trans women by way of making their existence the "cause" of men's pain and struggling (Mock).

Recently, in response to the violence faced by black gender normative males and, above all, black trans women, there has been a growing chorus of calls for gender normative males to be open and transparent about their intimate engagements and desires with/for trans women (Stylz, Moore, Rohrbach, Williams, Cooper). The call for openness and visibility has led many gender normative males, most visibly black, to articulate a sexual identity that accurately communicates their desires (Men Like Us Podcast). These trans-specific sexual identity labels have primarily centered around the terms trans-attracted and, to a lesser degree, transamorous<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In a similar fashion to the homophile (homo- same and -phile love; the love for the same sex) movements of the 1950s and 1960s, transamorous is, I would argue, a politic rooted in respectability (Kjaer). The suffix -amorous is an attempt to emphasize love; transamorous is the love of trans women. The emphasis on love is because this term emerges out of a white and/or middle-class context, as far as I can track down: in a 2007 issue of the Advocate, an author wrote, "trans guy friends of mine in New York got sick of the term tranny chaser — they felt it was insulting to the chaser and had a negative connotation all around, so they came up with trans amorous..." (Advocate).

Though some people use the terms interchangeably, trans-attracted usually speaks to a sexual desire for trans women while not foreclosing the possibilities of relationships (see footnote).

Transamorous, however, attempts to emphasize romantic feelings over sexuality. In *Trans\*am: gender normative males and trans women in love* (2017), Joseph McClellan, a self-proclaimed transamorous man, explains his desire through romantic feelings:

Upon serious self-reflection, I will honestly say that I have never dated a trans woman only because she was trans. Humor, intelligence, political views, and character have always taken precedence for attributes. If I were considering pursuing two women who both I found attractive, and one of them was a trans woman, I would admittedly factor it in as an attribute that might tip the scale her way, but it would not be such an important factor that it would outweigh many other considerations about her personality and values (McClellan xxvi-xxvii).

Attempting to deemphasize transness as central to his desire, McClellan speaks in terms of romantic longing for a compatible partner first and foremost. The body, according to McClellan, is secondary to his desire for a compatible partner. The hierarchy in McClellan's statement of romantic feelings followed by sexual attraction makes his partner's gender expression (both women) the point of eroticization, not their bodies. For McClellan, his partners "happened to be trans."

Kiara St. James, a black trans woman and executive director of the New York Transgender Advocacy Group, defines transamorous (transamory) as "people who are attracted to and seek out relationships with transgender people" (Fitzsimons). Though the two terms have diverging implications (which are beyond the scope of this paper), trans-attracted and

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However, a complete analysis of transamorous and its difference from trans-attracted is beyond the scope of my research.

transamorous have become the means by which gender normative males have begun to organize themselves around a shared sexual desire. Perry Gruber of the *Transamorous Network*, who uses the terms interchangeably, writes about how he finds some lightheartedness embracing the term for its association with the classic Pontiac Thunder-bird car, whose emblem Phoenix: “And kind of like that bird, we Transamorous guys are emerging from the cesspool that is social criticism, ostracism and shrinking before social claims that is taboo, to claim that part of our identity making us uniquely us . . . among other things (McClellan xxxvi).

The usage of trans-specific sexual labels, however, hasn’t gone unchallenged. In 2016, Princess Harmony’s article for *The Establishment* stated, “Even the phrase itself ‘trans-attracted’— demonstrates how this fetish is inherently transmisogynistic. If those who identify with this label saw trans women as real women, they wouldn’t need a word to differentiate us from other women in order to explain their attraction to us” (McClellan xxvii). Harmony goes on to critique gender normative male “allies,” implying that the majority of them are just fetishizers who have learned a new way to exploit trans women sexually:

Trans fetishizers often perform love on multiple levels. At an individual level, they befriend or romance us, feigning care and affection. On a societal level, they partake in ally theater in order to create the illusion that they care about us as people and our rights as a whole. But their love can quickly turn into hate— especially if we turn down their sexual advances . . . I’ve known far too many trans women who have been violently harmed by “trans-amorous” men to believe that they are capable and dependable allies (McClellan xxviii).

According to McClellan, Harmony's usage of "real women" encourages us to think of woman or womanhood as a fixed metaphysical essence, which is something feminist and trans-feminist

theory and even social and medical science has been chipping away at for a long time (McClellan xxvii). Harmony's critique rests on an essentialist ideal of womanhood, by which a "natural" desire is a desire for cis womanhood, a woman with a vagina, first and foremost. In explicitly desiring trans women, assumed as a desire for a woman with a penis, gender normative males fetishize trans women. According to Harmony, gender-normative men's fetishism becomes knowable by its distance from "love" and, therefore, inextricably linked to harm. Instead of focusing on the harm produced by a transphobic society, which harms gender-normative male people like Mack, the argument simplistically rests on gender-normative men who desire trans women as the problem.

In the years that followed, and as the terms have gained momentum, opponents of trans-specific sexual labels have framed their arguments similarly to Harmony. By 2019, the debate over trans-specific terms began to enter the public sphere. In the wake of Reese's suicide, Malik Yoba, an American actor, came out as trans-attracted/ transamorous (Sonoma). Although Yoba "came out," many activists, including a trans woman, Simone Toussaint, took issue with his usage of both terms, especially trans-attracted (Breakfast Club Power FM). According to Toussaint, the difference between a fetish and not is: "It is about intention and impact." "[A] fetish comes when you only want to be with this person in the dark. You only want to be with that person sexually. Instead of wanting to get to know them" (Sonoma). Fetish is thus in opposition to romance. Similarly, in response to Yoba, Sonoma, an author and trans activist, wrote in *OUT* magazine:

Whether the label is trans-attracted, transamorous, or the outdated and slur-based term "tranny chaser," the truth of the matter is that these types of people are often attracted to us due to our genitalia, with little to no regard for the person they are actually preying on.



We become merely objects for their pleasure. The process is ultimately dehumanizing and can include an objectification that often makes men violent... The important distinction is that one does not have to be “trans-attracted” to be attracted to a trans person — having an attraction that includes trans people is enough. And anything other is rooted in transphobia (Sonoma).

For Sonoma and others, the desire for trans women needs to travel through a desire for women more broadly. Regarding gender normative males, acknowledging trans women as women would allow gender normative males’ desire to be heterosexual-orientated. As a result, the normative sexual categories of heterosexuality or bi-/pan- sexuality are adequate sexual labels. Sonoma's analysis fails to account for the harm gender normative males experience and the ways in which the hetero/homo binary erases the way transphobic/homophobic violence impacts gender normative males who are sexually and/or romantically involved with trans women and through reinforcing heteronormativity.

By 2020, the debate had expanded. In response to an article published in the 2020 trans-porn edition of the *Transgender Studies Quarterly (TSQ)*, transamorous came under fire when a cis man utilized it as an identity label. Published under a pseudonym, Geoffrey H. Nicholson, “On Being a Transamorous Man” was a short autobiographical confessional piece centered on the author's experience with trans pornography and his relationships with trans women (primarily as a client of women involved in sex work) (Nicholson 268-271). The author, a married, middle-aged white, cisgender, “essentially heterosexual” man, offered insight into how pornography helped him locate his desire for primarily trans women (Nicholson 268-271). Though the author failed to consider what language was most appropriate for discussing an attraction for trans people or how financial transactions shape his relationships with trans women, many readers,

academics, and activists were concerned with his usage of transamorous as an identity. Thus, in response, one objector states,

All too often trans people experience this kind of desire, a wanting fueled by fascination, as a kind of fetishization, an objectifying gaze laced with eroticism. What Nicholson calls transamory is more colloquially referred to as “chasing,” or when cis people “actively eroticize transgender embodiment.” As most trans folks know, this active eroticization depends on a very specific imaginary of who trans people are, what their bodies are like, and what relationship a given trans person has with their body. Indeed, transamorous desire is less of a desire for trans people than it is a desire for a niche instantiation of gender nonconformance, a particular variation of trans embodiment that is far from the objective or reality of most trans lives (Smilges).

According to this opponent, the explicit eroticization of trans people is a fetish, reducible to the chaser. Another author invokes fetishization by linking transamory to coloniality: “If transness stemmed from and through coloniality and enslavement, with white people’s first encounter with gender nonconformity coinciding with their histories of commodifying and invading people of color, then “transmory” too must be examined as a violent erotic product of colonial encounters” (Atfab). For these authors, the erotization of difference is automatically problematic.

In a weird commentary about a "niche" desire for trans women, the author doesn't explain why the desire for cis women isn't also a "niche" desire. Nor does the second author, who links transamory to coloniality, explain how cis normative sexuality does not operate as a colonial project. The underlying assumption of both authors is that "natural" sexuality is the cis normative hetero/homo binary. In perpetuating a cis normative model of sexuality, these authors continue the erasure of the violence experienced by gender-normative males who are romantically and/or

sexually involved with trans women and the need to name and organize themselves. More precisely, this authors privileging of a cis normative hetero/homo binary allows for the dismal of Reese, Winchell, Mack, and a host of other gender-normative men who understand their themselves as unique and have to navigate the treacherous terrain of homophobic/transphobic violence.<sup>2</sup>

The critiques offered by these authors, as well-intentioned as they may be, lack nuance. Amid the debate over trans-specific sexual labels, people have already begun to problematize the universal deployment of fetishism/ the chaser. Florence Ashley, who responded to the *TSQ* transamorous controversy, commented:

Much of the conversation surrounding the essay has taken place against the background of a presumed universal transfeminine experience that belongs to a relatively privileged white trans woman whose romantic, sexual, and economic life isn't inseparable from those of chasers and/or transamorous men. The collective indignation we saw and the cluster of responses that you are reading may not have existed had the voices criticizing the essay been solely those of Black women, had the imagined victim of the essay not been white...[by reducing] "On Being a Transamorous Man" exclusively to pain erases the richness of experiences and sidesteps the fact that many trans women date and fuck men that they or others would call 'chasers' or 'transamorous'" (Ashley).

Ashley's argument offers a critical intervention into this debate. In so many ways, transfeminism universalizes a white middle-class trans subject who engages with and has to navigate institutional transphobia that benefits gender normative males, racialized as white and middle-

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<sup>2</sup> The number of men who openly date and eroticize trans women and who also experience homophobic/transphobic violence can not be stated enough. I have witnessed and/or experienced for myself being spit on, chased out of central park, beaten by a group of men, taunted as "faggots."

class. And in doing so, transfeminism, operating through a white middle-class lens, fails to account for how cisness is a narrow category that can only adhere seamlessly to those racialized as white and among the middle class (See *Black Trans Feminism*)<sup>3</sup>.

In addition, the failure to account for how cisness is inherent to the white middle-class body also fails to account for how arguments for incorporation into normative sexual categories privilege white middle-class trans people. As such, authors cannot emphasize racial and class dynamics enough. Stephen Ira, also responding to the critiques of *TSQ*'s transamorous article, states:

I believe that these days when we speak about the chaser, we are speaking, basically, about two different things, which we collapse to our detriment. Sometimes, we are speaking about the violence that chasers can perpetrate, predominantly against black and brown trans women, when their fear of their own desire becomes murderous misogynist hatred. This is because speaking of the chaser is often an occasion to speak of male desire, though not all chasers are men, and this murderous male desire is so dangerous that it must be a priority. Other times, I believe we are speaking about the fear of wrong love. It seems to be hard for us to acknowledge this fear, and so we collapse it into a fear of violence. At the worst, this type of critique of the chaser instrumentalizes racist and transphobic murders in order to soothe white bourgeois anxiety about the nature of desire and the perils of misrecognition. The bourgeois trans subject perceives the misrecognition of wrong love as a total annihilation of trans selfhood, one that this

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<sup>3</sup> In *Black Trans Feminism*, Marquis Bey explains that whiteness and cis-ness are intrinsically intertwined: "Whiteness and cis genders, for instance, are normative endeavors not because they are purely descriptive of most people in a given environment but because they determine who and what counts as valid, ideal, normal, and representable; bestow consequences on those who do not live up to, adhere to, or who deviate from their rubrics; and cast as imperfect, unfinished, nonideal, or deserving of fewer life chances those who are not proximal to, or who do not appear through, or who stray from, whiteness and cis genders" (Bey 38).

trans subject can only represent in its emotional totality as a fear of physical assault—even *murder* (my emphasis) (Ira).

The author here, Ira, makes an important criticism of the figure of the chaser. Through a racialized and classed lens, the figure of the chaser operates by tethering an explicit desire for transness to death through the mobilization of black, overwhelmingly poor, and working-class trans women/ feminine presenting bodies. Additionally, Ira’s critique subtly highlights the chaser himself as a racialized and classed figure. That is, since black trans women/feminine presenting people’s death are most frequently the result of black and lower classed “gender-normative” men, the chaser must also be understood as black and lower classed. The chaser and, by extension, continuous rhetoric of fetishism, then, operate through the mobilization of sexually dangerous black lower-class men and the death of black trans women/feminine presenting people to reinforce the gender identification of white middle-class trans people by ensuring their inclusion in the gender-normative hetero/homo binary. The “afterlives” of black trans women/ feminine presenting people and black people in general, therefore, constitute the “raw material” for the “generation of respectable trans subjects” (Snorton and Haritaworn 74).

Simultaneously, in addressing the chaser, Ira, in many ways, points to another assumption underlying trans feminism. Lynne Segal, a sex-positive feminist who responded to similar criticisms of patriarchal power made by anti porn feminists in the 1980s, is helpful here. Trans feminists positioning all men as having equal power concluded that the eroticization of difference, or even the acknowledgment of differences, produces inferiority (Segal 72-73). In doing so, their analysis lacks an account for how the “powerful have always not only sexually (as well as economically) exploited the relatively powerless,” but also “projected sexuality itself onto those they see as least powerful - particularly the apparently dangerous, troubling and 'dirty'

aspects of sex. This is why it is not only women but black and working-class women and men who are mythically invested with sexuality in dominant Western discourse and iconography” (Segal 72-73). The point here is “that it is the dynamic interplay between power and desire, attraction and repulsion, acceptance and disavowal, which eroticizes those already seen as inferior (and thereby gives them, in fantasy, a threatening power)” (Segal 72-73). In other words, power produces desire. And in a society where most of us are navigating privilege and marginalization simultaneously, sexual relations are loaded with power relations that reinforce and complicate systems of domination. In the end, transfeminism fails to account for how cisness doesn’t equate to safety for those who aren’t white, middle-class, heterosexual, able bodied, from anywhere outside of the Western hemisphere, undocumented, and so on. An intersectional lens of Transfeminism ought to ask, who gets to be cis?

Unfortunately, however, while these critiques of sexual relations as a site of power relations that are shaped by cis hetero patriarchy are important, they, too, leave in place a new monstrosity, a modern sexual deviant as a “fact” of trans life: the chaser. The unquestioning "truth" of the chaser allows a line to be drawn—a boundary of perverse sex from "good" sex. In dancing around the subject, the conversation becomes circular: Trans women are always fetishized (by chasers)... We need to stop such behaviors... Only some gender normative males fetishize trans women.... How do we know who and when?... We Don't... Therefore, the eroticization, in and of itself, has to be banished... Begin again... The chaser is cemented. in doing so, trans activists on the left and right merely reinforce a sexuality that exacerbates, among other things, racialized and classed dynamics that continue to produce harm.

The narrative of the chaser produces harm because normative sexuality, non-fetishistic sexual activity, reinforces the privilege of dominant groups. That is, “healthy” sexuality reflects

the norms and values of, in the West, white middle-class, regulating all “perverse” sexuality to the underprivileged (Rubin 152). As such, by leaving the chaser in and of himself unchallenged, the chaser is reflective of a black and lower-class desire. In this way, trans politics, by way of the chaser narrative, recirculates racism and classism. It is, therefore, pivotal that the chaser is demystified by unpacking how knowledge and power have historically constructed gender normative males’ desire for trans women.

In order to demystify the chaser, the research in this project problematizes transfeminists’ arguments of fetishism by recognizing that the discourse of fetishism is one rooted in sexology. More precisely, in this project, transfeminists’ rhetoric of the chaser/fetishism is put alongside sexological texts from the late nineteenth through to the late twentieth centuries. For example, by juxtaposing arguments advanced by Julia Serano, Talia Mae Bettcher, and others with early sexologists like Havelock Ellis and Alfred Binet and later John Money, Robert Stoller, and Richard Green, figures who were fundamental to the science of transsexualism.

Thus, in chapter one, the chaser, who is understood as a gender-normative man who eroticizes the genitals— the penis— of trans women/trans feminine presenting people, is read through the late nineteenth-century pathological figure of the homosexual, a figure informed by ideas tied to race and class. In the late nineteenth, sexologists influenced by racialized notions of evolution believed that black people showed little, if any, signs of evolution and were less sexually distinct than the white middle class. Havelock Ellis, for example, described the black female body as “poorly developed” with a “large clitoris” (Somerville 27). The black female-bodied person, therefore, was inherently masculine and whose body showed evidence of a penis. The black female-bodied person could only be eroticized by the black male-bodied person who, by evidence of his large penis, was lust-driven and engaged in sexual activities not only with

people of the “opposite” sex but the same sex. These ideas rooted in anti-blackness would inform the construction of the pathological, fetishistic figure of the homosexual, a category which included all who, in modern terms, deviated from cis heteronormativity and, therefore, included gender-normative men who eroticized trans women/feminine presenting people and trans women/ feminine people themselves. Throughout the late nineteenth until the late twentieth century, the pathological, fetishistic homosexual was a lust-driven person, who reduced the entirety of their partner to their genitals, and who was so fixated on sexual gratification most often a he was unable to commit to a monogamous relationship. In order to secure a white middle-class social order, sexologists had to redirect these fetishists to their “natural” gender and sexual roles.

In chapter two, the category of the pathological, fetishistic homosexual would transform with the development of the concept of gender. Gender, separated from the sexed body, enabled transsexuals, a narrow category for people who underwent or desired to undergo vaginoplasty, to emerge as a distinct population. Consequently, sexologists would also parse out transsexuals’ gender-normative partners from homosexuality. In line with the gender and sexual norms of the white middle class, researchers like John Money and Richard Green would recategorize these men as “normal” males who responded “naturally” to the femininity of their transsexual partners. However, the construction of a “normal,” “healthy” sexual ethic between gender-normative men and transsexual women would be informed by the fetishistic homosexual, which still draws on the pathologization of black and lower-class people. Throughout the 1960s and into the mid-1970s, black inner-city lower-class communities’ gender and sexual nonconformity to the norms of the white middle class enabled, per the theories of gender, not only crime and poverty but also the proliferation of transfeminine people who forewent vaginoplasty and the eroticization of these



transfeminine people by black men. Per theories of gender, the matriarchal structure, as highlighted by the Moynihan report, led black boys to associate authority and, therefore, a penis with black women. This same-sex, cross-gender desire was, therefore, one associated with the black lower classes. However, since gender and sexuality were yet to be separated, the chaser and these transfeminine people were not, in fact, distinct from the category of homosexual.

In chapter three, the category of homosexuality who undergo a radical transformation throughout the mid-1970s and 1980s. In the aftermath of gay and lesbian activism post-Stonewall, homosexuality would be de-pathologized via the separation of gender and sexuality. As a result, a gender-normative (homonormative) model of homosexuality/ gay would replace older understandings of homosexuality based on same-sex desires/activities in pop culture and medicine. The political negotiation of gay and lesbian activists with the medical officials had uneven and complicated effects: the gender-normative model of homosexuality made transfeminine people and the gender-normative partners who explicitly desired transness excess to the category. Further, the gender-normative model of homosexuality would cement a gender-normative hetero/homo binary, which foreclosed the explicit eroticization of transness outright. In the political atmosphere of the 1980s, as white middle-class political activists on the left and right of the political spectrum reinforced traditional ideas of gender and sexuality, and as President Reagan weaponized black people's gender and sexual nonconformity as impacting the overall well-being of America, trans people particularly but also gender-normative men who explicitly desire transfeminine people threatened to undermine a white middle-class social order. Transness and, therefore, the eroticization of transfeminine people had to be treated out of existence, made invisible. In this political environment and via the separation of gender and sexuality, the chaser would emerge as a gynemimetophile, a type of paraphiliac sex offender who

is lust-driven, reduces his trans partners to their genitals, and inherently violent, in the texts of John Money. Thus, the research in this project illustrates how the chaser reflects a long racist and classist legacy and whose epistemological roots start in the late nineteenth century before officially emerging in sexological-medical texts in the 1980s. The chaser is not, in fact, the creation of a transfeminist political lens; instead, the chaser is a product of the science of transsexualism, a figure whose circulation ensures transness as non-threatening to a white middle-class social order.

### 1.1 Literature Review

The following literature review set up the questions that guided this project. In the section *Tracing Trans-attraction through the Medical Discourses*, the available medical research illustrates how researchers and participants operating within the confines of studies are/have been categorized. The available data illustrate that men who explicitly desire trans women have, since the 1980s, been categorized the entire span of the gender-normative hetero/homo sexual binary. Deviating from the norms of the gender-normative hetero/homo sexual binary by eroticizing a feminine partner with “male” genitals, sexologists first categorized these men as paraphiliacs outside of the hetero/homo binary. But in the years since the 1980s, these men were subtype of homosexual before being recategorized as a paraphiliac subtype of heterosexuality. Among the participants of the available data, the categories become murkier as participants’ sexual identification relies on whether they eroticized gender, the sexed body, or both. The data, therefore, enables two essential questions to be asked:

- If same-sex desires have historically been understood through homosexuality, when, concerning trans bodies, did a shift happen?
- When did the trans body become the means for parsing out gender-normative males?

Moreover, what was its purpose?

The answers to these questions are informed by the following two sections of *Fetishization* and the *Social Construction of Sexuality*.

The *Fetishization* section highlights that the concept of fetishization is complex, frequently changing, and meant to reinforce the boundaries of “natural” sexuality. From the 1870s until the 1970s, fetishism demarcated deviations from reproductive sexual activity, aka the “natural.” By the 1980s, the “natural” would be constructed as being between two gender-normative adults in a monogamous relationship. Thus, the section on Fetishization accounts for the various ways that fetishism was understood and, therefore, who was a fetishist. The section, therefore, enables the question:

- How have historical shifts in understanding of fetishism contributed to the knowability of the chaser today?

Finally, the questions asked above and the entirety of the research presented here pivot on the *Social Construction of Sexuality*. The section on the *Social Construction of Sexuality* highlights that the hetero/homo binary is not, in fact, “natural.” Instead, a social constructionist lens makes room for the fact that sex, sexuality, and the erotic are all constructed within particular discourses and cultures at a particular time. Further, a social constructionist lens of sexuality recognizes that in the Western hemisphere, “natural” sexuality is informed by perverse racialized and lower-classed others. Thus, the section enables the question:

- In what way has the perverse figure of the chaser been informed by ideas tied to race and class?

Thus, in this literature review, the conceptual frameworks and understanding of men who explicitly eroticize trans women that guide this research are laid out.

### 1.1.1 *Tracing Trans-attraction through the Medical Discourses*

The literature on men who are sexually and/or romantically involved with trans women is scarce. John Money and Margaret Lamacz's 1984 study is the earliest attempt to categorize cisgender men who have an explicit interest in trans women (Key and Brook 60). The authors employ the term *gynemimetophile*, a lover of gynemimetic “males” (Money and Lamacz 392). The gynemimetophile is a gender normative male who desires gynemimesis, “a subtype of gender transposition or gender dysphoria in which a person with male anatomy and morphology lives in a society as a woman without genital sex-assignment surgery and with or without female sex-hormonal therapy” (aka a trans woman/transfeminine person) (Money and Lamacz 392). Laid out more fully later in this project, Money and Lamacz presume gender is the “natural” point of sexual desire. Money and Lamacz do not foreclose relationships between gender normative males and trans women. Instead, Money, who is critical to constructing our understanding of the non-paraphiliac desire for trans women, determined that gender normative males' natural desire for trans women is one aimed at gender, which privileges cis women first and foremost. The explicit eroticization of this particular type of trans embodiment, therefore, cannot be accounted for by the cis normative gender model of sexuality. As a result, gynemimetophilia, which is the desire for a “lady with a penis,” is incompatible with heterosexuality or homosexuality, since this desire is aimed simultaneously at gender and a sexed body (Money and Lamacz 395). Gynemimetophilia is instead a paraphilia (sexual fetish).

Following the lead of Money and Lamacz, Ray Blanchard and Peter Collins (1993) coined the term gynanandromorphophilia (GAMP) to describe “all men with distinct sexual instinct in feminized men” (Key and Brook 60). This category included a host of desire from

feminine men to people who were surgically or hormonally feminized but with “male” genitalia (Key and Brook 60). By design, the category included a desire for crossdressers, transvestites, and trans women with an understanding that all of the previously mentioned were gynandromorphs (GAM) (Key and Brook 60). Blanchard and Collins, who utilize the Hirschfeld system of sexuality, position gynandromorphophilia as a type of homosexual desire: a desire for another person assigned male at birth (Blanchard and Collins). A conclusion that is further supported by the fact “partial autogynephiles,” which describes a feminine presenting person, often with breast and a penis, is, by Blanchard standard’s, a “homosexual” (Blanchard *She-male* 74). In contradicting Money and Lamacz, Blanchard and Collins illustrate the tension presented by trying to account for the explicit desire for trans women under existing sexual categories: is "natural" sexuality aimed at the sexed body of their partner or gender?

In recent years, the categorization of gender-normative males who desire for trans women would shift as a result of an emergent binary transgender politic, which reinforced a separation of trans women from transvestites/crossdressers and homosexuality and, thus, repositioning, ““partial autogynephiles” as exclusively as women (Valentine *Imagining* 173-203). Whereas in the 1990s trans feminine people and their gender- normative partners were homosexual, by the 2000s, they would increasingly be understood through heterosexuality. In "Who Are the Gynandromorphophilic Men?"(2015), Hsu et al, who recruited their participants using a Chicago-area Internet website for men interested in sexual encounters with transgender individuals, characterized gender normative males with a sexual interest in transgender women (Hsu et al. *Who Are* 2; Key and Brook 60). While continuing to use the term GAMs and GAMPs, the research argues that a sexual desire for trans women is a type of sexual attraction along the spectrum of orientations and contextualized it as a type of heterosexual orientation (Key and

Brook 60). The researchers determined that cisgender men who have an interest in trans women do not share the same sexual interests as homosexual males and view transgender women along a spectrum of femininity. But, compared to heterosexual men, GAMP men were more aroused by the GAM stimuli (Key and Brook 60).

Although Hsu et al. determine the desire for trans women to be heterosexual, their research indicates a much more complex picture. Instead of simply a heterosexual desire, many GAMPs, by the evidence in this self-identification and the data in this research, demonstrate a distinctiveness from the hetero/homo binary. In terms of self-identification, GAMP men were moderately likely to identify as bisexual. But, Hsu et al. point out “their bisexual identities, however, did not correlate with their sexual arousal to male stimuli (Hsu et al. *Who Are 6*). Hsu et al. determine that a likely explanation of this is the “fact that GAMs have both male and female features. This might explain homosexual men’s increased sexual arousal to the GAM stimuli, compared to the female stimuli, as well as heterosexual men’s increased sexual arousal to the GAM stimuli, compared to the male stimuli” (Hsu et al. *Who Are 6*). Many GAMPs neither explicitly desired gender or the body, but both. Gender isn’t necessarily the sole point of eroticization, but may instead be one point of a hierarchy of various desires. gender normative males who desire trans women, therefore, complicate the gender-normative model of the hetero/homo binary. In the end, Hsu et al. unwittingly challenge both Money and Lamacz by framing the GAMP as a type of heterosexual desire. But Hsu et al. also challenge Blanchard and Collins assumptions of GAMP as a type of homosexual desire.

Further, in a follow up study of “Who Are Gynandromorphophilic Men? An Internet Survey of Men with Sexual Interest in Transgender Women (2017),” the authors, Hsu et al, reaffirmed their previous thesis that the desire for trans women is a subtype of heterosexuality,

due to the greater number of those who identify as such, but further that more men who desire trans women are likely to have greater bisexual identities, experiences, or desires: 166 (52.9 %) identified themselves as heterosexual/straight, 117 (37.3 %) as bisexual, 8 (2.6 %) as homosexual/gay, and 23 (7 %) as something else (Hsu et al. *Internet*). Consistent with this, GAMP men's Kinsey<sup>4</sup> scores were slightly higher than those of heterosexual men, indicating relatively greater bisexual attractions among GAMP men. They were also more likely than heterosexual men to have had homosexual experiences. They did not, however, experience relatively greater arousal by purely male stimuli compared with heterosexual men. Importantly, "some GAMP men revealed that they had considered the possibility that they were gay or bisexual due to their attraction to GAMs, as distinct from ordinary men." Hsu et al. speculated that some GAMP men identify as bisexual because GAMs have both male-typical and female-typical features (Hsu et al. *Internet*). When asked whether they focused on GAM's male-typical or female-typical anatomical features, 85 (67.5 %) of the 126 men responding said "both," 18 (14.3 %) said "female," 8 (6.3 %) said "male" (Hsu et al. *Internet*). In this way, gender-normative men's feeling of having a distinct sexual desire reflects the impossibility of articulating a desire that doesn't neatly adhere to the hetero/homo binary. The hetero/homo binary, which rests on the gendered patterns of sexual attraction, presumes that a normative desire for trans women should be directed at femininity, divorced from the explicit eroticization of trans women's bodies (Ashley and Robertson). The dominance of this cis-normative model of sexuality, therefore, cannot make sense of desires and behaviors that don't reflect cis-hetero norms.

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<sup>4</sup> The Kinsey scale, also called the Heterosexual–Homosexual Rating Scale, is used in research to describe a person's sexual orientation based on one's experience or response at a given time. The scale typically ranges from 0, meaning exclusively heterosexual, to a 6, meaning exclusively homosexual (Kinsey Scale)

The article "Who Are Gynandromorphophilic Men?" is helpful in another way in that the authors reflect, at least partly, the grounds on which a desire becomes fetishistic. That is, Hsu et al. conclude that a "natural," nonfetishistic, and, therefore, "healthy" desire would automatically point towards monogamous relationships.

"If GAMP were a distinct sexual orientation, we would expect a larger percentage of the participants to have had romantic history with GAMs and express interest in long-term relationships with GAMs, as is common with men of other sexual orientations. But this is not what was observed. Rather, results of the current study suggest that GAMP is best considered an unusual variant of male heterosexuality. Perhaps it is a kind of paraphilia that coexists or competes with typical heterosexuality within an individual man" (Hsu et al. *Internet*).

The article, thus, medicalizes via pathologization the desire for trans women divorced from the material conditions that enable gender-normative hetero/homo relationships to be possible.<sup>5</sup> The influence of material condition is driven home by the fact that among the men in their study, the interest in GAMs does not extend beyond masturbatory fantasy (Hsu et al. *Internet*). And yet, these researchers reflect an institutionalized norm of sexuality whereby romantic attachments are juxtaposed with fetishistic desires. The knowability of gender normative males' explicit desire for trans women/ chaserdom therefore rests on institutionalized norms of sexuality, whereby a desire divorced from loving relationships becomes perverse. Hsu et al. assume sexuality "naturally" drives individuals towards monogamous relationships.

In another study, Weinstein and Williams (2010) study conducted interviews

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<sup>5</sup> Their analysis fails to consider the material conditions necessary for all, particularly queer relationships, to thrive openly. That is, the widespread visibility or merely the desire to be in a gay and lesbian relationship were products of economic and political shifts that enabled a way of life to emerge and become possible (see D'Emilio's "Capitalism and Gay Identity"). But, a detailed argument is beyond the scope of this paper.



with men sexually interested in transgender women regarding their desire for and experiences with transgender women. Weinstein and Williams' study occurs in a small bar where trans women engage in sex work in an area that includes "a number of working-class Asian immigrants and a poor African American population" and which also "served as the epicenter for the city's homeless" (Weinstein and Williams). In this study, 52 % were white, 37% black, and 11% other; 50 % identified as all surveyed identified as heterosexual, and the other 50% as bisexual (Weinstein and Williams). Sexual identification was largely based on whether the men eroticized their partners' penis or not. As such, the men who eroticized their partner's penis identified as bisexual, whereas the heterosexual-identified men typically did not (Weinstein and Williams). Further, the majority of the men when asked said they'd prefer a cis women sexual partner first and a trans partner second (Weinstein and Williams). But, not only did many gender normative males identify as bisexual because they eroticized a partner with a penis, they also visited the bar where this study occurred more frequently (Weinstein and Williams). Thus, bisexual men in this study invoke the figure of the chaser. These bisexual men explicitly desire trans women with penises. Further, due to proximity, these men can engage multiple trans women, as the label of "chaser" would imply. In addition, by undertaking their study in this area, Weinstein and Williams' study link gender normative males' explicit desire for trans women to a racialized and classed geographical location. Minority and lower-class communities become the site of gender and sexual nonconformity.

In 2008, Operario, Burton, Underhill, and Sevelius explored perceptions of identity and meanings of sexual behavior among men who have sex with transgender women. In this study, 19 participants were white, 19 were African American, 6 were Latino, and 2 were of other ethnicities (Operario et al.). Operario et al. observed three general patterns of erotic attraction:(1)

attraction to an individual who happened to be a trans woman rather than an attraction to trans women as a group; thus, the individual desire for sexual partnership dominated the interactions; (2) attraction to trans women because of their challenge to the traditional gender binary, which motivated sexual attraction; and, (3) an explicit interest in the trans body, a trans woman's physical appearances, and an attraction to eroticized femininity or hyper-femininity or the specific physical anatomical features of some transwomen (Key and Brook 61-62). As the studies above already demonstrate, Operario et al. study also suggest that gender normative males' desire for trans women are complicated and diverse.

In Operario et al., the majority of the participants reported that they had sexual encounters with a transgender woman within the past year. These men discussed themselves as both the penetrative and the receiving partner during sex and receiving and giving oral sex. The degree to which individuals engaged in sexual acts loosely correlated with the self-conceptions of their sexual orientation. Men who identified as heterosexual typically had sex with trans women as the penetrative partner or receiver of fellatio (Operario et al). Self-identified bisexual or gay men engaged in sex as the receptive partner and/or giver of fellatio. Other factors noted in the study included that half of its participants had past sexual experiences with transgender women, cisgender women, and men. In contrast, another half only had sexual encounters with cisgender and transgender women. Even with this diversity of sexual partners, the dominant self-reported sexual orientation was heterosexual, which meant to the respondents they held no specific attraction to men. With similarities to the Williams study, these men were equally likely to regard transgender women as women or something other than men (Operario et al). Operario et al. study suggest that adherence to cis-hetero norms regarding sexual relations between gender

normative males and trans women becomes the means for self-identification. Whether penetrative or not, the activity between cis-trans partners informs many men's self-identification.

In October 2019, Martha Kemper summed up the existing data on gender normative males who have sex with trans women in their article (MSTW) "Trans Women Are Increasingly A Focus of HIV Programs, But What About Their Cisgender Male Partners?: "The ten reviewed studies show that MSTW have a wide array of partners. In one of the studies, for example, 14% reported engaging in sex with trans women and cisgender men; 37% reported sexual contact with transgender and cisgender women; and 23% reported intercourse with transgender women, cisgender men, and cisgender women. The proportion of MSTW who reported exclusively having sex with trans women ranged from 2% in one study to 50% in another" (Kemper).<sup>6</sup> However, the studies so far covered reinforce a normative understanding of sexuality by assuming all desires adhere to the hetero/homo binary.

As the above research indicates, gender normative males who have sex with trans women do not have a singular way that they define their sexuality. It is for this reason that Wendy Ashley and Randy Robertson, R. argue for breaking away from the existing binary of heterosexuality and homosexuality and instead recognizing "trans-attraction" as an independent sexual category. The authors comment that "Contemporary sexual orientation terminology incorrectly assumes that binaries positions accurately capture the nuances of orientation, attraction, identity, lived experiences, partnerships, and behavior included in romantic and sexual relations" (Ashley and Robertson). In addition, participants are often forced to choose between existing sexual orientations despite the fact researchers acknowledge "that this group is 'puzzling to scientists and themselves,' and concluded that GAMP is best considered an unusual form of

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<sup>6</sup> It is noteworthy that studies indicate that 60% of Men who have sex with trans women exhibited signs of clinical depression.

sexuality rather than a separate sexual orientation" (Ashley and Robertson). Attempting to break from a heteronormative lens, the authors argue for trans-attraction to be understood as a valid, non-fetishistic sexual orientation (Ashley and Robertson). Based on Robertson's experiences as a cisgender man whose sexual interest in transfeminine people began in the 1980s, and who utilized the sexual label "gay" for a while, the authors argue that because gender normative males experience isolation, stigmatization, rejection, and even violence due to their relationships, trans-attraction should be embraced to allow for community formations to happen (Ashley and Robertson).

Ashley and Robertson's argument echoes the literature that suggests body politics regarding trans embodiments complicate normative sexual categories. In the data available, how men identify is broad, and how they arrive at that identity is often influenced by what they eroticize. Gender normative males who do not eroticize the penis of their partner usually identify as heterosexual, and therefore, eroticize gender. On the other hand, gender normative males who utilize bisexuality as a sexual identity eroticize both the body and gender. gender normative males who desired the male body, regardless of gender identity, identified as gay. However, this categorization is complicated by alternative research perspectives that argue that these men are neither heterosexual nor homosexual. Rather than situating this desire as another sexual orientation or another type of queer person, clinicians like Money and Lamacz document these men as sexual fetishists, deviating from the norms of sexuality. However, despite their differences, both sides of the vast and varying literature on men who date trans women are reflective of the institutionalized cis norms hetero-homo binary of sexuality. It is, therefore, necessary to problematize the normative ideas of sexuality in order to investigate the current milieu in which these men and their trans partners find themselves.

Thus, as this project will demonstrate, the question of how to classify gender normative males who are or desire to be sexually and/or romantically involved with trans women has been a decades-long endeavor by sexologists. Throughout the late twentieth century, researchers would construct a “normal,” “healthy” way for gender-normative men to desire trans women as part of the science of transsexualism. The construction of a “normal” desire for trans people would determine the centrality of the trans body for cis people to reinforce the cis hetero norms of sexuality. In doing so, researchers would also construct a perverse way for gender normative males to eroticize trans women. Gender-normative men who eroticized “wrongly” would become perverse and inform the figure now known as the chaser, a way that deviated from the gendered norms of sexuality and, therefore, a fetishist.

### ***1.1.2 Fetishization***

The opposition to trans-specific sexual labels and/or the explicit eroticization of trans women more broadly rests on the notion of fetishization.<sup>7</sup> However, erotic fetishism is a complex notion that has taken various shapes to define the boundaries of the “normal” versus the perverse sexuality throughout history. In the 1870s, Alfred Binet, who first proposed fetishism as a technical term, utilized the concept to identify pathological sexual desires and activity which were not primarily aimed at reproduction, a norm that wouldn’t be replaced until the mid 1970s

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<sup>7</sup> In contemporary social sciences, the theory of fetishization is not the same as theories of objectification or sexualization. Objectification theory posits that objectifying a person means to consider them as an object, a mere instrument for the attainment of a personal goal, and which leads to their denial of human dignity. Thus, objectification can be considered a form of dehumanization. Objectification can affect different minorities and social categories, just as different dimensions of identity can be objectified. When these dimensions correspond to the body, where the value of a person is established primarily on the basis of their physical appearance, we refer to it as sexual objectification or sexualization. Sexualization occurs when someone is reduced to their body parts or sexual functioning (Anzani et al.). However, I would argue fetishization, objectification, sexualization are not intrinsically different but are representative of the original theories of fetishization laid out here. In the late twentieth century, feminists adopted various parts of this idea as psychological notions of fetishism changed. A topic that is beyond the scope of this project.

(Logan 117).<sup>8</sup> Broadly speaking, throughout much of the history of sexuality, gay, lesbians, trans women/feminine presenting people along with their gender-normative partners (i'll complicate this later on) were all fetishists, since their sexual desires/activities were nonreproductive.

Alfred Binet's conceptualization of fetishism credited fetishes to the debilitating effects of an unhealthy social environment and/or genetic inheritance.<sup>9</sup> In line with the theory of degeneration, Binary claimed fetishes were a disease of civilization, one that could be passed on to the next generation as an inherited predisposition (Logan 117). According to Binet, each generation becomes increasingly susceptible to the debilitating effects of an over-civilized

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<sup>8</sup> The etymology of fetish begins before Binet with colonial encounters between Europeans and Africans in the seventeenth century (Logan 18-20). Portuguese traders to West Africa applied the term "feitiço" to objects they thought Africans treated as magical (Logan 18-20). For Europeans, the assumed fetishism of West Africans represented an earlier stage of human progressive whereby primitive humans anthropomorphized the world around them by engaging in a fetish-like act of self-projection (Logan 18-20). Medieval theologians/ philosophers argued that humans advanced from primitive polytheism, which included idol worship and belief in oracles, to monotheism (Logan 23-24). A century later, the linkage between anti-blackness and the "primitive" would be cemented in the work Charles de Brosses.

In 1760, the French philosopher Charles de Brosses solidified the fetishism as an attribute linked to the "primitive" people and societies in his book *Du culte des dieux fétiches*. Brosses proposed a uniform universal sequence so that all religion went through a process of historical development, which might take longer in one place than another but was ultimately inevitable (Logan 28). "Since fetishism was universal in the earliest stage, it had to stem from some quality inherent to human beings, and he argued that it reflected their primordial psychology. As a "natural" element of human psychology, fetishism was evident in the early development of the individual as well as that of society. He compared children to primitives and asked why anyone should be surprised to see fetishism in savages when all children imagine their dolls to be alive" (Logan 28-29).

In the same vein, Brosses drew parallels between religious development and the evolution of languages, a field he discusses further in *Traité de la formation mécanique des langues et des principes physiques de l'étymologie* (1765) (Logan 29). "Children and primitives alike, he reasoned, have only rudimentary language abilities because they lack a capacity for abstract concepts, and this linguistic deficiency contributes to their fetishistic mode of thought" (Logan 29). Through Brosses, the two crucial psychological elements of concreteness and projection, which had been firmly linked throughout eighteenth-century writing on the primitive, became jointly signified as fetishism. At the same time, fetishism was now understood as a universal attribute of primitive life, rather than a localized practice of the West Africans (Logan 29). Later usages of the term fetishism derive from Brosses concept: philosophers like Karl Marx and Auguste Comte would draw on Brosses' concept (Logan 28).

<sup>9</sup> Two distinct qualities made the primitive fetish readily adaptable to the language of psychology: in the first place, fetishism described an entirely psychological phenomenon- a purely speculative one associated with primitives, to be sure, but nonetheless a widely accepted mechanism of mental life, and one that was thought to persist within the modern individual (Logan 115). Second, that mechanism explained how humans invested objects with unusual qualities or extraordinary powers, and so it provided a framework for understanding the psychology of attraction. With the increased professional interest in sexuality at the end of the century, fetishism was a ready-made concept that quickly found a new home (Logan 115).

environment, so that the condition steadily worsens. In time, social evolution comes to a dead halt and then begins to reverse. Each generation travels further back in evolutionary time until humans return to the most primitive state of all; beyond this lies extinction, the ultimate endpoint of degeneration (Logan 117). However, degeneration alone did not explain the form fetishism takes in each individual, such as a preference for small feet or large noses. Binet explained these variations through a theory of *psychological association*; childhood experiences create particular emotional associations that persist into adulthood, long after the original experience is forgotten. When it manifests as erotic preference in the adult, its origin seems inexplicable (Logan 117). Logically, then, Binet would claim that “all love was to some extent fetishistic” (Nye, *Sex Difference* 41-42).

“for how else could we account for one observed between ugly and beautiful individuals? But in some predisposed beings, a kind of ‘hypertrophy’ in the ‘normal excitement’ occurs, and, often by accident, the full attention of the erotic impulses is focused on a single feature or object. This ‘exaggerated,’ and ‘pathological’ behavior was a true ‘perversion’ of the sexual instinct [Reproduction]. The bewildering variety of forms assumed by fetishistic attachments ought not to confuse us, because it is the ‘perversion itself which is the characteristic fact” (Nye, *Sex Difference* 41-42).

The combination of heredity and personal accident was necessary to explain the emergence of fetishism as infinitely variable while always the same (Logan 118).

Binet’s concept of fetishism reflected a dualistic lens whereby a “pure” person who is uncontaminated by genetics and/or their environment and, therefore, in line with the “natural instinct” is juxtaposed to the fetishist, a contaminated person. A modern application of Binet’s concept of fetishism would assume trans women/feminine presenting people were “pure,”

“natural” whereas the chaser/trans-attracted gender-normative men fetishists. In the first instance, the chaser/trans-attracted gender-normative men inherited a desire for male bodied people, which positions them as really gay (since the mid 1970s and again in the early 2000s, gayness has been reinforced as a “natural” variation). Or, the chaser/trans-attracted gender-normative men are, in fact, contaminated by a transphobic society, which produces a perverse desire for transness.

In the 1880s, Richard von Krafft-Ebing who published the first book to propose a comprehensive medical taxonomy of sexual perversion, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, would universalize fetishism as an inherent biological quality of sexuality (Logan 118). Instead of inherently being in opposition to the sexual instinct, reproduction (the “natural”), fetishism was a biological essence of all sexuality, practiced by everybody, that (in some instances) ensured reproduction: Krafft-Ebing would label these physiological fetishes (Logan 121). Krafft-Ebing’s concept of physiological fetish utilized Binet’s *psychological association* to explain the special attraction of the fetish. But instead of connecting it to a forgotten event in childhood, he ties it to the present-day beloved, replacing the assumption of a forgotten but persistent source of attraction with a conscious association (Logan 118).

Fetishism, for Krafft-Ebing, is "physiological" because it is built into the body's structure as an inherited system of sexual attraction--a biological eroticism. From evolutionary adaptation "springs the particular choice for slender or plump forms, for blondes or brunettes. . ." (Logan 120). Certain body parts lend themselves to this preferentiality more regularly than others: "the HAIR, the HAND, the FOOT of woman, or the expression of the EYE." are all mentioned, as well as the "color of the hair or body (even artificial perfume)" and the sound of the voice (Logan 120). "The ability to procreate," Krafft-Ebing argued, "supplies an important survival



advantage, a fact that provides an anthropological justification for heterosexuality: one of the refinements of evolution is the fact love ‘can only exist between persons of different sex capable of sexual intercourse’ (Logan 120). Evolution is hard at work on the opposite side of attraction as well, with bodies developing desirable attributes to gain admirers: ‘The germ of sexual love [reproduction] is probably to be found in the individual charm (fetish) with which persons of opposite sex sway each other’ (Logan 120). The biological basis of fetishism allows for evolution to naturalize monogamy: “adaptation” accounts for “the fact of fascination by one person of the opposite sex with indifference towards all others” (Logan 120). Thus, whereas for Binet the fetishists forgot the childhood association, Krafft-Ebing argues that the predisposed fetishist object of desire signified, and its value came from the association with a sexual partner rather than any quality within the object (Logan 120).

The pathological fetishist, unlike the “normal,” physiological fetishist abandons any connection to a lover (Logan 122-123). Krafft-Ebing’s pathological fetishism was more in line with Binet’s theory of fetishism whereby pathological fetishes emerge as the result of excessive sexual activity including masturbation which damaged the sex organs and led to impotence, which could be passed down through heredity (aka degeneration) or “under which the association arises are usually forgotten; the result of the association alone is retained” (Logan 123-124). Krafft-Ebing’s notes, “Here the abnormality consists only in the fact that the whole sexual interest is concentrated on the impression made by a part of the person of the opposite sex, so that all other impressions fade and become more or less indifferent” (Logan 123). The pathology lies not in being stimulated by the part, but rather in the absence of any connection between it and the rest of the beloved (Logan 123). Whereas the “normal” lover sees the object as a representation, the pathological fetishist sees it as significant in itself. While physiological

fetishism transforms the object into a symbol, pathological fetishism makes it intrinsically erotic (Logan 122). In this sense, the fetishist's sexual interests are diminished because they are narrowed to the fragment, and so the pathology is characterized by "what does not affect him, the limitation of sexual interest that has taken place in him" (Logan 123).

A modern application of Krafft-Ebing's articulation of fetishism changes the dynamics between trans women/feminine presenting people and the chaser/trans-attracted gender-normative men. Whereas under Binet's concept of fetishism, trans women/feminine presenting people were "pure," uncontaminated, Krafft-Ebing's concept of fetishism positions them as fetishists, too. Trans women/feminine presenting people's preference for tall men or black men, or big dicks, for example, were fetishes but unproblematic in that they are within the range of the "natural." That is, trans women/feminine presenting people would allow for reproduction (obviously, a social reproduction, in this case) through a heterosexual pairing. The chaser/trans-attracted gender-normative men, on the other hand, are pathological, as was the case in Binet's theory. An active desire for femininity paired with a male-bodied person who identifies as a woman (Obviously, this, too, becomes complicated by people who, in colloquial terms, are referred to as "femboys").<sup>10</sup> The desire is fetishistic in that it completely deviates from the range of the "natural" because, in modern liberal/trans activists notions of sexuality, desires are aimed at gendered people with a secondary, if any, emphasis on the sexed body (Bettcher, *Intimacy* 61-67). A gender normative man should, therefore, desire women, men, or both, not a crossing a feminine traits usually assigned to women and a maleness.

At the turn of the century, Sigmund Freud's theory would shift fetishism from a biological framework to a psycho development framework. In *Three Essays*, Freud rejected

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<sup>10</sup> A femboy is a person, typically under the age of 30 years, who is biologically male. However, this person will often present himself in a very feminine manner (FemboyJeremy).

theories of evolutionary biology and degeneration espoused by figures like Krafft-Ebing and Binet while simultaneously viewing fetishes in relation to the full spectrum of sexual perversions and not as an isolated pathology (Logan 125). Instead, Freud's theory would argue that perversions are the outcroppings of a single, universal sexual instinct, from "something innate in everyone" that was variously shaped by individual childhood experiences (Logan 125).<sup>11</sup>

Similar to Krafft-Ebing, Freud narrowly defined normal sexuality, which, for Freud, consisted of a brief period of erotic play that culminated in heterosexual copulation (Logan 125). But unlike Krafft-Ebing, Freud used the narrow definition differently: normal sexuality, for Freud, existed at the center of a continuum, whereby on either side were opposite degrees of success at repressing the sexual instinct (aka reproductive) (Logan 126). In childhood, excessive repression led to the neuroses; unable to find an outlet, the sexual instinct flowed into conversion symptoms. In the opposite case, too little repression led to perversions by allowing the sexual instinct to express itself in its rawest form. He summarized the inverse relationship between the two ends of the sexual continuum by emphasizing that "neuroses are, so to say, the negative of perversions (Logan 126). Squeezed in the middle, normal sexuality became the remaining range of behaviors, bounded by the excessive expression or repression of a single sexual instinct.

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<sup>11</sup> In his later work, "Fetishism" (1927), the emphasis on individual childhood experiences would take the form of the *Oedipus complex*. According to Freud, "The fetish is a substitute for the woman's (the mother's) penis that the little boy once believed in and--for reasons familiar to us-- does not want to give up" (Logan 128). Freud's mythic little boy fears being punished by the father, with whom he competes for the mother's affection. According to this bildungsroman, his first glimpse of the mother's genitals seems to show him what that punishment will entail; since he naively imagines that her genitals are like his own, he concludes that she has been castrated and that the same lies in store for him (Logan 128). In normal sexual development, he finally accepts this "fact" and submits to the father's will by giving up his narcissistic fantasies about the mother, but in fetishism, the boy's response takes a different turn. He fixates on something that symbolizes the mother's penis to him, and this object emotionally reassures him that the father's threat is not real (Logan 129). Thus, fetishism serves as a defense mechanism, alleviating his fear by creating a substitute for the absent penis. It also impairs the process of his psychological maturation. Fetishism allows him to continue denying the reality of those external forces that exist outside the narcissistic world of early childhood. For Freud, fetishism "saves the fetishist from becoming a homosexual by endowing women with the characteristic which makes them tolerable as sexual objects" (Logan 129).

Classified into two broad categories, Freud's perversions were demarcated by whether they deviate from the sexual object ("the person from whom sexual attraction proceeds") or aim ("the act toward which the instinct tends") (Logan 126). In perversions, one or both are inappropriate. Inverts, pedophiles, and zoophiles represent deviations of sexual objects. Deviations of aim involved oral, anal, or other non-genital sexual acts. But, for Freud, "union of the actual genitals," only in "the rarest of instances," is interest confined to the genitals alone. The "psychical valuation that is set on the sexual object" can extend to the lips and even the whole body, for example.... "it helps to turn activities connected with other parts of the body into sexual aims" (Logan 126).

In pathological fetishism:

What is substituted for the sexual object is some part of the body (such as the foot or hair), which is in general very inappropriate for sexual purposes, or some inanimate object which bears an assignable relation to the person whom it replaces and preferably to that person's sexuality (e.g., a piece of clothing or under linen). (SE, 7:153)

As a result of the substitution, fetishism involves an actual "abandonment of the sexual aim," along with the substitute object; along with voyeurism/exhibitionism and sadism/masochism, it is one of the perversions that entails both a substitute object and a substitute aim. Instead of normal sexual gratification, "the longing for the fetish ... actually takes the place of the normal aim"(Logan 126). Like Krafft-Ebing, fetishism becomes "pathological . . . when the fetish becomes detached from a particular individual and becomes the sole sexual object" (Logan 127 ). In pathological fetishism , the object loses connection to the whole person and becomes meaningful in itself; divorced from representation, it transubstantiates, taking on an intrinsic erotic quality. Otherwise, perverse behaviors can emerge as components within normal sexuality

without contradicting it, so long as they appear as part of the normal sexual aim and object (Logan 127 ). But if the perversion "ousts them completely and takes their place in all circumstances--if, in short, a perversion has the characteristics of exclusiveness and fixation, "then it crosses the borderline into the terrain of the pathological" (Logan 127-128).

A Freudian lens of fetishism would complicate the relation between trans women/feminine presenting people and chaser/trans-attracted gender-normative men. Like with Krafft-Ebing, trans women/feminine presenting people, like most people, would be within the range of the "natural." However, the chaser/trans-attracted gender-normative men would be representative of an earlier stage of psychosexual development, whereby they failed to successfully "repress" a childhood memory.

By 1980, in the wake of the Stonewall Rebellion, John Money would greatly influence contemporary understanding of non-normative sexuality. Instead of an emphasis on reproductive sexual acts, Money's theory of paraphilia presumes "natural" sexuality are activities that enable long-term monogamy, which Money labels as "lovemap" (Money, *Lovemaps* xvii, 292). Lovemaps are like "a native language" and is "a developmental representation or template in your mind/brain," which "depicts your idealized lover and what, as a pair, you do together in the idealized romantic, erotic and sexual relationship" (Downing, *Normophilia* 280-281). Lovemaps are informed by the institutionalized norms and costumes of any given society, which allows for a wide range of sexual activities/practices within the "statistical" norms: normophilia (Downing, *Normophilia* 283). Money thus presumes "healthy" sexuality to be both informed by biology, like the ability to learn language, but also shaped by psycho development during childhood which gives rise to sexual desires and activities that are inline with social norms. Through a mixture of ideas expressed by Krafft-Ebing and Freud, sex that is non-genitally focused is

universalized, a component of all individual's sexuality. Money's theory of paraphilia, therefore, in line with the statistical norms of society, allows for a wide range of hetero/homo sexual and/or romantic relationships between presumeabled to be gender-normative people.<sup>12</sup> The theory of paraphilias, then, allows for trans women's desire for gender-normative men to be understood as non-pathological.

Conversely, paraphilias are the "vandalization" of an individual's "lovemap." Paraphilias compromise "love" and "love bonding" (pair-boning). an "unusual" interests founded upon a dissociation between love and pleasure (Giambi, *Paraphilia* 1132; Money, *Lovemaps* xvi). "Unusual sexual interests" were "unusual" in that they are not exclusively focused on heterosexual or homosexual coitus and do not fit the heteronormative ideals of "reciprocal affectionate sexual activity" and a byproduct of improper socialization or genetics (Giambi, *Paraphilia* 1132; Money, *Lovemaps* 292). In terms of socialization, paraphilias are the result of trauma, abuse, inadequate education on sex, or lack of rehearsal play with other children. Paraphilias develop as "a strategy for turning tragedy into triumph" by preserving "sinful lust in the lovemap by dissociating it from saintly love" (Downing, *Normophilia* 280-28; Money, *Lovemaps* xvii). But, socialization, in and of itself, does not example the totality of all paraphilias, Money's theory of paraphilias also assumes a some paraphilias to have "phylogentic" histories: a genealogical history shared by all members of a species which become paraphiliac if entertained during childhood development (Money, *Lovemaps* xvii, 293). Like previous sexologists, then, Money's theory of paraphilia situates non-normative sexuality as the result of childhood experience and/or passed down genetically. In terms of the chaser/trans-attracted gender-normative men, the paraphiliac desire for trans women with a penis is the

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<sup>12</sup> I go into more detail in chapter two and three of this project.

byproduct of a perversion social environment during childhood or inheritance that was enabled by a perversion social environment.

The shifting language and understanding of non-normative pathology sexuality are reflective of instability of the logic of fetishization/paraphilias. Instead of a stable and unchanging understanding of pathological activity, the discourses on non-normative sexuality are diffuse, complex, and sometimes in conflict with each other. The way this logic shifts and develops through the late nineteenth and twentieth informs how the chaser/trans-attracted gender-normative men would be historically understood. Equally important, however, the various shifts are reflective of the way sexuality is socially constructed. As a social construct sexuality and sex are shaped within practical cultures, at various times and places, and are, therefore, not “natural.”

### ***1.1.3 Social Construction of Sexuality***

Since the mid-twentieth century, theories on the social construction of sexuality have proliferated. In 1966, Berger and Luckmann acknowledged that sexuality is "grounded in biological drives" and that these drives provide a generalized motivation. However, biology does not dictate where, when, and with what object a person engages in sexual behavior; "sexuality . . . [is] channeled in specific directions socially rather than biologically, a channeling that not only imposes limits on these activities, but directly affects organismic functions" (DeLamater and Hyde 14). In other words, sexuality doesn't happen in a non-discursive vacuum of predetermined biology. Instead, Berger and Luckmann argue that sexuality is informed by societal factors that determine the boundaries and functions of the biological.

Gagnon and Simon's 1973 book *Sexual Conduct* presented a theory of sexuality that is fundamentally social constructionist, breaking with the mixture of biology and social argued by

Berger and Luckmann. They rejected an essentialist view, arguing that "sexuality is not . . . [a] universal phenomenon which is the same in all historical times and cultural spaces." Sexuality is created by culture when some behaviors and some relationships are defined as "sexual," and members of the society begin learning these definitions or scripts (DeLamater and Hyde 14). In other words, sexuality is inextricably embedded in cultural or social norms.

Laws and Schwartz, 1977, applied the constructionist paradigm to female sexuality in the contemporary United States. With regard to phenomena such as birth, sexual anatomy, menarche, sexual initiation, impotence, and frigidity, "the primary significance of these biological events is not that they occur, but that they are marked by others. They have social significance; terms exist to refer to them, and communication occurs about them." The authors note the emphasis on language and communication as the source of significance or meaning of biological phenomena (DeLamater and Hyde 14).

Foucault, 1978, systematically applied a social constructionist paradigm to human sexuality. He argued that sexuality is not an essence. It is not a biological quality or natural inner drive whose character is the same across time and space. It is a cultural construct. Its meaning is derived from language or discourse; each institution in society has a discourse about sex, a way of thinking and talking about the broad array of behaviors and actors who are involved in sexual expression. Similarly, Gagnon, 1990, argued that each institution in society has an "instructional system" about sexuality (DeLamater and Hyde 14-15).

In terms of sexual orientation, social constructionists challenged the universal heterosexual/homosexual binary. "The biological theories of sexual orientation assume that there are two distinct types of people, heterosexual and homosexual, and that each person is one or the other. If a preference for partners of the same gender is genetic, or due to differences in hormone



levels or brain anatomy, one would expect at least some similarities in gays or lesbians (not to mention heterosexual men and women) across cultures. Social constructionists, on the other hand, expect substantial variation across cultures in the behaviors associated with homosexuality and heterosexuality" (DeLamater and Hyde 15). Blackwood, 1993, concluded, based on a review of the anthropological literature, that homosexuality varies greatly from one society to another:

Patterns of homosexual behavior reflect the value systems and social structure of the different societies in which they are found. The ideology regarding male and female roles, kinship and marriage regulations, and the sexual division of labor are all important in the construction of homosexual behavior (DeLamater and Hyde 15).

Instead of being a universal "fact," there is tremendous variability within a single culture in sexual behavior and lifestyle.

In addition, theories of sexuality as a social construct are important in that they illustrate how "normal" sexuality defines privileged groups. According to Foucault, "one of the primary concerns [of the European middle-class] was to provide itself with a body and sexuality — to ensure the strength, endurance, and secular proliferation of that body through the organization of deployment of sexuality. Moreover, this process was linked to the movement by which it asserted its distinctiveness and hegemony. There is little question that one of the primordial forms of class consciousness is the affirmation of the body" (Foucault 1990 125-126). However, as Stoler points out, the "healthy sexuality" that defined the white middle class was "measured in racial terms" (Stoler 115).

Foucault was undoubtedly right that the affirmations of the body were "one of the primordial forms of class consciousness," but bourgeois "class bodies" defined their "healthy sexuality" with a consciousness of civilities and social hygiene always measured

in racial terms. Sexual promiscuity or restraint were not abstract characteristics attached to any persons who exhibited those behaviors, but as often post-hoc interpretations contingent on the racialized class and gender categories to which individuals were assigned (Stoler 115)

In other words, the development of "healthy" sexuality defined and separated the European middle class from various other racialized and lower-class populations.

Similarly, Gayle Rubin's "Thinking Sex" highlights how privileged populations constructed "normal," "healthy" sexuality. According to Rubin, "all these hierarchies of sexual value — religious, psychiatric, and popular — function in much the same ways as do ideological systems of racism, ethnocentrism, and religious chauvinism. They rationalize the well-being of the sexually privileged and the adversity of the sexual rabble" (Rubin 152). But further, "all these models assume a domino theory of sexual peril. The line appears to stand between sexual order and chaos. It expresses the fear that if anything is permitted to cross this erotic DMZ, the barrier against scary sex will crumble, and something unspeakable will skitter across" (Rubin 152). As such, the line between "good" and "bad" sex, Rubin points out, is continuously being redrawn. In times of political crisis, sexuality becomes more sharply contested, overtly politicized, and "where to draw the line" and determine what activities, if any, may be permitted to cross into acceptability (Rubin 152). Put another way, the "line" between "good" and "bad" sex, informed by feminists and social conservatives alike, inform what becomes pathological, a perversion/fetish.

And yet still, sexual morality "grants virtue to the dominant groups and relegates vice to the underprivileged" (Rubin 152). Black people, for example, have been and continue to be constructed as lust-driven, a notion that has complicated effects due to the norms of gender.

After 9/11, Muslim men, usually Arab, are constructed as lust-driven, willing to die for seventy-two virgins. Latinx women and men are given to wild passions. Thus, it can be said, the majority of people are simultaneously sexualized and sexualizing. Segal states, "the powerful have always not only sexually (as well as economically) exploited the relatively powerless, but also projected sexuality itself onto those they see as least powerful - particularly the apparently dangerous, troubling and 'dirty' aspects of sex" (Segal 72).

Regarding transgender women and their gender-normative male partners, sexuality as a social construct is particularly useful. Through the lens of "normal," "healthy" sexuality as a defining feature of the white middle-class that is informed by racialized and lower-class "others," it becomes possible to chart the way the sexual ethic of "happens to be trans" or the rhetoric of sexual fetishism more generally has developed. More precisely, by framing sexuality as socially constructed, how the ethic of "happens to be trans" or sexual fetishism operates and who benefits can be deduced. Further, the social construction of sexuality opens up for investigation the ways in which the chaser recirculates black people and working and poor people as inherently perverse.

## **1.2 Methodology**

For this project, Foucauldian discourse analysis act as the foundational theory for unpacking the fetishization discourse regarding sexual relations between gender normative males and trans women. A Foucauldian approach to discourse, in line with the general premise of social constructionism, posits that

"knowledge is not just a reflection of reality. Truth is a discursive construction, and different regimes of knowledge determine what is true and false. Foucault's aim is to investigate the structure of different regimes of knowledge – that is, the rules for what

can and cannot be said and the rules for what is considered to be true and false. The starting point is that although we have, in principle, an infinite number of ways to formulate statements, the statements that are produced within a specific domain are rather similar and repetitive. There are innumerable statements that are never uttered and would never be accepted as meaningful. The historical rules of the particular discourse delimit what it is possible to say" (Phillip and Jorgensen 13).

That is, discourses, per Foucault, are rule-bound sets of statements which impose limits on what gives meaning. They build on his ideas about truth being something which is, at least to a large extent, created discursively (Phillip and Jorgensen 13). As such, knowledge (s), in this case, the explicit desire for trans women as fetishistic, is held in place and made repeatable by other logic around it (for example, sexuality as a biological "natural" process that directs individuals towards gender-normative assumed men and/or women). However, the knowledge that grounds discourse is not, as many theorists presume, the effect of agents or a structure but an effect of power.

In his genealogical work, Foucault developed a theory of power/ knowledge. Instead of treating agents and structures as primary categories, Foucault focuses on power. In common with discourse, power does not belong to particular agents such as individuals or the state, or groups with particular interests; rather, power is spread across different social practices (Phillip and Jorgensen 13). Power should not be understood as exclusively oppressive but as productive; power constitutes discourse, knowledge, bodies, and subjectivities:

What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it does not only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be

considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression (Foucault 1980: 119)

Thus, power provides the conditions of possibility for the social. It is in power that our social world is produced, and objects are separated from one another and thus attain their individual characteristics and relationships to one another. For instance, 'crime' has gradually been created as an area with its own institutions (e.g., prisons), particular subjects (e.g. 'criminals'), and particular practices (e.g., 'resocialization'). And power is always bound up with knowledge – power and knowledge presuppose one another (Phillip and Jorgensen 13-14). In other words, power constructs a particular space for particular types of people who must do a specific set of acts. The prison, criminal, and the belief in resocialization are separate, but all three operate together to inform each other. Because of the prison, we know who and what a criminal is and vice versa. But also, because of the prison and the criminal, we know what acts society demands of the criminal: resocialization. It might be easier to say that power determines the who, what, where, and when of society. Together, prison, the criminal, and the belief in resocialization form a particular set of knowledge. For example, it is hard to imagine the modern prison system without criminology (Foucault 1977).

Power is responsible both for creating our social world and for the particular ways in which the world is formed and can be talked about, ruling out alternative ways of being and talking. Power is thus both a productive and a constraining force (Phillip and Jorgensen 14). And with respect to knowledge, Foucault's coupling of power and knowledge has the consequence that power is closely connected to discourse. Discourses contribute centrally to producing the subjects we are and the objects we can know something about (including ourselves as subjects) (Phillip and Jorgensen 14). Further, since discourse constructs subjects and objects, per Foucault,

there can be no universal truths; truths are products of discourse that give people and things meaning (Phillip and Jorgensen 14). "Because truth is unattainable, it is fruitless to ask whether something is true or false. Instead, the focus should be on how effects of truth are created in discourses" (Phillip and Jorgensen 14).

In terms of this project, a Foucauldian discourse analysis makes it possible to "criticize, diagnose and demythologize the 'truth phenomena' that gender normative males' eroticization of trans women is the result of fetishization (Tamboukou 3). As such, this project uncovers the procedures that produce this truth, i.e., the construction of sexuality, but also how the knowledge of related categories, i.e., sex and gender, chart the way knowledge/power have come to organize the relations between gender normative males and trans women. Additionally, to unpack the operations of power, this project, by necessity, has to unpack how power/knowledge produced these populations. To undertake this feat, this project will couch a Foucauldian discourse analysis in the Foucauldian method of genealogy.

### ***1.2.1 Method***

A genealogy is an active intervention within the present: that is, the Foucauldian genealogist must ask, "what is happening now?" and "what is this 'now' within which all of us find ourselves?" The framework draws on the past to answer these questions. However, unlike the historian who attempts to reconstruct the past or trace the effects of past events in the present, the genealogist, instead of searching for origins, "traces the numberless beginnings not easily captured by the historian's eye" (Tambouko 9). The genealogist makes an effort to look directly at what people do without taking anything for granted, without presupposing the existence of any goal, material cause, or ideology. The rule is to strip away the veils that cover people's practices by simply showing how they are, and where they come from, describing its complicated forms

and exploring its countless historical transformations" (Tambouko 10). That is, the genealogists don't attempt to uncover a hidden meaning to a past event but understand particular discourses as historically situated with specific purposes that are culturally situated.

This form of analysis disturbs previous immobile statements and fragments of unified truths and exposes heterogeneity of previous consistencies (Tambouko 10). Put another way, a genealogy introduces power through a "history of the present," concerned with "disreputable origins and unpalatable functions." Kendall and Wickham describe this as "making the older guests uncomfortable": at the table of intellectual analysis, older assumptions are made uncomfortable by pointing out things about their origins and functions that they would rather remain hidden (Kendall and Wickham 34). In the search, the genealogist points to the fact "truth or being does not lie at the root of what we know and what we are." This conception is important in establishing the role of genealogy as a critique (Tambouko 10).

In the end, a genealogical analysis describes how "a discourse emerged historically, with the intent of interpreting how certain power relationships arise. Discourses emerge on the surfaces of other discourses, arising in social contexts that make conditions possible for their emergence. The genealogist seeks to uncover the conditions that made the discourse possible. A genealogy, in its historical situatedness, examines the major influence of the development of a discourse. A genealogical analysis aims to examine the prominent discourses in the textual discourses and expose the conditions that made the discourse possible; this is known as the surface of emergence" (Bond 13-14). A genealogy can also show the accidental status of the discourse and broaden our perception to include practices still alive and those that have been co-opted or removed (Bond 13-14). Highlighting various historical problems prior generations sought to resolve and by what means, a genealogy points to the fact the present isn't a

predetermined, inevitable fact of precious decisions. Instead, the present often occurs through the convergences of historical solutions that made new things, problems and solutions, possible.

In general, the text for the genealogy includes published articles, books, accounts, and comments. A genealogical analysis reveals the extent to which epistemological and political knowledge and power are related. Truth is not so much discovered (as if it lay ready-made in an objective reality patiently awaiting the articulate voice of science) as it is produced according to regular identifiable procedures that determine in any given historical situation: what it is possible to say, who is authorized to speak, what can become an object of scientific inquiry, and how knowledge is tested, accumulated, and dispersed (Bond 14).

The influences of nondiscursive factors are also considered in a genealogy. These nondiscursive factors include institutions, events, practices, politics, economics, demographics, media, clothing, style, habits, terminology, and the range of roles to be fulfilled by human subjects. What the analyst chooses to look at and the range of material available for the genealogy both reflect their own historical situatedness (Bond 14).

Thus, in order to execute a genealogy, this project puts trans feminists' arguments about fetishization alongside sexologists' texts from the late nineteenth through to the late twentieth century. As such, trans feminists like Julia Serano and Talia Mae Bettcher, who articulate the problems inherent in the explicit eroticization of trans women, are juxtaposed with figures like John Money and Richard Green, two sexologists who were fundamental to the science of transsexualism. By bringing trans feminism and sexology together, this project problematizes trans feminists' discourses by anchoring their arguments in sexology. That is, recognizing that fetishization is the discourse of sexology, this project argues that the discourse of gender



normative males' fetishization of trans women's genitals emerges as part of the science of transsexualism.

But further, this project doesn't take the separation of gender and sexuality as a universalized and ontological "truth." Instead, through the understanding that gender normative males' eroticization of trans women's genitals is a same-sex desire, this project charts the emergence of trans-attraction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century with the figure of the pathological homosexual. Since nineteenth-century inversion theories assumed that any deviation from gender/hetero norms was a sign of degeneration and sliding towards the "opposite" sex, homosexuality served as a catch-all term for gender and sexual nonconformists. As such, this project begins an exploration of how sexologists like Alfred Binet, Krafft-Ebing, and others constructed homosexuality as a sexual fetish between people of the same sex, regardless of gender identity; and how homosexuality as a sexual fetish was a racialized and classed desire that informed the "healthy" sexuality of the white middle-classes. This project then moves on to how sexologists' elaborations on the differences between sex, gender, and sexuality produced new knowledge that enabled a new population to emerge: gender normative males who desire women with penises (trans-attracted gender normative males). Finally, this project puts sexological texts within their respective political atmospheres to highlight the conditions that made trans-attracted gender normative males' documentation necessary.

## 2 CHAPTER ONE: THE UNITY OF SEX, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY: SEXOLOGICAL ORGANIZATION OF SAME-SEX DESIRES

In recent years, trans feminists and their allies have highlighted sexual relationships between gender normative males and trans women as a key site of political intervention. Sexual relations between gender normative males and trans women, according to some trans feminists, produce and reproduce trans women as always and only sexual objects in a gender-normative - hetero patriarchal society (Serano 255-257). In their analyze, trans people are never allowed to be fully actualized people worthy of exercising autonomy over their own bodies, nor are they recognized as people who are unique with complex needs and desires. Ultimately, this dehumanization excludes trans people, and, ultimately, being engaged with as a as suitable romantic partners (Mock). The problem is thus one of sexualization/fetishization/or objectification of trans women whereby trans women's difference from gender-normative women, particularly trans women's bodily difference, is eroticized by gender normative males (Serano 255-257; Sonoma).

Problematizing gender normative males' eroticization of trans women has come to be represented by a particular form of embodiment: the "tranny chaser" (chaser). The chaser, according to some trans activists and their allies, is knowable through his fetishistic desire, which reduces trans women to objects and leads to violence and even death for many trans women. Sonoma, a black trans writer and activists writes in her op-ed "The Problem with Identifying As 'Trans Attracted'" states that tranny chasers are attracted to trans women due to their "genitalia," which produces trans women as "objects" of sexual pleasure. "The process is ultimately dehumanizing and can include an objectification that often makes men violent" (Sonoma). Thus, the chaser represents a form of eroticization known as sexualization.

Unlike other gender-normative hetero men who wish to sexually interact primarily with gender-normative women, the chaser is a gender-normative (read masculine present man who actively seeks out and desires to engage in sexual activities with trans women. It follows, then, that all chasers are assumed to be involved in sexualization, but all sexualization is not compatible with chaserdom. The line of demarcation rests on the fact that unlike other gender normative males, the chaser actively desires a *same sex, cross gendered* identified and presumably presenting partner. In this way, the chaser - as indicated by Sonoma's and others calls for trans women to be included in wider desire - falls outside the norm of "natural" sexuality, in which people desire gender-normative women or gender normative males according to the hetero/homo binary (Sonoma). The chaser, therefore, is a fetishist outside of "natural" sexuality.

The chaser, due to his presumed focus on genitalia, is a fetishist. According to some activists, the chaser has a roving sexual appetite that drives him away from loving, romantic, monogamous relationships (Sonoma). The chaser recirculates "well-worn ideas, one might almost say clichés, about perverts: their troublesome and irrational fixation on their preferred practice and their incapacity for true intimacy or love, for example" (Downing, *Nomophilia* 281). He, the chaser, is thus a fetishist (Sonoma).

The chaser as a same-sex, cross-gender desiring person has his historical roots in the sexological figure of the homosexual, and since, the category of homosexuality was informed by racialized and classed ideologies, so too is the chaser figure raced and classed. In the nineteenth century, the construction of homosexuality drew on racialized notions of gender and sexuality. According to evolutionary theories of the nineteenth century, black people had failed to sexually differentiate at the same pace as white people. This belief system is demonstrated in sexologist

Havelock Ellis's book *Sexual Inversion* (1897) wherein he claimed the black female body showed signs of hermaphroditism due to their vaginas being "irregular" and "poorly developed." According to Ellis, black women showed signs of a penis and, thus, deviated from the "normal" female represented by white middle gender-normative hetero women (Somerville 28-29). The black female-bodied person sexologists claimed showed signs of a penis was inherently masculine and thus represented a perverse sexuality (Somerville 28-29). Invoking the modern-day discourse on particular trans embodiments, the black female was the original "woman with a penis." But the black female-bodied person could only be eroticized by a "perverse" type of male-bodied person such as black male-bodied people who sexologists had determined to have an abnormally large penis. This physical attribute, according to sexologists, produced a type of "hypermasculinity" whereby these males had a roving sexual appetite. Through this logic, the black male-bodied person had a sex appetite so strong that his lust overcame any self-discipline (Ross 167-168; Somerville 15-38). As a result, the black male-bodied was prone to sex with all people, including members of the same sex, including a woman with a penis. The black male-bodied person, therefore, foreshadows the chaser. In the nineteenth century, sexologists, to guard against contamination of this racialized embodiment and desire, would pathologize this type of embodiment and desire through the figure of the homosexual.

The pathological homosexual was a degenerate contaminated by racialized and classed sexuality. By the logic of the theory of sexual inversion, the homosexual was, most often, the male who deviated from the "natural" norms of their assigned sex (Nye, *Sex Difference* 36-39). All at once, the homosexual, in psychiatric texts, was feminine in tastes or behavior and eroticized the same sex, which was knowable to medical officials by, in this case, feminine psychological traits (Nye, *Sex Difference* 36-39). The broad metrics of evaluation, which traversed

normative ideals of sex, gender, and sexuality, allowed the homosexual to encompass a broad array of individuals who deviated from gender-normative hetero normativity, trans feminine people and their gender normative male partners<sup>13</sup> included. The broad assortment of populations contained under the category of homosexual was composed of, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, individuals to be corrected and restored to their “natural” gender and sexual roles. As a result, sexologists of this time would classify homosexuality as a sexual fetishism (Nye, *Medical Origins* 20; Nye, *Sex Difference* 41).

Sexual fetishism was/is a political discourse. In the 1870s, amid anxieties over depopulation, shifting gender roles, and vice in general, medical officials focused on the sexual practices of white middle-class gender normative males (Nye, *Medical Origins* 16). For officials, the root cause of social upheavals was the result of gender normative males deviating from their “natural” sexual instincts. Instead of fulfilling their “natural” roles, gender normative males were too fixated on sexual pleasure. Sexologists classified these “unnatural” fixations with sexual pleasure as sexual fetishism, and among them was homosexuality. In 1882, for example, Jean-Martin Charcot and Valentin Magnan argued that homosexuality was an “inversion of the genital sense” that gave “rise to a genital appetite for the same sex” (Nye, *Medical Origins* 20; Nye, *Sex Difference* 41). Homosexuality, according to Charcot and Magnan, was an uncontrolled, narrowly defined sexual fixation, identified by an obsession with the same sex (Logan 116-117). According to medical officials, the homosexual was driven by lust, incapable of notions of “true

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<sup>13</sup> Colloquial usages of the term “cis” or “cisgender” are often utilized to identify an individual as not trans and/or a person who identifies with the gender assigned to their sex. However, cis also articulates a system of privilege or oppression, which inadequately speaks to the people I address in this project. That is because, as this project partly highlights, systems of oppression complicate cisness. Black people, people of lower classes, and people with desires outside traditional notions of heterosexuality are all understood as gender and sexually nonconforming. Therefore, I move forward with the usage of gender-normative males/ men to differentiate these partners of transfeminine people to highlight the historical emergence of the modern, masculine-presenting “chaser.”

love,” and reduced their same-sex partner to their genitals (Logan 116-117). In this way, the homosexual foreshadows the modern-day chaser.

The chaser, like the pathological homosexual, has an “unnatural” desire. The chaser, like the homosexual, reduces his partners to their genitals. The chaser, like the homosexual, is so fixated on the genitals of his sexual partner that he, the chaser, is unable to find “true love.” However, in an era where gender and sexuality emerged out of the sexed body, the rhetoric of sexual fetishism adhered to the various populations housed under sexuality. In the end, as medical officials attempted to restore order, reproduce a normative social order, and secure white middle-class gender normative males’ “natural” place in society, the population of “homosexuals” had to be redirected towards gender-normative womanhood. From this historical and political context, the figure known today has its roots.

## **2.1 Race, Class, and the Construction of Sexuality**

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the development of sexuality as an intrinsic part of the human condition drew on notions tied to race and class (Stoler 115). Throughout the nineteenth century, evolutionary theory tended to reinforce the notion of racial and class hierarchies through the method of ranking and ordering bodies according to stages of evolutionary “progress” (Somerville 27). The notion of “progress,” under the Darwinian model of evolution, enabled the basic assumptions that posited that as organisms evolved through a process of natural selection; these organisms showed greater signs of sexual differentiation (Somerville 29). As “more evolved people,” white men and women of the middle class had become entirely distinct from each other with highly specialized reproductive organs, which determined their gender and sexual behaviors (Nye, *Medical Origins* 16-17; Nye, *Sex Difference* 36- 39; Somerville 27-29). White men and women of the middle-class had the “typical” genitals

of their sex, were in line with gender norms, and engaged in reproductive sex (Nye, *Sex Difference* 36- 39, Somerville 27- 29). But, at the same time, the antiblackness and class antagonism constructed black people as incipient species and the lower classes as degenerates (Somerville 24; Stoller 123-128). By evidence of their sexed bodies, black people and the lower classes were gender and sexually nonconforming (Stoler 128). In the nineteenth century, racial science that drew on the sexed body as evidence for gender and sexual nonconformity would enable the construction of gender-normative hetero norms. Ultimately, these norms would enable the prohibition against the explicit eroticization of trans women (a woman with a penis) to emerge and eventually allow for such a desire to be documented as distinct personhood.

Throughout the nineteenth century, evolutionary theories allowed the black female body to invoke a type of trans embodiment. Belonging to "incipient species," which by the tenets of natural selection made black people biologically inferior to white people, the black female displayed signs of hermaphroditic traits (Somerville 24). Unlike the "pure" white heterosexual feminine females considered to be "normal" bodied persons, the black female body, Sexologists like Havelock Ellis, for example, would argue, had "abnormal" genitals, which gave rise to "abnormal passions" (Somerville 28). Sliding towards masculinity on the hermaphroditic scale, which supposed the gender-normative hetero binary as the norms (male, masculinity on one side and female, femininity on the other), black bodies assigned female at birth, were strongly linked to lesbianism due to their "unusually large clitoris," which served as evidence of primitive sexuality (same sex desires) (Somerville 27). Black female genitals were described as "poorly developed" having an "unusually large clitoris" and "fleshy sacs," which invoked the anatomy of a phantom male body inhabiting the lesbian's anatomical features (Somerville 28-29). In characterizing either lesbians' or African American women's bodies as less sexually

differentiated than the norm (always posited as white heterosexual women's bodies), anatomists and sexologists drew on notions of natural selection to dismiss these bodies as lesser or non-evolved within a scheme of cultural and anatomical progress (Somerville 29). But also, in constructing the black female body as masculine and strongly linked to lesbianism, transness found expression and continuous circulation within blackness (Snorton, p. 2). That is, the black female bodied person was the woman with a penis.

Racialized sexuality also explained the sexual morality of the middle class versus the poor – i.e., "underserving" versus the "respectable" poor (Stoler 123). In early nineteenth-century France and elsewhere in Europe, Sarah Baartman's genital physiognomy was exaggerated to naturalize lascivious sexuality (Stoler 128). Industrializing England constructed the promiscuous working-class woman as a "primitive relic of an earlier evolutionary period" (Stoler 128). The "wild woman" myth contrasted the "moral model of...middle-class sexual restraint and civility" (Stoler 128). Baartman's body explained pathology, unrestrained, atavistic, and the diseased body of both the people assigned female at birth of the lower classes and people racialized as black (Stoler 128). Black and working-class female bodied people were representative of a type of transness whereby these female-bodied people deviated from the norms of womanhood which were prescribed by their sexed body.

The construction of the black and lower-class female body as invoking transness could only be eroticized by a black male who, unlike their white male counterpart, eroticized the same sex. In this period, physicians and scientists would stipulate and then set out to confirm that black men were closer to the lower animals than white men when it came to sexual appetite, lack of morality, and, to a certain degree, sexual anatomy (Saint-Aubin 261). These assumptions were made because, at the time, scientists believed an opposition existed between the head and the



loins. The brain was the mark of superiority and, thus, ascribed to white men. Physicians would write "the greater abdominal and genital development of the Negro [which] merely corroborated the inferiority of his other anatomical peculiarities— his black skin, flat nose, lesser cranial and thoracic development" (Saint-Aubin 261). The widely held belief "that the Negro penis exceeded in size that of the average adult white male" served as proof that black males were bestial in their sexual needs and in the gratification of those needs; it was proof that they had not evolved significantly as a race much beyond their "animal subhuman ancestors" (Saint-Aubin 262). The black male had "stallion-like passion" with a "willingness to run any risk and brave any peril for the gratification of his frenetic lust" that made him alone a criminal and the most immediate and intransigent threat to the white race and world civilization (Saint-Aubin 264). Black men, owing to a larger cock or a diminished brain size, were sexually deviants who lacked sexual self-discipline. As a result, black men were by nature prone to sexual activity with members of the same-sex, including a woman with a penis. Black masculinity would operate as the raw material that informs the modern figure of the chaser. The loose sexual morality of black males would ultimately inform the sexual conduct of the white middle-class.

In the end, if black people assigned females at birth and black people assigned males at birth were both, by evidence of their sexed bodies, gender and sexually nonconforming, black heterosexual couples were inherently problematic. By the logic of sexual inversion, which would emerge towards the end of the nineteenth century, the black heterosexual couple represented the pairing of a sexual invert and a person with homosexual tendencies. Black women – who were too masculine and showed signs of a penis – were eroticized by black men – who were lust driven towards anyone, including the "wrong" type of women – and this pairing resulted in a deviant couple. Therefore, the black heterosexual couple represented a perverse pairing. Drawing

on these racialized and classed notions of gender and sexuality, sexologists narrowly defined the proper gender-normative-heterosexual relationship in terms of the white middle class, whereby white female-bodied people are feminine and heterosexual, and white male-bodied people are masculine and heterosexual. Through the pathologized, degenerate figure of the homosexual, sexologists ensured the reproduction of a white, middle-class, gender-normative hetero social order.

## **2.2 The Homosexual**

Homosexuality is a relatively recent development in Western thought. According to Foucault and others, "homosexuality" only emerged as a possibility for identification (in both senses of the term) in Europe in the latter part of the nineteenth century (Valentine, *Imagining* 40). In the context of urbanization, changing forms of state organization, and the reshaping of kin and labor relations, same-sex erotic practices were de-linked from a broader set of non-normative non-procreative practices (broadly understood as "sodomy" and as sinful) and were reorganized into a form of pathological personhood that we call "homosexuality." In Foucault's often-quoted words, "The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species" (Valentine, *Imagining* 40). Homosexuality, however, was a complicated category that included trans women and gender-normative men who desire trans women, even chasers. The construction of the nineteenth century homosexual is the knowledge that shapes the figure of the modern day chaser.

In the Victorian era, gender and sexual expression were the product of the sexed body. Drawing on notions attached to race and class, the sexed body, male or female, determined one's expected gendered behavior as well as their intimate sexual relations (Chauncey 119). Under this logic, a person who was assigned male at birth was the sexually "active," penetrative partner, for

instance, which served as a paradigm for his complete gender and sexual role (Chauncey 119; Nye, *Sex Difference* 36- 39). In modern terminology, the "normal" male was the gender-normative hetero man who, because he was born with a penis, presented masculinely and "naturally" desired the "opposite" sex partner who, because they were born with a vagina, was passive and feminine (Nye, *Sex Difference* 36- 39). And, since sex, gender, and sexuality were always in unison, an individual who diverged from one diverged from all three; they were a sexual invert, the term used in most nineteenth-century literature (Chauncey 119).

According to sexologists, under the theory of sexual inversion, gender nonconformity served as a distinguishing sign of homosexuality and vice versa. As George Beard wrote in the 1880s, when "the sex is perverted, they hate the opposite sex and love their own; men become women and women men, in their tastes, conduct, character, feelings, and behavior. Richard von Krafft-Ebing explained that a person's thought, character, and behavior "correspond with the peculiar sexual instinct [i.e., "the sexual role in which they feel themselves to be"], but not with the sex which the individual represents anatomically and physiologically (Chauncey 119). In this way, then, transness and homosexuality continuously invoked each other. In terms of modern categories, transfeminine people and gender normative males who desire them, because of their deviation from the norms of sexuality, would have all been subsumed under the category of homosexuality.

In late nineteenth and early twentieth century, sexologists noted all visible physical and behavioral markers of non-normative gender expression, regardless of sexuality, as a sign of homosexuality, including those whose traits and characteristics most attributed to transfeminine people today (Valentine, *Imagining* 40-41).<sup>14</sup> Krafft-Ebing, for example, noted two primary

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<sup>14</sup> The argument being advanced here is not, in modern terminology, that gay men, trans women/transfeminine people, and transfeminine people's gender-normative partners are the same and not distinct. Instead, as the rest of

categories of homosexuality— acquired and congenital —and considered each to contain transgender elements to which he applied ornate Victorian labels such as “eviration,” “defemination,” “viraginity,” and “metamorphosis sexualis paranoica.” This later term represented the most extreme, and therefore, the most pathological, form of gender deviation in Krafft-Ebing’s conceptual framework. It described individuals ... who strongly identify themselves as proper members of the “opposite” sex, and who wish to physically alter the sex-signifying aspects of their bodies. Krafft-Ebing thought such individuals were profoundly disturbed and considered their desire for self-affirming transformation to be psychotic (Krafft-Ebing, *Transgender Studies* 21). Many other early sexologists would similarly interweave homosexuality and transgender expressions to varying degrees.

Karl Ulrichs, a nineteenth-century German lawyer, saw male Uranian, his term for same-sex desires, as having innate femininity (Valentine, *Imagining* 41). For Ulrichs and later sexologists, such as Hirschfeld, the body was evidence of a spiritual inversion in male Uranians, which manifested simultaneously in embodied gendered inversion and sexual and romantic desire for the same sex (Valentine, *Imagining* 41). "Ulrichs took it for granted that the male [Uranian] body also showed some feminine qualities; his successor, Magnus Hirschfeld, believed this more firmly" (Valentine, *Imagining* 41). Moreover, "for Ulrichs, the most important sign of gender inversion was sexual preference" (Valentine, *Imagining* 41).

Meanwhile, Havelock Ellis and Magnus Hirschfeld argued for homosexuality as an intermediate or third sex (Valentine, *Imagining* 41). While Hirschfeld distinguished between (primarily heterosexual) male transvestitism and male homosexuality, his commitment to the

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this project highlights, the difference between peoples, between populations included under homosexuality is a difference that is not ontological but epistemological. The separations of all people, of populations, rest on a development of particular knowledge.

third-sex model implicitly drew on the idea of certain femininity traveling with male homosexuality (Valentine. *Imagining* 41). In *Die Transvestiten*, Hirschfeld wrote: 'one can understand all too well that most of them [his male transvestite subjects] wish they had been born female, a wish that is certainly expressed in great measure by [male] homosexuals' (Valentine, *Imagining* 41). The linkage between femininity and homosexuality, therefore, allowed transness to invoke homosexuality and vice versa.

Simultaneously, if sexologists understood transfeminine people as homosexuals, gender normative males who desired or engaged in sexual activity with transfeminine people were also homosexuals. That is, the theory of sexual inversion posited that an individual couldn't change one aspect without affecting the others. gender normative males who desired transfeminine people and, thus, male-bodied persons led sexologists to categorize this population as homosexuals. These gender normative males who desire transfeminine people, however, cannot be easily accounted for due to the limitation of the gender and sexual binary. gender normative males who desired trans women were presumably masculine, which means that these men were not documented by a distinction trait, unlike transfeminine people under the category. Instead, one has to look at the distinction of the men documented by sexologists. Havelock Ellis arguably documents an early form of trans-attraction/chaserdom in his 1897 book *Sexual Inversion*.

In Ellis's book, a 26-year-old actor's preferred sexual partners are documented:

He especially admires youths (though they must not be immature) from 16 or 17 to about 25. The type which physically appeals to him most, and to which he appeals, is fair, smooth-skinned, gentle, rather girlish and effeminate, with the effeminacy of the ingénue not the cocotte. His favorite to attract him must be submissive and womanly; he

like to the man and the master. ...Padicatio [anal sex] is the satisfaction he prefers, provided he takes the active, never the passive role (Ellis, *Sexual Inversion* 56-57)

While ingénue may be a reference to youth of this man's partners, Ellis's description of this man's desired partners as girlish, effeminate, and womanly reinforces the notion that this man's male-bodied partners are exceptionally feminine. Ellis' description allows for a number of types of people to be read as this man's desired partner including feminine men, transvestites, without foreclosing the possibility that, in modern terms, this man's desired partners may be trans women. Ellis, therefore, captures an otherwise overlooked desire for femininity in a male-bodied person.

The inclusion of trans-attraction among homosexual is captured more clearly in a "Note on a Feature of Sexual Psychopathy," published in 1907 in the medical journal *The Alienist and Neurologist*. Dr. Hughes, who updated his report of 1893, wrote on the arrest of a group of black male transvestites and white male homosexuals in St. Louis:

Male negroes masquerading in woman's garb and carousing and dancing with white men is the latest St. Louis record of neurotic and psychopathic sexual perversion. Some of them drove to the levee dive and dance hall at which they were arrested in their masters' auto cars. All were gowned as women at the miscegenation dance and the negroes called each other feminine names....

The detectives say that the levee resort at which these black perverts were arrested, is a rendezvous for scores of west end butlers, cooks and chauffeurs. Apartments in the house are handsomely furnished and white men are met there. The names of these negro perverts, their feminine aliases and addresses appear in the press notices of their

arrest, but the names of the white degenderates consorting with them are not given (Katz, *Gay American* 48-49).

Though these descriptions are open for interpretation, the above passage illustrates an example of how the category of homosexual included gender-normative males who actively desired femininity in male-bodied people who also understood themselves as women. The artist in Ellis's account and the white men in Hughes's article offer examples of gender-normative males who desired male-bodied people whose behavior and/or cross-gender self-identification represented a type of trans embodiment. However, in the context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, where gender and sexuality emerged out of the sexed body, sexology could only account for gender normative males' desire for transfeminine people through homosexuality.

However, sexologists didn't limit their theory of sexual inversion/homosexuality to queer individual embodiments. Instead, the theory of sexual inversion/homosexuality informed the "normal" couple. In the occasional medical accounts of heterosexual relations of married inverts, for example, the regulation of sexual relations went beyond hetero coupling. Havelock Ellis, for example, thought that the man attracted to an inverted woman must be exceptionally effeminate, and he cited the case of one such man he knew who was "of slight physique, . . . with a thin voice, . . . considerate to others to a feminine degree, . . . and very domesticated in his manner of living - in short, the man who might easily have been attracted to his own" (Chauncey 121). Ellis' documentation of a man attracted to an "inverted women" marked as pathological the eroticization of gender nonconforming women. But more importantly since sexual inversion affected sex, gender, and sexuality, the eroticization of "inverted women" marks as perverse the eroticization of a woman with a penis. The pairing of gender-normative males with a gender-conforming woman, therefore, made the entire relationship perverse. Thus, the prohibition

against the eroticization of gender nonconformity is inherent to the emergence of the idea of sexuality in and of itself. The pair was gender and sexually nonconforming. And in this way, sexual inversion foreshadows some gender-normative-trans pairing as pathological.

By reinterrogating the pathological homosexual, it becomes possible to see that, far from merely demarcating same-sex desires as perverse, the category of homosexuality encompassed all who deviated from normally gendered heteronormativity. Operating through the unison of sex, gender, and sexuality, the theory of sexual inversion allowed homosexuality to serve as a catch-all category for all who deviated from gendered-hetero norms. As such, homosexuality included transfeminine people and gender normative males who desired transfeminine people were also included. Further, the pathological homosexual arranged heterosexual pairings as those that adhered to gender-normative hetero norms. Gender normative males had to be masculine in their social and sexual roles, and gender-normative women feminine in their prescribed roles. To reproduce this narrow nonpathological pairing, sexologists intervened in the male-bodied person – and, by extension, all of society – through the rhetoric of sexual fetishism.

In terms of modern figures, the pathological homosexual who encompassed all male-bodied people who deviated from, in current terminology, gender-normative hetero norms included the chaser. The chaser, like the homosexual, was a person to be corrected, brought back to his "natural" gender and sexual role. Instead of desiring femininity in a male-bodied person, psychiatrists had to redirect the chaser back towards gender-normative womanhood. To correct the chaser, as well as others, in the late 1800s, psychiatrists would classify homosexuality as a sexual fetishist.



### 2.3 Sexual Fetishism

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, homosexuality was constructed as a sexual fetish. During this time, sexual fetishism emerged amid shifting gender roles and as anxieties about depopulation and the overall being of the nation circulated throughout Europe (Nye, *Medical Origins* 15; Nye, *Sex Difference* 41). Attempting to address social anxieties, a principal speculation of the medical experts in this era was that the masculine "will" or "instinct" to reproduce had been somehow affected by the spread of degeneracy (Nye, *Medical Origins* 16). For psychiatrists and doctors of legal medicine, sexual reproduction was "superior" to evolutionary antecedent and more primitive forms of reproduction; sexual reproduction depended on a highly distinct sexual dimorphism, on highly aggressive reproductive behavior in the male, and on coyly passive behavior in the female (Nye, *Sex Difference* 38). As the "active" agent in reproduction, men's assumed sterility and impotence served as a symptom, in this system, of de-masculinization sliding towards femininity (Nye, *Sex Difference* 36- 39). Sexual fetishism emerged, therefore, as a medical discourse to restore gender normative males to their "natural" gender and sexual roles by emphasizing marital, genital focused, reproductive sexuality (Nye, *Medical Origins* 17). Gender-normative hetero marriage, early sexologists believed, was prophylaxis against sexual perversions that confronted adolescents, bachelors, old men, and sexual perverts (Nye, *Medical Origins* 19). Further, gender-normative hetero marriage secured the wellbeing of the nation and society as a whole. Thus, since homosexuality deviated from the gender and sexual norms of gender-normative manhood, homosexuals, including people understood as transfeminine and their gender normative male partners, were constructed as sexual fetishists.

Though not officially labeled a sexual fetish until the mid 1880s, the construction of same-sex desires as a pathology in psychiatric text had already begun in the 1870s with Carl Westphal's important article "Contrary Sexual Instinct" (Nye, *Sex Difference* 41). In 1882, the influential psychiatrists, Jean-Martin Charcot and Valentin Magnan published "Inversion of the Genital Sense" (Nye, *Sex Difference* 41). Here, Charcot and Magnan treated inversion as a weakening or "perversion" of the affective faculties, which produced a "strange order of ideas," giving rise to a genital appetite for the same sex (Nye, *Sex Difference* 41). In their account, inversion "was one of a host of other fetishistic attachments, such as obsession with nightcaps, aprons, or shoe nails," but, in the case of inversion, the fetish had fixed on a person of the same sex (Nye, *Sex Difference* 41). A few years later, in 1887, Alfred Binet's elaboration on fetishisms gave homosexuals and other fetishists their characteristic form as individuals too fixated on their "objects" of desire to find "true love" (Nye, *Sex Difference* 41).

Alfred Binet would cement the notion of same sex desire as a fetish. In his influential essay "*Fetishism in Love*." In "*Fetishism in Love*," Alfred Binet set up the conceptual framework of sexual fetishism in early sexology as, in terms of desires directed at other people, a pathology that reduced a person's sexual partner to a single trait (Nye, *Medical Origins* 22). However, for Binet and later sexologists, how an individual developed a sexual fetish was an effect of society. According to Binet, each generation becomes increasingly susceptible to the debilitating effects of an over-civilized environment, so that the condition steadily worsens (degenerate). The very appearance of these multiple obsessions is the consequence of the unique need "so frequent in our epoch, to augment the causes of excitation and pleasure. Both history and physiology teach us that these are the marks of enfeeblement and decadence. The individual does not look for strong excitations with such avidity but when his power of reaction is already in a weakened

state” (Nye, *Sex Difference* 42). In other words, a focus on sexual pleasure was a trait of the lower class and races. If a focus on sexual pleasure was a trait of any individual member of the white middle-class, it was because he was degenerating, sliding down the evolutionary scale, either due to genetic inheritance or a corrupt society.

Binet agreed with Charcot and Magnan that a "perverse predisposition" was the "characteristic fact" of fetishism, no matter what form it took, but he insisted that heredity itself could not explain the particular attachment each fetishist displayed. Binet would claim that the origins of an individual fetish harkened back to some accident in the victim's psychic past. As Charcot and Magnan had done, Binet treated inversion as a fetish, arguing that the only difference between an invert and a boot fetishist was a variation in life experience (Nye, *Medical Origins* 22).

Sexual fetishism, however, is complicated. The line between fetishistic and nonfetishistic desire was porous. In his influential article, Binet argued, “all love was to some extent fetishistic, for how else could we account for one observed between ugly and beautiful individuals? (Nye, *Sex Difference* 41-42). But, the pathological ones, however, were those that completely deviated from “natural,” which in the 1800s meant, in modern terms, heteronormative reproductive sex. A complete deviation from the “sexual instinct,” aka reproduction, were “true perversions” (Nye, *Sex Difference* 41-42).

Sexual fetishism, the pathological type, was in opposition to “true love” —coded language for “natural” sexuality aka reproduction— because it reduced their partner to a single trait. For Binet, "[t]rue love is a kind of symphony, an emotional 'polytheism,' which celebrates all the glories of the beloved, not an impoverished 'monotheism,' which focuses impotently on a single unworthy object" (Nye, *Medical Origins* 22). True love, for Binet, is the eroticization of

the entire person. "Normal love, he argues, always leads to the deification of the whole individual, a natural enough consideration given its aim in reproduction" (Nye, *Medical Origins* 22). Per sexology, "love" is a quality only compatible with "natural" sexuality. "Love" is already fixed to specific people (in this case, gender-normative-hetero people), who may engage in a number of sexual activities as long as those activities lead to a predetermined outcome (reproduction).

Although this will change by 1980, Binet's articulation of fetishism and subsequently "love" bring to the fore trans-attraction/chaserdom.<sup>15</sup> Per some trans activists arguments, gender normative males' explicit desire for trans women reduces them to their genitals. Deviating from a "natural" way to eroticize women, one aimed at gender, chaserdom/trans -attraction is outside of "true love." Chaserdom/trans-attraction are already predetermined to reduce trans women to their genitals, driven by lust/ sexual pleasure, and, therefore, a fetish. But also, given the fact that institutionalized norms of gender and sexuality are shaped by the white middle-class, Binet's articulation of fetishism helps explain why the term trans-attracted circulates unproblematic (or at least less problematically) among black trans women and their black gender normative male partners who transition and exist in lower-class contexts (See Breakfast Club's TSMadison's interview and/or Men Like Us Podcast by Chris Patterson ).<sup>16</sup> The privileges of gender or sexual conformity don't extend to the black lower-classes. The desire as inherently fetishistic becomes devoid of the social and material conditions that enable or restrict queer relationships. Instead, the language of fetishism individualizes a broader problem (transphobia) by centering the individual as THE problem. The individual has to be brought back to natural sexuality. After the

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<sup>15</sup> I highlight this shift in chapter three.

<sup>16</sup> The works cited do not elaborate on the terms. However, TSMadison, a black trans woman, and many men on the Men Like Us podcast, who are primarily black and brown, openly discuss their lower-class affiliations while utilizing the term trans-attracted.

individual is “corrected,” trans women and by extension society will be safer.<sup>17</sup>

Chaserdom/trans-attraction as a fetish is already predetermined by the institutionalized norms of sexuality. In the late 1800s, chaserdom/trans-attraction characteristic reduction to merely pleasure would be articulated through the figure of the pathologized white middle-class figure of the homosexual as this logic traveled into the 1900s.

Binet’s articulation of homosexuality as a fetish would be amplified by other medical commentators. Sexologists would categorize homosexuality as a fetish in nearly all the books written on perversions in this era and afterwards (Nye, *Medical Origins* 22). Krafft-Ebing, who universalized fetish as a biological element of sexuality by claiming some fetishism were “physiological,” would similarly position homosexual a fetish, outside of “natural” sexuality and “love.” Physiological fetishisms are built into the body structure as an inherited system of sexual attraction—a biological eroticism that operated to enable “sexual love, the real purpose of the instinct,” so that “the propagation of the species, doesn’t enter the consciousness” (Krafft-Ebing 9; Logan 120). This type of fetishism, “sexual love,” was thus geared towards reproduction: “One of the refinements of evolution is the fact love 'can only exist between persons of different sex capable of sexual intercourse' ...' The germ of sexual love is probably to be found in the individual charm (fetish) with which persons of opposite sex sway each other" (Logan 120). On the other hand, pathological sexual fetishism, such as homosexuality, reduced their partners to merely their bodies. Homosexuality as a sexual fetish is, therefore, exclusively focused on the

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<sup>17</sup> The point here is not to dismiss transfeminine people’s personal experiences with sexual violence. But instead, the point is to call into question the completed foreclosure of specific sexual desires for trans people. As trans scholar Avery Tompkins points out, the foreclosure of transness as erotic, in and of itself, erases people, bodies, and identities (Tompkins 771-773). Tompkins’ point brings back the question, who does this logic serve? The answer being very few. Thus, one should, as sex-radical feminists like Gayle Rubin have argued, focus on harm, consent, and violence (which are not uncomplicated in themselves) without a continuation of the fetishistic gaze, especially among the oppressed (Rubin 152)

genitals of their partners for sexual pleasure and is divorced from heteroromantic bonding (Krafft-Ebing 20). Binet's construction of same-sex desires which included chaserdom/trans-attraction would continue to travel into the twentieth century.

Around the turn of the century, Freud would similarly frame homosexuality and, thus, chaserdom/trans-attraction as a fetish as he framed perversions as a part of the individual's psychodevelopment during childhood. Freud argued that fetishisms are commonplace: while the normal aim is theoretically restricted to "union of the actual genitals," only in "the rarest of instances" is interest confined to the genitals alone (Logan 126). The "psychical valuation that is set on the sexual object" can extend to the lips and even the whole body, for example. For Freud, love, "as the expression of the whole sexual current of feeling," becomes fixed to a sexual object...which satisfies the needs of sublimated sexual instincts" (Freud, *Instincts* 133-134, 137). "Love" required the pairing of the "masculine" and "feminine" (Freud, *Instincts* 133). "It helps to turn activities connected with other parts of the body into sexual aims" (Logan 126-127). "Love," yet again, would be coded language for "natural" sexuality, which at this point was still constructed as reproductive sexual intercourse. Inherently, then, sexual activities that were not or could not lead to reproduction were, outside of "love." All people categorized under homosexuality would continue to be understood as pathological fetishists fixated on a single body part.

Fetishism becomes "pathological . . . when the fetish becomes detached from a particular individual and becomes the sole sexual object." In the normal version of fetishism, the object is a synecdoche for the whole person and assists in accomplishing the normal aim. In the pathological version, however, the object loses its connection to the whole person and becomes meaningful in itself; divorced from representation, it transubstantiates, taking on an apparently

intrinsic erotic quality” (Logan 127). Thus, deviating from reproductive sexuality, homosexuality<sup>18</sup> was a fixation; "owing to the erotogenic importance of their genitals, [homosexuals] cannot do without a similar feature in their sexual object...they have remained fixated..." (Flanders et al. 940). The homosexuals required the genitals of the same sex in his object and is thus precluded from the object choice understood as necessary for the aims of reproduction (Flanders et al., 940-945). The homosexual was, therefore, outside of “love,” which is a “kind of special component instinct of sexuality” (Freud, *Instincts* 133). From the late 1800s and into the early 1900s century, the logics that govern homosexuality and, therefore, chaserdom/trans-attraction was already constructed, institutionalized, and part of a larger structure for reinforcing the “natural” boundaries of sexuality prior to the onset of trans activism in the 1990s (Valentine, *Imagining* 33).

Thus, sexual fetishism was a political discourse. From its inception, sexual fetishism aimed to restore gender normative males to their “natural” gender and sexual roles. By constructing homosexuality as a sexual fetish by which same-sex desiring people reduce their partners to their genitals, sexologists reinforced the “healthy,” non-pathological man as the gender-normative man who presents masculinity and desires gender-normative women. Further, since inversion spoke to the entirety of the individual by which the healthy man desired his “opposite” – i.e, a feminine woman with a vagina – sexual fetishism served as a means to shore up traditional gender and sexual relations across society. The couple pairing in line with gender normative, heterogenital norms, which would inform gender-normative hetero norms, was capable of “true

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<sup>18</sup> Freud appears to have been undecided whether or not homosexuality was pathological, expressing different views on this issue at different times and places in his work. In his famous 1935 letter to a woman concerned about her son’s sexuality, Freud wrote: Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation; it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of the sexual function, produced by a certain arrest of sexual development (Lewes 58)

love.” The prohibition against the eroticization of women with penises was thus already embedded in the historical emergence of homosexuality as a sexual fetish, foreshadowing the modern-day chaser. Sexual fetishism is, therefore, a discourse that reproduces gender-normative hetero-genital normative relations (Nye, *Medical Origins* 22).<sup>19</sup>

## 2.4 Conclusion

As the above sections indicate, the chaser is historically and socially embedded in histories of race and class as well as intrinsically tied to sexological perceptions of the homosexual. For example, in the nineteenth century, sexologists pointed to the black body as evidence of black people as inherently gender and sexually nonconforming. Arguing that the black female body was less evolved, sexologists constructed the black female body as displaying signs of being inherently masculine with loose sexual morals. By way of evidence of a penis, sexologists would point to the black female and invoke transness. At the same time, the black male, by evidence of his large penis, was constructed as being prone to a roving lust that drove him to eroticize any and everyone. Together the hetero pairing of black males and females informed the prohibition against gender-normative-trans relationships as well as the “normal” conduct of the white middle class. Through the figure of the pathological homosexual, psychiatrists reinforced the eroticization of a woman with a penis as a perverse desire attributed to blackness and the lower classes.

Moreover, the historical construction of homosexuality served to ensure white, middle-class, gender normative, heterogenital norms. Any individuals who deviated from the white middle-class norms of gender and sexuality were included under this category. As such, people

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<sup>19</sup> Heterosexuality, too, was a perversion, driven by a lust for the “opposite sex.” Heterosexuality wouldn't become normalized until the 1930s as a means to prevent people, primarily men, from becoming homosexuals (Katz, *The Invention* 67- 74).



who are understood as trans feminine today as well as their gender normative male partners would have been included and understood as homosexuals. To restore males to their “natural” gender and sexual roles, the homosexual would emerge as a sexual fetishist due to a perception that homosexuals reduced their partners to their genitals, were driven by lust, and were incapable of “true love.” To adhere to the norms of manhood, sexologists would reinforce love and gender/hetero marriage as the norms. In doing so, sexologists reinforced traditional gender and sexual roles.

The chaser, thus, finds his epistemological roots in the figure of the pathological homosexual. As part of a project to construct the "healthy" person, psychiatrists included within the vast category of homosexual, gender normative males who desired femininity in male-bodied people. In doing so, psychiatrists made the chaser, along with transfeminine people, gay men, and others, knowable through their fetishist desire for a same-sex person. According to psychiatrists, the chaser deviated from his "natural" gender and the sexual role attributed to his sex. Instead of desiring gender-normative women, the chaser, via the pathological homosexual, was fixated on sexual pleasure; the drive for sexual pleasure led him to reduce his partners to their genitals; and, finally, driven by his "unnatural" desire, he eschewed romantic relationships. Psychiatrists believed they had to redirect the chaser toward desiring gender-normative women. These ideas about the fetishistic homosexual in the late 1800s traveled into the 1900s; however, this designation came to adhere to fewer and fewer people, as individuals once included under homosexuality were parsed out and reincorporated into normative society.

### 3 CHAPTER TWO: THE SEPARATION OF SEX FROM GENDER AND SEXUALITY: SEXOLOGICAL PRODUCTION OF NEW “NORMAL” PEOPLE AND DESIRES

According to some trans activists and their allies, trans-specific sexual labels are inherently problematic in that these labels fail to adequately recognize trans women’s gender identification as women. Princess Harmony, a writer and trans woman states, "even the phrase itself— 'trans-attracted'— demonstrates how this fetish is inherently transmisogynistic. If those who identify with this label saw trans women as real women, they wouldn't need a word to differentiate us from other women in order to explain their attraction to us" (McClellan xxvii). Furthermore, by differentiating trans women from gender-normative women, per the dominant strand of trans-politics today, trans-specific sexual labels risk reinscribing transphobia; she is "really a man." Or she is “something in between man and woman” (Bettcher, *Intimacy* 63-64, 66). Talia Mae Bettcher, a trans woman and philosopher, states, “in this type of eroticism, a trans woman becomes something that cannot exist in reality and has no substance as a person” (Bettcher, *Intimacy* 63-64, 66). Trans-specific sexual labels, opponents argue, differentiates trans women from gender-normative women, a division that relies on assumed genitalia among other things, and, in doing so, dehumanizes trans women (Bettcher, *Intimacy* 63-64, 66). Trans women become mere sexual fantasies, sexual objects, *fetish*.

Instead of trans-specific sexual labels, opponents argue for the seamless inclusion into the bi-gender system, which extends to sexuality. That is, through the separation of gender from sex, transgender women should be governed by the logic of normative gender, which extends to the hetero/homo binary of sexuality. As a result, gender normative males who desire transgender women fall within contemporary constructions of heterosexual/homosexual or

gynephile/androphile binaries (drawn to femininity or masculinity) (Bettcher, *Intimacy* 65-67). Thus, unlike the model of sexuality defined by the sexed body wherein a desire for a same-sex partner, regardless of gender identity, necessitated a categorization of homosexual, the model advanced and reinforced by trans activists constructs sexuality as traveling through gender. The gender-normative man who desires trans women should, therefore, find articulation through normative sexual categories of either heterosexuality or bisexuality.

In recent years, the fortification of the binary gender and sex categories has enabled the emergence of a conversation referred to here as "happens to be trans." The rhetoric of "happens to be trans" posits that trans subjectivities should not factor into an individual's desirability (Tompkins 771). Instead of the explicit eroticization of transness, the rhetoric of "happens to be trans" operates to make transness, the body, incidental (Tompkins 771). "Happens to be trans," thus, operates by erasing the eroticism of transness (Tompkins 771). As such, "happens to be trans" relies on the idea that the desire for trans people should always and universally adhere to traditional gendered norms which allow trans people to be included in the hetero/homo binary. Ultimately, the binary rhetoric of "happens to be trans" or sexual fetishism operates to limit the number of trans partners a gender-normative person engages with sexually and/or romantically. It also helps to ensure that trans people are included in a broader desire for people of the same gender identity so as to avoid being labeled as fetishists, aka tranny chasers (Tompkins 767-773).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Of course, "happens to be trans" can and should not be separated from many trans people's desire to be included within and recognized by their gender identity. Pfeffer captures how complicated it is for some gender-normative people, especially those who already have a queer identity to articulate a sense of self without erasing themselves or their trans partner this in their work *Queering Families* (Pfeffer 35-82) In a transphobic society, one which refuses transness, the rhetoric of "happens to be trans" is a double bind in that it is a refusal to be othered. But, as Tompkins and this project will point out, the universalizing of this sexual ethic comes at the cost of recognition of other trans people or people who are understood as gender nonconforming.

However, the framework of "happens to be trans" is reflective of the way a gender/sexual normative sexual ethic for transsexual women was constructed decades ago as part of the science on transsexualism. Towards the end of the 1960s and 1970s, gender researchers, who utilized the science of transsexualism to reassert traditional gender roles, also constructed how transsexual women should be desired (Meyerowitz 125). The construction of a normative way to desire transsexual women drew on the distinction of gender from the sexed body, which had begun earlier in the century but was officially cemented in the 1950s by John Money (Repo 233). The cementation of gender as distinct from the sexed body meant that some transfeminine people — transvestic homosexuals, effeminate men, and other gender -nonconforming male-bodied people— could transition to women, per medical officials' authority. However, in order to separate transsexual women from other sexual deviants and to secure traditional gender roles, medical officials emphasized that transsexual women adhere to gender-normative hetero gender roles. Scientific knowledge constructed the normative transsexual women by separating her from her sexed body. That is, since gender was still tethered to sexuality which itself was still tethered to the sexed body, how transsexuals related to their body had to be divided. According to medical officials, the "true" transsexual wanted to "escape" association with their genitals. In normalizing this logic, officials constructed a gender conforming adult who, in line with gender stereotypes, was a "passive," feminine partner.

The division from the body was also extended to transsexual women's gender normative male partners. With gender normative males' attraction to transsexual women traveling exclusively through gender, gender normative males engaged in sexual and/or romantic relationships with transsexual women could be recategorized. Unlike older taxonomies of sexuality, where engaging in sexual activity in and of itself allowed officials to categorize these

men as homosexuals, a sexual attraction that traveled through gender allowed medical officials to reinscribe these men as heterosexual. Traveling through the norms of gender, gender normative males who were unaware of their partner's transness upon meeting and who didn't eroticize the genitals of their partners were in line with the gender-normative hetero norms of the white middle-class. Therefore, officials determined that these couples could be incorporated into a more expansive definition of heterosexual. Under the gender model of sexuality, gender-normative males' partners "happened to be trans." The now gender and sexually conforming gender-normative-trans couple would thus no longer be considered paraphiliac homosexuals, who reduced their partners to their genitals. Instead, in the mid-twentieth century, these gender-normative males and trans women would become "normal," healthy individuals. But the widening of the boundaries would require policing which would still be informed by homosexuality.

In a period where homosexuality was still categorized as a psychological diagnosis, transsexual women who forewent surgical intervention on their genitals and gender normative males' explicit eroticization of transsexual women continued to be racialized. Per the medical lens, these transsexual women had to "pass," to uphold white middle-class gender stereotypes, live quietly as heterosexuals, and get married (Meyerowitz 225; See Skidmore). Subsequently, to "pass, live as heterosexuals, and get married," medical officials had to ensure that gender normative males' sexual attraction to these women traveled exclusively through gender. These gender normative males also had to be shown to have benefited from their relationships with transsexual women as to ensure they were not only sexually conforming but upholding white middle class ideals of masculinity. For the men and transsexual women who didn't uphold white

middle-class norms, they represented a risk that was demonstrated by black lower-class communities.

Throughout the 1960s, the black inner-city communities, which according to the Moynihan Report, were overrun by loose sexual morality, crime, unemployment, and other social ills, was a deviation from white middle-class gender and sexual norm – aka, the “natural order” (Geary). Black inner-city communities were the sites where masculine women and effeminate men were widespread; the site where women with penises and gender normative males’ eroticization of them was unproblematic. Thus, to ensure a white gender normative hetero middle-class social order, transsexual women who were engaging with medical institutions would have to adhere to the norms of gender and sexuality. A “healthy way to desire transsexual women would be inform by anti-blackness and classism which historical informed the racialized classed same-sex, cross-gender desire by deemphasizing the sexed body. The pathological homosexual, who reduced their partners to their genitals, who eroticized and was gender nonconforming, who prioritized sexual gratification over loving, monogamous relationships, and who deviated from the norms of the white middle class was redeployed to ensure compliance among a new group of heterosexuals. Therefore, in the 1970s, the first inclinations of the chaser started to emerge and form a binary with the rhetoric of "happens to be trans." This binary which took up opposing ideas of trans attraction – as either gender and sexually conforming or a sexual fetish – therefore began to appear as part of the science of transsexualism.

### **3.1 Separating Gender and Sexuality from Sex**

Throughout the 1900s, as scientific knowledge began to elaborate on the differences between sex, gender, and sexuality, the category of “homosexual fetishist” began to narrow. In 1900 medical officials began to specify and narrow the definition of sexuality, and to

distinguish and classify sexual deviation in ever more discrete categories. While early investigators had maintained that male sexual inversion involved transvestitism, effeminacy, and other un-masculine characteristics, as well as sexual desire for men instead of women, Havelock Ellis and other writers tried to redefine male sexual inversion in narrowly sexual terms (Chauncey 122).

Ellis emphatically distinguished homosexuality from transvestitism and other forms of gender inversion (initially called *sexo-aesthetic inversion*, and later *Eonism*), which he claimed were often practiced by heterosexuals (Chauncey 122). Similarly, in *Die Transvestiten*, Hirschfeld would argue that transgenderism is a complex phenomenon that cannot be reduced to homosexuality, fetishism, or some form of psychopathology (Hirschfeld, *Transgender Studies* 29). In distinguishing between homosexuality and transfeminine embodiments, Hirschfeld states, “homosexuality, as its root word—*homos*, or ‘same’—indicates, is the direction of the sex drive toward persons of the same sex... effemination and masculation step before us as distinct phenomena, which certainly often, but not always, appear related” (Hirschfeld, *Transgender Studies* 29). Hirschfeld would ultimately state: “One has to extend the sentence: ‘not all homosexuals are effeminate’ to include ‘and not all effeminate men are homosexual’” (Ellis, *Transgender Studies* 29). Hirschfeld, like Ellis, would claim that transvestitism was primarily a practice of heterosexuals, in that they were people assigned male at birth who desired people assigned female at birth (Hill 320). Inversely, then, a transfeminine person who desired other people assigned male at birth was both a transvestite and a homosexual.

Sigmund Freud, too, clarified this distinction by introducing the concepts of sexual object and aim in the first of his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* in 1905. Sexual aim, in Freud's view, referred to a preferred mode of sexual behavior, such as genital or oral sex, or

active roles (Chauncey 122). Sexual object referred to the object of sexual desire. Freud classified children, animals, and persons of the same sex as "deviations in respect of the sexual object" (Chauncey 122-123). Freud maintained that although the "secondary and tertiary characteristics" of one sex often appeared in the other, which he attributed to a kind of hermaphroditism, there was no correlation between their appearance and homosexual desire in the case of men (Chauncey 122-123). "The most complete mental masculinity," he observed, "can be combined with [male] inversion." For many subsequent theorists, then, a man's sexual object choice, rather than his actual role in intimate sexual relations, was the primary determinant in the classification of his sexuality, and they no longer saw his sexual role as paradigmatic of his social role (Chauncey 122-123).<sup>21</sup> Doctors postulated that he could be the passive partner to another man's sexual advances without necessarily being passive and effeminate in his social role, while creating the new category of heterosexual men whose deviance was embodied in their effeminacy (Chauncey 122-123). Put another way, a man could be a bottom and, therefore, passive during sex but still present in accordance with the norms of masculinity. Conversely, a heterosexual man may not be masculine at all besides the fact he is attracted to women.

By distinguishing between the experiences of people who visibly transgressed conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity and their sexual partners, sexologists would create a distinction. Drawing on clothing, occupation, or mannerism (gender) and those who, despite being content to be social men and women in concordance with their birth ascription, who were erotically drawn to people of the same gender embodiment (sexuality),

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<sup>21</sup> The full scope of Freud's ideas and theories is beyond the scope of this research. But, an individual's sense of, in modern terms, gender and sexuality begin with the recognition of one's sexed body. Freud's Oedipus complex posits that a male child's fear of castration may impact the child's psychosexual development so that the child identifies with their mother and desires their father. The male child's association with their mother may lead them to become "inverts" (Freud, *Sexual* 45-87; Logan 128-129).



early sexologists were able to parse out transvestitism and homosexuality (Valentine, *Imagining* 57). Sexologists' texts like Hirschfeld, Ellis, and others, made the distinction between homosexuality and transvestitism and, therefore, a distinction between sexuality and gender, but these sexologists had yet to fully separate the categories (Valentine, *Imagining* 57). Later, this distinction would become more clearly defined; however, racialized notions of gender and sexuality remained.

Even as medical models of sexuality had begun to shift and incorporate a notion of homosexuality based on who a person desired (sexual object choice) rather than inversion in the early twentieth century, same-sex desires were still racialized. In 1913, for example, Margaret Otis, whose analysis of "A Perversion Not Commonly Noted" appeared in a medical journal in 1913, noted that in all-girl institutions, including reform schools and boarding schools, she had observed widespread "love-making between the white and colored girls" (Somerville 34). Performing her ostensible duty to science, Otis carefully described these rituals of interracial romance and the girls' "peculiar moral code." In particular, she noted that the girls incorporated racial difference into courtship rituals self-consciously patterned on traditional gender roles: "One white girl ... admitted that the colored girl she loved seemed the man, and thought it was so in the case of the others" (Somerville. 34). According to Otis, "The difference in color, in this case, takes the place of difference in sex" (Somerville 34). Otis, thus, makes the point that "white" and "colored" girls are differently gendered, even in the space of a supposedly single-sex institution. In noting these girls as differently gendered, however, Otis reaffirms the black female body as masculine and, therefore, inherently gender nonconforming.

Likewise, black male bodied people were reaffirmed as inherently queer. Taking up the discourse of sexual pathology, black males were, understood as inherently choosing inappropriate sexual partners. As X writes:

In 1903, for instance, a southern physician drew on the language of sexology to legitimate a particularly racist fear: 'A perversion from which most races are exempt, prompts the negro's inclinations towards the white woman, whereas other races incline toward the females of their own.' Using the medical language of perversion to naturalize and legitimate the dominant cultural myth of the black rapist, this account characterized interracial desire as a type of congenital abnormal sexual object choice (Somerville 37). In the writer's terms, the desire of African American men for white women could be understood and pathologized by drawing on emergent models of sexual orientation (Somerville 37). By the racial norm of the early twentieth century, black male bodied people deviated from normative hetero masculinity by desiring the wrong type of women (i.e, the wrong "sexual object"). Thus, the black heterosexual pairing, a lust driven gender-normative man who desires "masculine" women, would continue to invoke the perversity of an explicit eroticization of a particular type of trans embodiments. Thus, even as the category of homosexuality was beginning to shift with the distinction between gender and sexuality in the early 1900s, black people still represented gender and sexuality nonconformity. Anti-blackness would, therefore, continue to inform the sexual and gender norms of the "healthy," "normal" white individual. Even as the category of homosexuality shifts, via a slight distinction between sexuality and gender, racial and class would continue to inform both.

The slight distinction between sexuality and gender that was beginning to emerge began to parse out distinct populations once included under homosexuality. The distinction between

gender and sexuality meant the homosexual population would be diversified. By dividing gender and sexuality, the homosexual population could be parsed into feminine homosexuals, which would have included trans feminine people, and masculine homosexuals, including gender-normative males who desired transfeminine people; the former, transfeminine people, who were still inverts, being more problematic than the latter who was subject to homosexual tendencies and may only be “passive” or gender nonconforming in terms of their sexuality (Chauncey 126). As a result, transfeminine people and their gender normative male partners would begin to chart diverging but intertwined trajectories. Transfeminine people who desired gender normative males would be subject to the medical gaze which operated on gender. Meanwhile, transfeminine people’s gender normative male partners would be operated on through the medical lens of sexuality. Though sexologists were beginning to make a distinction between types of “homosexuals,” what we now understand as "gender," "sex," and "sexuality" were complexly interwoven for these writers; homosexuality and transvestitism were still understood to be properties of the sexed body itself (Valentine, *Imagining* 57). Therefore, the line of demarcation between gender-normative homosexual men, feminine homosexual men, and all types of transfeminine people was blurry. But, in the early 1900s, the sex binary was being undermined as science of sex itself had become problematic: with five categories of biological sex, establishing a person’s sex was increasingly difficult and undermined the scientific impetus of traditional notions of gender and sexuality (Repo 240). In order to reinforce the sex and, therefore, gender and sexual binary, the sociological/psychological concept of gender would emerge to ensure the individual’s adherence to traditional norms while also enabling sexologists to make clearer distinctions between homosexuals and transfeminine populations (Repo 235-240).

In the 1950s, the concept of gender emerged from the work of John Money, a psychologist and sexologist (Repo 229-235).<sup>22</sup> Although earlier sexologists had begun to separate behaviors, mannerism, and so on from sexuality, they had lacked the language to make explicit distinctions (Valentine, *Imagining* 57). Therefore, Money's full elaboration of the concept of gender was essential to its becoming separate from the sexed body (Repo 229-235). Gender shifted an individual's relationship with themselves and others, and subsequently, shifted the distinction between transfeminine people and their gender normative male partners. In the wake of Christine Jorgensen, the most notable transsexual woman in 1953, researchers utilized Money's theory of gender to look for stable and embodied diagnostics for homosexuality to differentiate it from transsexuality (Meyerowitz 125; Valentine, *Imagining* 41-43). The sexual invert came under an intensifying medical gaze as researchers attempted to address femininity in people assigned male at birth (Bryant, *Gender Identity* 25). The theory of gender narrowed who was included under the category of fetishistic homosexual – a category of peoples who reduced their same-sex partners to their genitals – by reinscribing some people as “normal.” As a result, the iteration of the chaser began to emerge as a distinct type of personhood.

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<sup>22</sup> The research presented here is not, nor is it intended to be, an endorsement of John Money's work. Instead, I want to broaden the criticism already advanced by researchers like Mary Anne Case. Case stated Money made “fraudulently deceptive claims about the malleability of gender in certain patients who had involuntarily undergone sex reassignment surgery” and that this fueled the anti-gender movement (Case). However, the criticisms of John Money (and other prominent researchers on the science of transsexualism) have to go beyond that to say that not only were they fraudulent but racist and classist. Money's work build's on the racist and classist ideologies of sexology, which always positions black people as sexually and gender non-conforming. Money's racist and classed assumptions are so institutionalized that they not only gave birth but continued circulation to the modern figure known today as the “tranny chaser,” an idea that I argue here is one rooted in race and class. But, in saying that, I also advance a criticism already made by trans feminists of color who argue that much of mainstream transgender politics centers on a white-middle-class paradigm (Koyama). It is, therefore, important to wrestle with how our understanding of not only gender but also sexuality are problematic in and of themselves.

### 3.2 Gender and Transsexuals

In the mid-twentieth century, the separation of gender from sex enabled the transsexual to emerge as a modern subjectivity and the chaser, though still housed under homosexuality, also began to emerge. John Money's theory of gender marked a turn to a more behaviorist understanding of what he termed, gender (Repo 233). Whereas before Money gender and sexuality had been a product of the sexed body and, thus, were always operating together, Money argued that gender identity and behavior differentiation were not innate biological occurrences. Rather, he argued, gender was an active postnatal process initiated through the stimulus of interaction with a behavioral environment that could override the influence of the psychological variables of sex (Repo 233). More precisely, since gender and sexuality didn't emerge out of the sexed body but, instead, children learned them, gender explained how a person's sense of self as male or female could contradict the signs of sex in the physical body (Repo 233). Under the theory of gender, an individual could be permanently socialized into the "wrong" gender, at which point changing the body to correlate with the person's gender identity was easier than attempting to intervene in their mind (Repo 232-236). The endocrinologist Harry Benjamin, for example, argued that transsexualism had an as yet undetermined somatic basis; therefore, changing the body to suit the mind was the proper intervention and the most humane way of alleviating patient pain<sup>23</sup> (Bryant, *Gender Identity* 26). These perspectives allowed some individuals with cross-gender identities to medically transition. In the 1960s, the transsexual whom sexologists had previously described through homosexuality as "metamorphosis sexualis paranoica—" a person who strongly identifies themselves as proper members of the "opposite"

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<sup>23</sup> It is not the case that transness was invented by science. Per the last examples of chapter one, people who identified and lived as a gender other than the one they were assigned already existed. Instead, the shift in scientific knowledge enabled transsexual people to become distinct and legible to modern institutions.

sex and who wishes to physically alter the sex-signifying aspects of their bodies – in Krafft-Ebing's work and as a transvestite in Hirschfeld's work was removed from the category of sexual deviants (Meyerowitz 169).

The parsing out of transsexuals from transvestites and homosexuals via the concept of gender was a complex process, though. In the 1960s, researchers desexualized transsexuality in medical taxonomies by separating it from transvestic fetishism and homosexual desire, a separation of gender and sexual variations. The doctors who endorsed surgery repeated the distinctions they drew: "Transsexuals had an overwhelming sense of cross-gender identification, transvestites cross-dressed, and homosexuals desired same-sex sexual partners (Meyerowitz 169, 173-174). However, the parsing out of transsexuals from homosexuals and transvestites through the scientific knowledge of gender went further. More precisely, for these researchers, who were attempting to reassert traditional gender roles through the science of transsexuality and the concept of gender, the presurgical bodies of transsexual women had to be made secondary in order to produce gender and sexually conforming people (Meyerowitz 125). Operating through the concept of gender, the science of transsexualism thus institutionalized a division between the cross-gender identifying person and their sexed body – i.e., the division between sex and gender/sexuality.

According to scientific knowledge, transsexuals who became knowable through the concept of gender had to be separated from their sex in order to be "normal." In terms of the sexed body, transsexuals were constructed as always and only having an antagonist relationship with their sexed body. The "true" transsexual, Harry Benjamin stated in *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, "despises [her] male sex organs"... is in "danger of suicide or self-mutilation, if too long frustrated." The "true" transsexual "may live and work as a woman" but "dressing gives

insufficient relief.” The “true” transsexual’s “gender discomfort [is] intense” (Benjamin 12-19). The “true” self was the transsexual person’s gender identity, which in totalizing fashion, necessitated the separation of the sexed body. The results of this narrative were to compartmentalize the transsexual individual, to structure the transsexuals relationships to themselves, and to make parts of the body off-limits, in order to be legible to a normalizing medical gaze.

Further, the construction of transsexuals’ relationship with themselves extended to sexuality, which itself was still tied to the body. That is, while sex was separated from gender, gender was still tethered to sexuality, which presumed that one’s sexual desires/activities correlated with one’s gender identity. Following this logic, the individual consistently more aroused by being penetrated than by penetrating was “feminine.” In contrast, sexual behavior that was initiatory, genitally focused, visually driven, and largely independent of concerns for love and intimacy was “masculine” (Sullivan, *Reorienting* 138). The normative logics of gender reaffirmed male-bodied people who actively eroticized other male-bodied people, such as homosexuals and transvestites, for example, as gender nonconforming as their gendered behavior/ desires were incongruent with their physiology (Sullivan, *Reorienting* 138). Conversely, then, for transsexual women, their legibility as women had to conform to the norms of normative womanhood; transsexual women’s gender/sexuality had to be directed towards a gender normative male partner, they had to embody characteristics such as being sentimental and romantic, and, most importantly, they had to have a desire to be the passive, penetrated partner during sex (Sullivan, *Reorienting* 138-141). Thus, throughout the 1960s, a few doctors portrayed transsexualism as “an escape from genital sexuality” (Meyerowitz 173-174). Gender researchers at the time would state, “for genuine MTF transsexuals, any preoperative homosexual longings

were “secondary,” a by-product “of the well-established primary gender role inversion” (Meyerowitz 174). Through the institutionalization of this logic, the “real,” “respectable” transsexual woman is one who is in line with the gender and sexual norms of womanhood. It is through this adherence, transsexual women become eligible as women to medical institutions and the state. Therefore, transsexuals should not engage with or allow for the eroticization of their male genitals by their male partners.

From the late 1960s, the normative transsexual was produced and reinforced through the application of gender, which deemphasized the body. “By textual authority, [male-bodied people] who lived as women and who identified themselves as transsexuals, as opposed to male transvestites for whom erotic penile sensation was permissible, could not experience a penile pleasure” (Stone 11). Any indication of interest in deriving erotic satisfaction from their male genitals, which was supposed to be abhorrent to transsexuals under the medical model, required transsexual women to be classified as a transvestite or homosexual (Valentine *Imagining* 58). Gender, still informed by sexuality, which itself was still informed by the body, would shape transsexual women’s relationship with their bodies as well as with institutions and others to produce gender-conforming people.

Following being removed from the category of fetishistic homosexuals transsexuals came to be regarded as gender variant people. However, because some transfeminine people were now viewed as women and heterosexual, how medical officials should categorize their gender normative male partners had to be addressed. Instead of older models of sexuality, which presumed that all desires and sexual activity between members of the same sex were homosexuals, sexologists needed a newer model to account for the concept of gender. Sexologists’ parsing out of transsexual women’s gender-normative male partners further ensured



that desire traveled through gender and not the body. Foreshadowing transgender politics, a “normal,” “healthy” desire would have to be aimed at gender as to be in line with the norms of sexuality.

### 3.3 The Question

The question of how to categorize gender normative males in relationships with transsexual women first appeared in the late 1960s. In his 1966 *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, Harry Benjamin states,

the 'husband' in such a union offers an interesting psychological study. Are there actual or latent homosexual inclinations in him so that he can be attracted to a transsexual man? [sic] Naturally, the attraction is to the "woman" in this man, but could a completely normal, heterosexual man be able to forget the presence of male sex organs, or, if an operation has been performed, even their former existence? (Benjamin 32)

In his question, Benjamin invokes the historical construction of same-sex desires, whereby the bodies involved define sexuality. If these gender normative male partners eroticized the “male sex organs,” in a medical and sexological framework, these gender normative male partners were homosexual. Ultimately, despite raising this question, Benjamin left it unresolved.

Benjamin’s unanswered question led John Money and John G. Brennan to pick up the conversation in their own research in 1970. In “Heterosexual vs. Homosexual Attitudes: Male Partners’ Perception of the Feminine Image of Male Transsexuals,” their study set out to determine the gender and sexuality of gender normative males in relationships with transsexual women. They ask,

If prior to surgical sex reassignment and while he still has a penis, a male transsexual has an erotic relationship with a man, then it is a case of two people with a

penis having sex together. Though it is true that some genetic females are born with a normal penis (and, vice versa, some genetic males with a normal vulva), common sense defines a male homosexual relationship as that of two people with a penis having sex together. The criterion is behavioral and etymologically literal, according to the evidence of common sense, which does not define as homosexual a relationship in which a sex-reassigned male transsexual with a vagina is having sex with an anatomically normal male partner with a penis. Such a relationship is, again by the canon of common sense, heterosexual. Nonetheless, one wonders about the partner with the penis in such a relationship, and wants to know whether he has perhaps some degree of a so-called homosexual personality. Or is he an erotically typical male, not a paraphiliac, who has responded sexually to the evidence of his senses, especially the evidence of his eyes? (Money and Brennan 193).

Money and Brennan's study aimed to identify, as the title indicates, whether these men were heterosexuals or paraphiliac homosexuals (fetishists). Nikki Sullivan suggests that Money and Brennan's study is driven "by a need to confirm to both themselves and others, that SRS [sexual reassignment surgery] will not produce homosexuals.... SRS is thus constituted as justifiable insofar as it makes things appear 'as they should (be)'" (Sullivan, *Reorienting* 144). In order to ensure things were "as they should (be)," Money and Brennan indicate the means by which they parse out these men: "One wonders about the partner with the penis in such a relationship and wants to know whether he has some degree of a so-called homosexual personality. Or is he an erotically typical male, not a paraphiliac, who has responded sexually to the evidence of his senses, especially the evidence of his eyes?" The separation of these men from homosexuality relied on whether these men eroticized their partner's same-sex body and, therefore, were

paraphiliac (read fetishistic) homosexuals or if these gender-normative males eroticized their partner's gender expression (evidence of his eyes) (Money and Brennan 193).

The reliance on gender expression as the means by which these men were separated from homosexuality spoke to the narrow norms of manhood in the 1970s. Per the theory of gender/sexuality articulated by Money, an individual's prenatal exposure to sex hormones in humans does not determine gender but rather that it lowers one's threshold for some kinds of behaviors and/or responses (Sullivan, *Reorienting* 138). Biology orientates an individual towards gynephile [toward femininity] or androphile [toward masculinity], which is reinforced via socialization whereby children learn their proper gendered sexual roles of their assigned sex (Repo 233). A "typical" or "total" gender and sexual conforming male was one who, via nature and nurture, is masculine and heterosexual (or gynephilic); he is one whose sexual behavior is initiatory, genitally focused, visually driven, and largely independent of concerns for love and intimacy (Sullivan, *Reorienting* 138, 141). Mapped onto the genitals, the normative notions of gender and sexual norms presupposed masculinity as inherent to a body with a penis and, therefore, a desire to be the penetrative partner in sexual activity with a feminine presenting person. Inversely, homosexuals and transvestites, for example, were gender and sexually non-conforming as their gendered/sexual behavior was incongruent with their physiology; homosexuals and transvestite males who desire another male-bodied person were "passive" and "feminine" (Sullivan, *Reorienting* 138).

In Money and Brennan's study, the conformation of these men as gender and sexual conforming would highlight their responses in the social and sexual spheres. The "circumstances of meeting" ensured that these men were unaware of their partner's transness and "naturally" responded to the "minimum number" of visual "feminine cues" (Money and Brennan 195, 203).

When “confronted with the incongruous, private image of the partner’s nudity, namely, the masculine, or erstwhile masculine sexual organs [a penis or signs thereof],” these men demonstrated “considerable hesitancy” (Money and Brennan 207). In line with the norms of gender and sexuality, Money and Brennan determine that these men were “normal,” aka masculine and heterosexual, not paraphiliac homosexuals deviating from gender-normative women.<sup>24</sup>

In 1974, Richard Green utilized and further crystalised the gender logic of Money and Brennan. In Green’s 1974 book *Sexual Identity Conflict in Children and Adults*, in his section "Boyfriends and Husbands of Male-To-Female Transsexuals," he interviews four couples. For Green, this chapter serves two purposes: first, to demonstrate that transsexual self-portrait of femininity is confirmable through their partners (Green 67). Second, Green challenges the simplistic idea of these men as homosexuals (Green 67). Instead, Green argues that these men respond to the "considerable femininity of male-to-female transsexuals, ignoring the dissonant cues of masculinity" and outlines the circumstance of these couples' meeting (Green 67). Green’s study reasserts a straightforward narrative of not actively desiring trans bodies.

In these interviews, three out of the four men were unaware that their partner was trans (two of the women had yet to undergo SRS), and the men showed varying degrees of hesitancy

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<sup>24</sup> The ability of sexologists to parse out men who are gender and sexually conforming but for their same-sex partner was new. Krafft-Ebing’s acquired theory of homosexuality, for example, who was gender and sexually conforming but for his same-sex partner. Acquired homosexuality spoke of a mildly tainted man who, but for life circumstances, like being isolated in a same-sex space for a prolonged period, would be heterosexual (Krafft-Ebing 188). Cis men of the acquired homosexual type were active partners during anal intercourse (aka tops) and eroticized cis women during sexual activities. And once the obstacle was removed, these cis men demonstrated an “immediate return to normal sexual intercourse” (Krafft-Ebing 188). Acquired homosexuality became problematic if these same-sex activities persisted once the obstacle was removed (Krafft-Ebing 188-192). And though still perverse, these men, unlike their congenital counterparts, who same-sex desires inborn, merely happened to have had sex with a partner of the same sex and, thus, didn’t completely deviate from cis womanhood. In the early 1900s, Freud’s work would reintroduce the acquired theory of homosexuality so forcibly that congenital theorists such as Ellis were compelled to devote much of their later work to its refutation (Chauncey 137).

before engaging in sexual activity (Green 67-79). The first man was unaware of his wife as trans before she disclosed it. Green states, "unbeknownst to him, she was an anatomic male" (Green 69). And upon his wife telling him that he was "a little confused for several days" (Green 69). Similarly, the second man, married to a woman who received sex reassignment surgery, had "never heard of anything like it..." (Green 72). However, although the second husband "never heard of anything like it...", his strong dislike of homosexuality made Green suspect a "conflict at some level" (a same-sex desire) (Green 74). The fourth man, in a relationship with a woman who had not yet received SRS, is also recorded as hesitant to sexually engage with his girlfriend upon her disclosure. The boyfriend in the fourth interview "couldn't believe it" and after sex was "a little bit repulsed..." and "didn't want to do it again" (Green 77). He, the fourth man, would eventually begin to have sex with his girlfriend twice a week (Green 78)<sup>25</sup>. In the end, as with Money and Brennan, these gender-normative hetero men didn't seek out trans partners, but instead, these men "naturally" responded to the feminine cues of these women. And when intercourse came into the picture, the men demonstrated some hesitancy. In line with Money and Brennan, these men were "normal" masculine heterosexual men.

However, the construction of a "healthy" way for gender-normative males to desire transsexual women was marked by its "class and racial origins... so that — proper or not —

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<sup>25</sup> The third man, who met his wife before her transition, is of particular interest. Before the wife transitioned, the husband met her as a "feminine male" but reported "feeling a little bit funny," and his sexual feeling had to "gradually progress" (Green 74-75). But as his wife started to transition, he was "very cold for about two months" and "very nasty," according to his wife (Green 76). Green states the third husband "acknowledges" his "homosexual interest" and reports the husband said, regarding masturbating to the image of a man, that "it's a little bit erotic, the thought of it," but Green doesn't go beyond this (Green 74-74). Despite what could be read as the ambiguity of this partner, the third man is understood as responding to the "considerable femininity" and "ignoring the dissonant cues of masculinity," which allows him to be read as a "typical" male (Green 79). Similarly, in Money and Brennan's study, two of the seven men had had actual homosexual experiences: one as a single event as a teen and the other who had "more extension experience (s), the exact amount being unknown" under the influence of alcohol (Money and Brennan 203). By the end of Money and Brennan's study, as already stated, these men were "normal," masculine men (Money and Brennan 207).

cannot be dislocated from the broader context of daily and institutionalized power” in which [these sexual relationships, in line with gender norms] come to cohere (Valentine, *Imagining* 60). Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, sex reassignment clinics not only preferred white and/or middle-class patients, but researchers who were attempting to reassert traditional gender roles would demand that transsexual women and their partners uphold white middle-class norms (Drager 16). Institutionalized gender norms allowed transsexual women to be legible as women as far as these women upheld white middle-class heterosexual norms such as being domestic, part of the nuclear family, desexualized (uninvolved in queer communities, nor sexually promiscuous), for example (See Skidmore). Medical officials, too, put a premium on transsexual women’s ability to “pass” in gender identity, live quietly, be heterosexual, and get married (Meyerowitz 225; See Skidmore). Transsexual women had to uphold traditional beauty standards and, at times, were required to undergo training in conventional gender stereotypes (Meyerowitz 225; See Skidmore). In order for these gender-normative males to be reincorporated into society, Money and Brennan had to determine their proximity to the gender and sexual norms of the white middle class.

The reproduction of traditional gender roles also extended to transsexual women’s partners. In Money and Brennan’s study, the researchers remark, “The normal men were initially educationally and/or vocationally underachievers but showed improvement in job stability once they had established a relationship with their transsexual partners” (Money and Brennan 209). “In general, it appears that the partners of transsexuals needed the stabilizing influence of a commitment” (Money and Brennan 199). Recirculating older notions of traditional heterosexual marriage, women, and the institution itself, as a means to tame men through the roles of father, husband, and breadwinner, Money and Brennan’s construct reinforces the “normal” man as

being in line with white middle-class gender expectation (Kimmel 198). Money and Brennan's statements imply that the science of transsexualism produces gender-conforming women and enables the reproduction of gender-conforming, gender normative males in line with white middle-class norms.

In the 1970s, then, Money and Brennan, and later Green, constructed a sexual ethic for gender-normative -trans sexual interactions. Instead of foreclosing all sexual activity with transfeminine people, Money and Brennan, and later Green, position "natural" desires as traveling through the norms of gender. Gender normative males' "natural" desire for transsexual women traveled through the gender-normative norms of femininity and made the trans body secondary. In this way, these transsexual women just "happen to be trans."

In line with the institutionalized gender and sexual norms of the white middle-class, these gender normative males and their transfeminine partners were no longer paraphiliac homosexuals who were fixated on the genitals of their partners and were driven by sexual pleasure. Instead, these gender and sexually-conforming, gender-normative males and transsexual women were in line with the "natural," and as such, were now eligible for "love" so long as they reproduced a gender- hetero normative white middle-class social order. Green states:

Thus, the extent to which adult males [sic] who want to become women are feminine is demonstrated by the attitudes of males who become their boyfriends and husbands. The consorts are masculine, a requirement of the male-to-female transsexual to complement her feelings of femininity and nonhomosexuality [sic]. For similar reasons, she must believe that her consort has never experienced homosexual relations. A certain amount of deception may be practiced by the transsexual, enough to permit her partner to

adjust to the situation without being overwhelmed by “homosexual” implications. By and large, these couples have heterosexual friends and assimilate unremarkably into society (Green 79)

For Green, as it was for Money and Brennan, through the reproduction of heteronormativity that assume the eroticization of gender-normative womanhood and gender-normative manhood, these couples can "assimilate unremarkably into society" (Green 79). In this way, gender-normative - trans sexual encounters/relationships were made respectable, non-fetishistic by “fading into the population... ‘proper’ in the eyes of the state," which requires trans people "to keep one’s material difference from others private” (Aizura 295-296). In this way, transness was remade as "non-transgressive or non-threatening" through application of gender-normative norms (Aizura 295-296).

### **3.4 Blackness and The Science of Transsexualism**

The construction of a “normal” way for gender normative males to desire transsexual women valorized and made hierarchical types of trans-feminine people and embodiments. In line with the science of transsexualism, the de-emphasis on the presurgical sexed body was reinforced as erotic transfeminine people who had or desired vaginoplasty. Transfeminine people who didn’t desire such a surgery and the gender normative males who desire them would continue to be regarded as perverse paraphiliac<sup>26</sup> homosexuals. These transfeminine people and their gender-normative male partners were “beside love,” outside of the “healthy,” the “natural.”

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<sup>26</sup> Although Money’s full articulation of paraphilia would not occur until the 1980s, he is already wrestling with the concept. Nevertheless, at the very least, it is possible to argue that to be “beside love” is a deviant from reproduction heterosexuality. As early as 1957, in *The Psychologic Study of Man*, Money writes that one of the “inevitables of being human” is that “a person is at birth equipped eventually to be either a mother or a father” (Money *Psychologic*)



Instead of a “natural” desire – i.e., a desire for gender-normative womanhood – the paraphiliac homosexual substitutes normal sexual and romantic interests – which in this case, can be assumed to be a penis for a vagina (Downing, *Normophilia* 281). However, while research on transsexualism operated to produce gender and sexually conforming people in line with white middle-class norms, pathologized notions of racialized patients and families informed the populations that were seen as “unhealthy.” Gender and sexual nonconformity continued to be seen as a trait of black people and people of the lower classes. As such, the racialized trans embodiment invoked by the black female body and the desire for such an embodiment by lust-driven black males continued to find circulation in the 1960s and 1970s.

In the mid-1960s, the black lower-class families of the inner city were represented as pathological because of their deviance from gender and sexual norms. In the Moynihan Report on the inner-city decline, the authors would state: “A fundamental fact of Negro family life is the often reversed roles of husband and wife.” In black households, he argues, family pathology exists because of deviant gender roles (Drager 22). Black inner-city communities were forced into a matriarchal structure, which “imposes a crushing burden on the Negro male and, in consequence, on a great many Negro women as well” (Geary). The matriarchal structure presumed that “bad” mothers failed to meet the demand of traditional “womanly” duties at home, which proliferated social problems for the black community (Collins *Controlling* 75). Black women were representative of gender nonconformity, as they were seen as being overly aggressive, unfeminine women and matriarchs. Allegedly, these black women emasculated their lovers and husbands and, thus, undermined a “natural” order. In the end, the inverse family structure and black women’s perceived masculinity and, thus, transness was to blame for black children’s failure in school and with the law, as well as black children’s subsequent poverty

(Collins, *Controlling* 75-76). The message was clear: gender deviance is to blame for social ills, social ills come from the family, and the family is corrupted by gender deviance (Drager 22). In order to “save” black people in the inner-city and secure the well-being of America as a whole, traditional gender and sexual roles had to be reinforced.

The Moynihan report is essential for contextualizing the science of transsexualism in the 1960s and 1970s, for the science of transsexualism drew on the racialized family who was rife with pathologies that produced gender deviance (Drager 23). The research on transsexualism presumed the family was central to the etiology of "mental illnesses" (Drager 22). Robert Stoller, another influential researcher on transsexualism, argued that transsexualism required multiple generations of pathology before manifesting as adult transsexualism (Drager 20). \. Thus, because black people, black communities were seen as being trans, they were the people to be corrected. The black inner city family was, therefore, pathological. Further, the pathological failure to adhere to gender and sexual norms was being reproduced and passed down from adults to children. The failure to adhere to the traditional gender and sexual norms of the white middle-class were the cause of poverty, crime and more. Applying Stoller’s line of thinking to the Moynihan report, the “masculine” mother of the black lower class matriarchal family enabled the eroticization of a woman with a penis. The eroticization of a woman with a penis was a “perversity” that emerges as the result of an overbearing masculine mother who causes her son to develop a partial (read, sliding towards femininity) gender pathology. In order to secure the well-being of the individual and society, therefore, these pathologies required intervention.

The linkage between anti-blackness, the inner city, and gender nonconformity is made clear by Money and Brennan questionnaire. In their questionnaire on “Partners’ Contact with ‘Gay’ People,” the researchers indicate, ever so slightly, anxieties about wanton gender and

sexuality (Money and Brennan 199). In their questionnaire on “Partners’ Contact with ‘Gay’ People,” the authors point out that four of the seven men in their search had contact with homosexuals and transvestites (Money and Brennan 199). Money and Brennan state, “Three of the four men grew up in an inner-city, Black culture where the traditional attitude toward homosexual and transvestites was easy going, if not accepting (Money and Brennan 199). The black inner-city, for Money and Brennan, is a site of queerness. But, the evidence of the racialized desire for a particular type of trans embodiment is a bit clearer in Money’s 1968 article.

In Money and Geoffrey Hosta’s 1968 article “Negro Folklore of Male Pregnancy,” the article tells of a myth about male pregnancy that the authors found circulating around Baltimore’s homosexual community while conducting “a longitudinal study of problems in juvenile gender identity” (Money and Hosta 34). The myth of male pregnancy held that after being penetrated during anal sex, one could become pregnant with a “blood baby” if the sperm was able to travel deep into the anus and reach internal organs. Money’s sample size for the paper was five individuals. In the discussion, the authors attribute this piece of folklore to the Negro family structure:

Since it is a Negro phenomenon, one may look to the dynamics of Negro social and family life for a possible explanation of the viability of the folklore. The American Negro family, especially at the lower socio-economic level, is commonly mother-centered (and grandmother-centered). The father may be completely absent or a periodic visitor. In such a family framework, there might be a considerable predisposition to encourage the maintenance and transmission of a tradition attributing maternal reproductive powers to the male. Perhaps the adolescent Negro boy, used to identifying

with and imitating his mother . . . does not find so strange the idea that some of the physical aspects of motherhood may be assumed by a man (Drager 23)

The notion of racialized gender nonconformity allowed for transness to proliferate. If the idea that male-bodied people could get pregnant and, therefore, had a uterus existed in black lower-class communities, the possibility of women with penises could surely circulate. Therefore, if the eroticization of transness existed, it would be in the black inner city where gender-nonconforming men would eroticize masculine women or women with “masculine” parts, the penis. The desire for this particular type of trans embodiment was therefore reinforced by its historical position as same-sex desire tied to blackness, And in this way, “transness finds expression and continuous circulation within blackness” (Snorton Black 2).

In the end, transfeminine people who, because of their sexual activities with their penises, were excluded from the category of transsexual, as well as their gender normative male partners who desired a partner with a penis, were reinscribed as fetishistic homosexuals, which drew on blackness and classism. Transfeminine people who forwent vaginoplasty and, therefore, are unable to be incorporated into the category of transsexual would be representative of an embodiment racialized as black and understood through homosexuality. As transsexualism emerged, transfeminine people like Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson would describe themselves as transvestites (Meyerowitz 235). Rivera would write elsewhere that “transvestites are homosexual men and women who dress in clothes of the opposite sex. Male transvestites dress and live as women. Half-sisters like myself are women with the minds of women trapped in male bodies” (Untorelli Press). For Rivera, the idea of being a woman and gay was not contradictory. At the same time, the desire, as stated above, for a woman with a penis would be racialized as black. The desire itself would continue to be read through homosexuality. In

pornographic imagery of the 1960s and 1970s, transfeminine people were featured alongside other male-bodied imagery, which allowed for the eroticization of transfeminine people to be understood as being homoerotic (Meyerowitz 201-202). Until the mid 1970s, these populations would be people to be corrected back towards the masculine desire for gender-normative women.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

The development of gender widened the divisions that had already begun at the beginning of the century. Whereas the division between gender and sexuality that had partially begun at the turn of the century had parsed people out into transvestites and effeminate men and homosexuals (transfeminine people who desire gender normative males and lived as women into transvestite homosexuals), the full elaboration of the concept of gender, which had been divided from the sexed body, allowed a new schema to take hold. Gender allowed some people with cross-gender identities to be separated from transvestites and homosexuals altogether by emphasizing the difference between gender and sexual categories. Thus, instead of the classification of homosexuals or transvestites, transsexuals who adhered to the norms of gender were women and, in terms of those who desired gender normative males, heterosexual.

Likewise, the development of gender would be the means through which some gender normative males would be recategorized. By deemphasizing transsexual women's bodily differences from gender-normative women and emphasizing gender at the point of attraction, medical officials constructed the "healthy" and "natural" way for gender normative males to desire transsexual women. As such, these men, who before the full elaboration of gender were outside of "natural" desires for gender normative males (often as acquired homosexuals), were now thoroughly in line with the norms of gender-normative manhood under the regime of gender. And therefore, these gender normative males whose desires were determined to travel

solely through gender could be reincorporated into a wider version of heterosexuality. Under this framework, trans people just “happened to be trans.”

The concept of gender had uneven effects on gender normative males and transfeminine people. For transfeminine people who engaged in penile activities or who didn't desire to transition genitally, the category of transsexual, per medical authority, didn't apply. The nonconforming transfeminine person and their partner were racialized as black and still tied to the fetishistic category of homosexuality. As such, for transfeminine people who lived as women and desired gender normative males, the category of transvestite homosexual still applied. While gender normative males whose desires could be determined as traveling through gender were reinscribed as heterosexual, gender normative males whose desires included the eroticization of their partner's body were still understood as homosexuals. But further, these "homosexual" men represented the "unhealthy" way to eroticize transsexual women. And as such, these men, in line with traditional sexology, represented a racialized and classed desire that reduced their partners to their genitals, focused on lust, and gender non-conforming. The "unhealthy" way would become the figure known as the chaser today.

The discourse of "happen to be trans" versus "chaser" was born in the 1970s as part of a wider project to shore up gender-normative normativity. The chaser sets the boundaries of a healthy desire that isn't in conflict with the norms of the white middle class. Instead of actively eroticizing trans bodies, gender normative males' eroticization should merely be coincidental ("happens to be trans"). In this way, trans people can be seamlessly incorporated into gender and sexual norms and, therefore, non-threatening to gender-normative -hetero society.

**4 CHAPTER THREE: THE SEPARATION OF GENDER FROM SEXUALITY:  
SEXOLOGICAL EMERGENCES OF A NEW PERVERSITY**

The conceptualization of trans-attraction, transamory, or the chaser circulates through the rhetoric of sexual danger. gender normative males who actively eroticize trans women are not only “often attracted to [trans women] due to [their] genitalia” but often “with little to no regard for the person they are actually preying on” (Sonoma). Trans women “become merely objects [for gender normative males’] pleasure,” which is “ultimately dehumanizing and can include an objectification that often makes men violent” (Sonoma). Trans activists’ critiques of gender normative males' eroticization of trans women produces gender normative males who are explicitly attracted to trans women as a type of sex offender.

Far from being neutral, discourses on sex offenders are productive. The sex offender, according to Judith Levine, is a "social menace to make the renewed old order more attractive" who "tends to crop up in times of social transformation (Levine 29,31). But, if sex offender discourses are productive, how does the chaser, as a sex offender, "make the renewed old order more attractive?" The answer to this question, at least partially, lay in the politically charged atmosphere of the 1980s.

In the 1980s, transfeminine people and their gender normative male partners, still included under homosexuality, would emerge as distinct peoples. Though a distinction had begun to emerge earlier in the century and, thus, had begun to put transfeminine people and their partners on different but interwoven paths, the full distinction between gender and sexuality by the 1980s would put these two populations into two ontologically different spheres. Whereas the full elaboration of gender separate from sex had allowed medical officials to recategorize some transsexuals women and their gender normative male partners as heterosexual women and men,

gender and sexuality, which officials had only barely separated at the turn of the century, still informed each other, and as such, medical officials still relegated these transfeminine people with penises and gender normative males who desired them to their quotidian categories of transvestite homosexuals and homosexuals. But the separation of gender and sexuality, brought about by political negotiations between gay and lesbian activists and medical authorities throughout the 1970s and cemented in medical texts by 1980, would mean transfeminine people and their gender normative male partners would be unable to find coherence under either sphere. And as a result, by the 1980s, these gender normative males and transfeminine people exceeded the category of homosexuality in popular culture and medical knowledge.

The full elaboration of gender and sexuality as ontologically different spheres and subsequent abjection of transfeminine people and their gender normative male partners from homosexuality would present new problems for medical authorities. No longer compatible with homosexuality, transfeminine people and their gender normative male partners were made visible by their distinction from gender norms and sexual categories. But, whereas transfeminine people would, according to the medical lens, have a problem in terms of their gender and, therefore, have to be made to cohere with the norms of womanhood or manhood, their gender normative male partners, unable to be categorized as heterosexual or homosexual, had a paraphilia (a fetish). And as transfeminine people became more visible, the once racialized homosexual figure who established the boundaries of transsexual relationships with gender normative males had to be documented for his peculiar interests. Trans-attraction would then emerge as a distinct desire.

But, in the 1980s, trans-attraction was documented as a distinct desire that would emerge amid a sex panic. In the 1980s, feminists who challenged patriarchal violence undermined white middle-class masculinity. Feminists and various other movements had throughout the 1970s



pointed a spotlight on how sexual violence was intrinsic to patriarchy itself. As a result, normative masculinity had to be refined; and its boundaries redefined. In this period, the pedophile would emerge to purify normative masculinity. Alongside the pedophile, however, in sexological texts, would be the gynemimetophile (chaser/trans-attracted gender-normative males). Trans-attracted gender normative males would thus emerge as a type of sex offender. As such, the categorization of trans-attracted gender normative males would also respond to a masculinity crisis by purifying the boundaries of white middle-class gender-normative hetero norms.

### **Gynemimesis and Gynemimetophilia**

In the 1980s, the racialized trans embodiment and desire informed by black and lower-class communities would emerge as distinct peoples. Documented in John Money and Margaret Lamacz's 1984 article "Gynemimesis and Gynemimetophilia: Individual and Cross-Cultural Manifestations of a Gender-Coping Strategy Hitherto Unnamed," the authors, as the title indicates, would, for the first in medical texts label and categorize the trans person who did not desire vaginoplasty and a type of gender-normative man who desired them. In terms of non-respectable transfeminine people, Money and Lamacz would label them gynemimesis and categorize this type of trans embodiment as a gender disorder: the gynemimesis is "a natal male who is able to relate... exclusively with [gender-normative ] men, and who may be hormonally but not surgically sex reassigned. It is a syndrome of gender transposition, not a paraphilia" (emphasis added) (Money, *Lovemaps* 262). And in terms of gender normative males who explicitly desired this type of trans embodiment, Money and Lamacz would label them as gynemimetophile and categorize this desire as a paraphilia: the gynemimetophile is a paraphiliac gender-normative man who is "attracted to a lady with a penis, more than to a lady without one"

(Money, *LoveMaps* 103). The gynemimetophile “is the...phenomenon of being attracted towards gynemimetic [transfeminine people with penises] explicitly and not inadvertently by misattribution of a [transfeminine person] as a regular female” (Money, *Lovemaps* 198). The gynemimetophile identified “a form of sexual desire that did not strictly exist before the late 20th century” (Escoffier, *Imagining* 269). The gynemimetophile spoke primarily to “a desire for a kind of person who did not exist before then—the ‘pre-op’ [sic] MTF transsexual woman — a...feminized male-bodied person who typically has breasts developed through hormone therapy or breast augmentation and some other female characteristics but who has not undergone...sex-reassignment surgery” (Escoffier, *Imagining* 269). In the 1980s, then, the racialized trans embodiment and desire that was once understood through homosexuality were now distinct. But further, it was in this historical moment that the chaser would emerge as a type of personhood through the labeling and categorization of the gynemimetophile. The emergence of the gynemimesis and gynemimetophile as distinct peoples and desire in the 1980s resulted from political shifts that made these two types of people's documentation not only possible but necessary.

#### **4.1 The Full Separation of Gender and Sexuality**

The gynemimesis and gynemimetophile labeling and categorization resulted from the separation of gender and sexuality. Per Money and Lamacz’s description, gynemimesis had a gender disorder, while gynemimetophile had a sexual disorder, a paraphilia. Only a decade earlier, the gynemimesis and gynemimetophile were both paraphilic homosexuals who were therefore gender non-conforming. But throughout the mid 1970s and onwards, the category of homosexual underwent a major shift, becoming narrower in terms of what types of peoples and

desires could be accounted for under homosexuality. The radical transformation would be due to the full elaboration of gender and sexuality as separate and distinct categories.

The separation of gender and sexuality, which on an epistemological level had begun with Robert Stoller's 1968 book *Sex and Gender*, meant that though gender and sexuality informed each other, one didn't necessarily impact the other (Valentine, *Imagining* 57). Stoller's separation of gender and sexuality as ontologically distinct spheres would fundamentally widen the slight separation that began decades earlier with other sexologists and enable a departure from historical understanding of homosexuality. Prior to the late 1960s onwards, sexologists posited that to be homosexual was to be gender non-conforming in some, if not all, aspects of their character. As stated earlier, until this point in history, homosexuality was tethered to femininity and a product of the sexed body. Freud, for example, noted that homosexuals were passive regarding sexuality. And similarly, Hirschfeld, too, linked homosexuality to femininity through the idea of a third sex. Even with the development of gender in the 1950s, gender still tethered to sexuality, which itself was still informed by the body, posited that homosexuals were gender nonconforming. The conflation of femininity and homosexuality complicated researchers' ability to isolate the "true" transsexual from homosexuality and transvestitism (Meyerowitz 174). But with the full elaboration of the distinction between gender and sexuality, and, thus, between homosexuality and gender, the two categories would be split into ontology different spheres.

In the 1970s, the elaboration on the differences between gender and sexuality and, thus, between homosexuality and gender would enable gay and lesbian activists to argue for the de-pathologization of homosexuality via gender conformity. In the 1970s, with the advent of gay and lesbian activism in the wake of Stonewall, activists were able to persuade psychiatrists like

Stoller, Money, and others, that homosexuality had no stable, visible diagnostic signs (Valentine, *Imagining* 55). That is, by insisting on “normality” and rejecting visible gender variance, gay activists argued that homosexuals displayed no publicly visible evidence of their homosexuality, which was essentially the private exercise of sexuality and which was itself neither caused by nor resulted in mental anguish (Valentine, *Imagining* 55). More precisely, gay and lesbian activists argued that based “on a theory of gender and sexuality that sees these two experiences as distinct,” the same-sex desiring person did not “have to be—indeed, in the language of much post-Stonewall gay activism, is not—gender variant just because one diverges from the heterosexual norm” (Valentine, *I Went* 415-416). By 1973, gay and lesbian activists’ argument would successfully liberate homosexuality as a pathology from psychiatry (Drescher 570).<sup>27</sup>

In medical texts, the gender normative model of homosexuality via the separation of gender and sexuality would allow same-sex desires aimed at gender-conforming people to no longer to be considered a sexual fetish (paraphilia) but instead a variant. Homosexuality, Money would state, was an “erotic orientation that is never simply freely chosen” (Sullivan, *Gender* 28-29). Since natural sexuality, informed by gender, posited that people were either androphilic (a desire for masculinity) or gynephilic (a desire for femininity) and mapped onto the gender-

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<sup>27</sup> In the years following the gay activists’ successful push to remove homosexuality as a formal psychiatric diagnosis, the separation of gender and sexuality would continue to expand as gay activists began to critique the research on gender-variant boys (Bryant *Gay Children* 458). In 1975, Richard Green built on the division of gender and sexuality in response to homophobia critiques aimed at the treatment of gender-variant children. For Green, addressing homophobia critiques, the treatment of feminine boys could turn would-be transsexuals into homosexuals: The natural course of boyhood femininity, when left unattended by parents or professional authorities, maybe the adult picture of transsexualism and, in some cases transvestism. However, when that natural course is interrupted in the preadolescent years, the outcome may be a masculine homosexual adult. Green concluded that he was helping to create homosexuals, not cure them (Bryant *Gay Children* 466). For researchers, then, masculine homosexual men were desirable outcomes: “[researchers] treated those ... boys by trying to encourage more typical (masculine) identifications and behaviors, in part in hopes of averting atypical adult psychosexual outcomes” (Bryant *Gay Children* 457). Before the full separation of gender and sexuality, the juxtaposition of homosexuality and masculinity would’ve been a contradiction. But, via the separation of gender and sexuality, homosexuality need not necessarily invoke gender nonconformity.

normative body — penises as masculine and vaginas as feminine, homosexuality was a “viable option” that should therefore not be subject to enforced medical treatment” (Sullivan, *Gender* 29). Homosexuality, as Money puts it, is analogous to “left-handedness in not being pathological in itself, though not conforming to the norm and not being exempt from other pathologies” (Money, *Lovemaps* 263). The “homosexual person is able to fall in love with, and [enter into long term relationships] only with a person of the same morphologic sex. Homosexuality [sic] is not a paraphilia but a gender transposition, variable in extent and degree” (Money, *Lovemaps* 263). In other words, the gender conforming homosexual who desired other gender conforming people was a variant of “natural” heterosexual desires. Desiring a gender-normative partner, the gender conforming homosexual was not “pathological” but compatible with “love,” able to enter into a long-term relationship with a partner. No longer pathological and compatible with “love,” the gender conforming homosexual who desired other gender conforming people was no longer a lust-driven fetishist who reduced his partner to his genitals. By the 1980s, the gender-conforming homosexual was a “healthy,” “normal” person. Thus, the advent of gay and lesbian activism throughout the 1970s resulted in a radical shift in medical and popular understandings of homosexuality, which brought to the fore a gender-normative model of homosexuality (Valentine, *I Went* 415-416).

But, the transformation of the category of homosexuality via the separation of gender and sexuality shifted the relationship of the category for transfeminine people and their gender normative male partners. The normalization of homosexuality— by which same-gender, same-sex people were, in pop culture and medicine, a variant of heterosexuality— forced gender non-conforming people out of the category, such as drag queens, fairies, as well as people now described as gynomimesis (Valentine, *I Went* 415-416). Capturing the untethering of people now

described as gynemimesis from homosexuality, Money lists the labels that people would have commonly used to describe these types of transfeminine people prior to his documentation: Money states, “The syndrome of gynemimesis without transsexualism is probably the same as what sexologists earlier in the twentieth century called passive or effeminate male homosexuality, or in some instances, male transvestism” (Money, *Lovemaps* 212). On a popular level the gynemimesis would’ve been called a “drag queen, fairy, faggot, or “female impersonators,” (Money, *Lovemaps* 104, 197, 203). By the 1980s, people categorized as gynemimesis, due to the separation of gender and sexuality, were only homosexual in terms of their sexuality (Money, *Lovemaps* 197). Money explains: “They are homosexual insofar as they fall in love with and/or have [sexual] relations with someone of their own morphologic sex (Money, *Lovemaps* 197-198).

However, at the time of Money’s writing, the gynemimesis escaped pre-existing medical categorizations, which were divided by gender and sexuality. A decade earlier, medical officials would have categorized the person described as a gynemimesis as a transvestite and/or homosexual. Throughout much of the history of sexuality, transvestite as a category had been utilized to describe people who presented and lived in a way that wasn’t attributed to their assigned sex. In *Die Transvestiten*, Hirschfeld’s descriptions of transvestites who were assigned male at birth, for example, included people who desired to live as women and those who eroticized women’s clothing (Hill 320-323). But, as Benjamin, Money, and others worked to differentiate transsexuals from transvestites, transvestites had become a category exclusively for those who eroticize the clothing of the gender they were not assigned. In the third edition of the American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM), the first manual to exclude homosexuality as a pathology as well as the first issue to

inaugurate into medical text the separation of gender and sexuality via gender identity disorders and paraphilias, transvestitism was narrowly defined. In the 1980s *DSM*, transvestitism was primarily a problem for heterosexual men who were sexually aroused by crossdressing (DSM-III 269). Gynemimesis were only “transvestite insofar as they cross-dress and present themselves in public permanently as a member of the sex to which they do not belong morphologically, though they are not fetishistically attached to clothing for erotosexual arousal and orgasm, in the manner of the paraphilic transvestophiliac” (Money, *Lovemaps* 197-198). Transvestitism was now a sexual disorder, a paraphilia. Transvestitism was unable to account for those who didn’t eroticize clothing or who lived as another gender than assigned.

The limitations of sexuality and gender were also recognizable in the research participant’s self-identification. Geraldine, a black trans woman whom Money utilized as his case study for the gynemimesis, who doesn’t want SRS, reflectively states, “I could put myself into the category of transsexual...” or “could it be bisexual... I don’t consider myself as a drag queen...I still consider myself as a woman with the ability to please everyone” (Money, *Lovemaps* 202). Similar to Geraldine, in the community, while at a bar for transfeminine/ trans women, Money notes that “those who have had sex-reassignment surgery and still participate in the bar scene are referred to, somewhat disparagingly by nontranssexuals as ‘sex-changes’...[and those like Geraldine] have no definitive name for themselves” (Money, *Lovemaps* 203). Geraldine’s claim to have the ability to “please everyone” before the 1980s would have marked her as a fetishistic transvestite homosexual, but with the separation of sexuality and gender, she was ambiguous. She is now only homosexual in terms of her sexual preference (Money *Lovemaps* 203).

The complications that resulted from the separation of gender and sexuality would have uneven and complicated effects on transfeminine people and their gender-normative male partners. The transformation of homosexuality into a category exclusively for same-gender, same-sex assumed people cemented the hetero-homo binary as a model based exclusively on the eroticization of gender-normative people. As such, in a similar fashion to the transfeminine people noted earlier by Money, gender-normative males who desired transfeminine people were also without a label/identity. But, whereas Geraldine and other transfeminine people were attempting to articulate a gender identity, gender normative males who desire transfeminine people were without a sexual identity. Before this moment, researchers and trans people, according to John Money, had no “name by which to differentiate the men with a proclivity for impersonators [transfeminine people] from those without” (Money, *LoveMaps* 203). No longer compatible with homosexuality, the absence of a label/category for these men by transfeminine people and researchers would also be reflected by gender normative males on the ground as more became aware of their distinct desire as it did not adhere to the gender norms of the hetero/homo binary.

Institutionalized in the medical realm, the gender-normative binary of sexuality allows for the continuous production of “truth” about a desire for transness. Outside of the “natural,” the explicit eroticization of transness was reinforced by the new rubrics of normative sexuality as a sexual fetish, a paraphilia. Whereas a decade ago, Geraldine and others would have been fetishistic homosexuals whose desires are “unnatural,” lust-driven, and incompatible with “love,” Geraldine’s desires, aimed at masculine gender normative males, were now “normal,” “healthy.” As the result of the gender normative model of the hetero/homo binary, Geraldine’s desires were, by the 1980s, aimed at the “right” type of person. Thus, due to the full elaboration of the



separation between gender and sexuality, Geraldine and others like her would emerge as new people who could now depart from the legacy of the pathological homosexual of the late 1800s. Unfortunately, the opposite is true for their gender normative male partners; these gender normative males who reinscribed as sexual fetishists.

Gender-normative males who explicitly eroticized transfeminine people, gynemimetophiles, “suffered” from a sexual disorder, a paraphilia/sexual fetish. Unable to be accounted for by homosexuality, Money would categorize gynemimetophilia as a paraphilia of the stigmatic/eligibic, which put the desire alongside some of the most loathed sexual activities once attributed to homosexuality: pedophilia, incestuous father-daughter sexual abuse, or bestiality (Money, *Lovemaps* 96-99). In various ways, these ideas had traveled together: Freud, for example, grouped bestiality, pedophilia, and homosexuality together as examples of deviation in terms of sexual object choice (Freud, *Sexual* 45-61). In addition to the fact, per Money, “the criterion of a homosexual status, and of a heterosexual status as well, is the morphology of the sex organs of the partner with whom you fall in love (Money, *Lovemaps* 104). Per Money’s logic, gynemimetophiles, prior to the shifts in the category of homosexual, would’ve been along those lines. As such, as a paraphiliac, the gynemimetophile, by the logic of “natural” sexuality, was incompatible with “natural” sexuality; the interviewee was in conflict with “love,” driven by lust which caused him, the interviewee, to reduce his partner to her genitals, independent of her individuality (Downing, *Normophilia* 281). Medical knowledge thus tethered the gynemimetophile to the legacy of the pathological homosexual of the late 1800s.

Thus, the transformation of homosexuality, via the separation of gender and sexuality, only made the conditions possible for gynemimesises and gynemimetophiles to emerge. Unable to be accounted for by pre-existing medical categories, gynemimesises and gynemimetophiles

represented new types of peoples. But, while these two had historically traveled together under the category of homosexuality, the separation of gender and sexuality would cement a division between these transfeminine people and their gender normative male partners. By the 1980s, gynemimesises had a gender disorder and gynemimetophiles had a sexual fetish. As the decade progressed, the gap between these two populations would further widen as the separation of gender and sexuality became more institutionalized. That is, just as the separation of sex and gender enabled transsexualism, and the separation of gender and sexuality transformed homosexuality, the separation of gender and sexuality, it can be assumed, would enable gynemimesises be incorporated into existing gender categories. Sexuality would no longer be necessarily a reflection of gender identity. It is perhaps partly due to the separation of gender and sexuality that in the 1980s, data began to become available for “preoperative male-to-female transsexual...who experienced genital sexual pleasure while living in the “gender of choice” (Stone 11). And, since gender and sexuality still reign as the “truth” of modern life, the relations and logic cemented in the 1980s continue to inform trans politics and the figure of the chaser. Foreshadowing, trans politics, then, the scientific knowledge of the 1980s that cemented the gynemimetophile as a distinct person with a distinct desire would also cement the explicit desire for transfeminine people as inherently dangerous, via the logic of the sex offender.

## **4.2 Race and Contamination**

In the 1980s, the onset of a socially conservative swing in national politics brought together racialized and classed anxieties around gender and sexuality with a rapidly expanding carceral state. The newly elected President Ronald Reagan rode into office by appealing to aggrieved white middle-class voters with the racially coded language of “tough on crime” (Alexander 61). Harkening back to the 1965 Moynihan report that had reinforced the normative

impetus to adhere to traditional norms of the white middle class to head off the social decay that was prolific in black urban lower-class communities, Reagan condemned “welfare queens” and criminal “predators” (Alexander 61-62, 64, 71). The “welfare queen” was a not-so-subtle code for “lazy, greedy, black ghetto mother” who “steals” welfare from hardworking people and is often part of the black poor and working class of the inner cities. Reagan portrayed her as content to sit around and collect welfare, shunning work and passing on her bad values to her offspring (Collins, *Controlling* 77). The image of the “welfare queen” functioned by labeling the fertility of women who are not white and middle class as unnecessary and even dangerous to the country’s values (Collins, *Controlling* 77). Likewise, the criminal “predators” portrayed black gender-normative men as the “face of the human predator” who was part of an inferior and criminal subculture in the black poor and working class of the inner cities (Alexander 61-62, 64, 71). The criminal “predator” circulated the imagery of prolific crime levels sweeping through the United States urban streets (Alexander 62- 64). Thus, whereas the Moynihan report forewarned an outgrowth of social decay for all of the United States without intervention in the matriarchal structure of the black lower classes, Reagan’s condemnation of racialized and classed figure of “welfare queens” and criminal “predators” was a declaration the gender and sexuality nonconformity were now profuse and undermining white middle-class lifestyle. But, if the election of Ronald Reagan ushered in a renewed emphasis to get “tough on crime” and was the logical outcome foreseen by the Moynihan Report, the outgrowth of black lower-class gender and sexual deviance beyond their urban borders also meant for John Money, an outgrowth of the racialized and classed trans embodiment informed by black women and the racialized and classed desire informed by black men.

Indeed, in Money's taxonomy of paraphilias, gynemimetophilia, the racialized and classed desire once isolated to the black lower classes, was beginning to contaminate the white middle class. In his account of gynemimesis and gynemimetophile, Money's reference to the racial difference of this couple would serve as the means for the articulation of contamination by blackness. Money state:

“It was fairly well known that he was attracted exclusively to black transvestites and transsexuals, one of whom he had previously lived with him for a time. He himself was white.... When questioned, the partner gives some insight into his desires. He states, ‘I play the man’s role only, and I got that straight with each girl before I started living together with her...I would never play dress up,’ and on the question of Geraldine’s genitalia, the partner states, ‘I don’t know. I don’t think that really matters. The anatomy, it doesn’t faze me at all—period...I had more sex with my wife...than the transsexuals I’ve lived with’... He could not explain why he had left his wife, apart from his fascination with the gynemimetics...There was nothing unmasculine in his lean, gnarled, farm-worker appearance and manner” (Money, *Lovemaps* 206).

Instead of this white man’s trans partner “happening to be trans,” he actively eroticized a particular type of transness, which is enforced as a racialized and classed desire by the fact Money states the white partner is “attracted exclusively to black transvestites and transsexual” and the fact that Geraldine is a sex worker, to the point of leaving his wife (Money, *Lovemaps* 203). As with the gender and sexual nonconformity of the black lower class, this man was representative of a threat to social stability. More importantly, however, paraphilias, like gynemimetophilia, have a biological, genetic component.

Gynemimetophilia, in Money's taxonomy of paraphilias, is a stigmatic/eligibic type (Money, *Lovemaps* 103). Stigmatic/eligible type of desires, paraphiliac or not, are those genetically inherited elements, responses, or behaviors, which belong to an individual as part of a member of a "species" or "race" and impose certain contrastive on desirable partners (Money, *Lovemaps* 85,96-99, 293). Treating "species" and "race" as analogous, Money's taxonomy makes clear the "fact" that the racialized and classed desire of gynemimetophilia, like transness itself, is a pathology passed down from generation to generation among the black lower classes. It is the desire, inherited, allowing some men to be born with a predisposed disposition towards a "lady with a penis."

But since Money treats race and species as analogous, the fact that some species are "able to hybridize," like humans reproducing with other races, which allows assortative mating and mating to be "achieved on the basis of a variety of phylogenetic (developmental history of a species, which is the genealogical history shared by all members of the species) formulas," the desire once isolated to the black inner city is able to be passed to the white race/species (Money, *Lovemaps* 96-99, 293). The point is driven home further by Money's statement that stigmatic/eligibic types may be "simply encrusted tradition by which a people or tribal group keep itself segregated from hybridization" or "an explicitly articulated religious, legal, racial, linguistic, or social-class policy to prevent hybridization or miscegenation with outsiders" (Money, *Lovemaps* 97). Like nineteenth-century notions of fetishism, gynemimetophilia as "tribal" invokes a primitiveness. Alfred Binet, who coined the term fetishism, once stated: "The term fetishism suits quite well, we think, this type of sexual perversion. The adoration, in these illnesses, for inanimate objects such as nightcaps or high heels corresponds in every respect to the adoration of the savage or negro for fish bones or shiny pebbles, with the fundamental

difference that in the first case, religious adoration is replaced by sexual appetite” (Pettinger 3). Gynemimetophilia is representative of a “less advanced,” non-white, non-middle-class peoples. Money, invoking the century-old notion of degeneration, conceptually frames gynemimetophilia as the result of an interracial genetic mixture. The white man in Money’s account has been genetically contaminated, “unpure.” Contextualized in the atmosphere of the 1980s, the paraphiliac racialized and classed desire for gynemimesises, like the “welfare queens” and the criminal “predator,” was undermining the lifestyle of the white middle-class. Thus, Money, doing some dog-whispering, rationalizes the non-mixture of white middle-class people with lower-class black people through a nod to “prevent hybridization or miscegenation.” And, since white middle-class people to have imposed constraints on acceptable partners (other white middle-class people or, at least, people in line with the norms of the white middle-class), Money concludes that stigmatic/eligibic types “are not, in and of itself, paraphiliac” (Money, *Lovemaps* 97). A statement that at the same time indicates near exclusive adherence to gender-normative relations within that white middle-class are sanctionable, and, in this case of gynemimetophilia, the desire for a “lady with a penis” is not paraphiliac within the preverbal boundaries of black lower-class communities. Gynemimetophilia, the active and explicit desire for a particular type of trans embodiment, is within its rightful racialized and classed context. But, when a paraphilia, like stigmatic/eligibic types, “so tyrannously restricts the range of eligible partners that it effectively precludes a reciprocal relationship,” they become “pathological.” More importantly, paraphilias were the result of childhood trauma (Money, *Lovemaps* xvii, 96-97).<sup>28</sup> The asexual child was in danger. Like others throughout the decade, the political figure of the asexual,

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<sup>28</sup> Money does two things here: like older sexologists, Money allows a variety of desires, including activities with transfeminine people, across racial and class lines, people and animals, and even adults with children (Money, *Lovemaps* 96-99). However, these desires, Money, who is clearly talking to “men” but, arguably, to white middle-class men, should not foreclose the possibility of gender-normative hetero/homo relationships.

innocent child would emerge as a means by which racialized and classed anxieties around sexuality and gender were being expressed. The documentation of gynemimetophilia as a paraphilia and the result of childhood trauma, therefore, would be enmeshed as part of a larger project to reinforce traditional white middle-class gender and sexual roles.

### **4.3 Social Conservatives, Cultural Feminists, and the “Protection of Innocence”**

The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 ushered in a socially conservative milieu that reinforced traditional white middle-class gender and sexual norms across society. Through the political figure of “the child,” white middle-class activists from the left and right addressed the shifting gender and sexual norms that began in the 1970s (Day; deYoung, 260; Featherstone). Activists across the political spectrum would highlight the roving sexuality of inherently depraved male bodied people as sexually dangerous to the inherently innocent, and vulnerable female-bodied people and children— traits that have historically and stereotypically belonged to white women and children (Lancaster 48; Featherstone).<sup>29</sup>

Among social conservative, who were concerned about sex outside of marriage and took a keen interest in abuse and neglect as signs of personal disorder and symptoms of the breakdown of the nuclear family, the notion of depraved men circulated fears of sexual danger to urge a return to traditional feminine ideals of domesticity and motherhood (Lancaster 48-49). Patriarchal protection via the nuclear family was not only the sole reliable protection for women and children, but the nuclear family also served to domesticate men’s sexual urges, whose lust

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<sup>29</sup> It was a sex panic. Sex panics are “a social eruption fanned by the media and characterized by alarm over innocence imperiled. That innocence, historically and stereotypically, has belonged to white women and children. The sex panic always involves some form of bad actor. Usually the bad man, the predator, is a lurking, mutable, social presence, a menace against which the population can be mobilized. Anthropologist Roger Lancaster calls this a “poisoned solidarity.” You can go back to *Birth of a Nation*. You can go back to the white slavery panic of the 1880s. Or a more modern period: the 1950s, where the Red Scare was a form of moral panic, and there was a “lavender panic” at the same time” (Featherstone).

once aroused, especially outside of marriage, were “increasingly unable to refrain from sexual aggression,” conservative argued (Lancaster 49; Vance, *Negotiating Sex* 33-39). By being home and not at work, women in their domestic and motherly roles could ensure the protection of their children. And men, in their traditional role as “protectors,” secured the family from an outside danger; a roving lust driven man detached from a family, a stranger (Lancaster 94).

Simultaneously, an off-sect of white middle-class cultural feminists who viewed the separation of sex from intimacy as promoting male dominance, would hit at the heart of gender relations and normative masculinity with images of every man as a potential rapist (Angelides 281-283; Featherstone).<sup>30</sup> Notable feminists like Susan Brown-Miller, for example, portrayed rape as paradigmatic of relations between men and women and depicted incestuous child abuse not as the normative rule under the patriarchal family structure (Lancaster 48). Unlike social conservatives, the normative patriarchal family was the problem. In making this statement, Brown-Miller made nearly all male people suspected rapists. Likewise, Andrea Dworkin famously depicted all penile-vaginal sex as violence: “The vagina . . . is muscled and the muscles have to be pushed apart. The thrusting is persistent invasion. She is opened up, split down the center. She is occupied” (Lancaster 48). A line that firmly cemented adult males, by design, as sexually violent. As feminists attempted to comb through the fibrils of one’s consciousness for every last trace of male supremacy, especially in the bedroom, a feminist sexual ethic would crystallize that framed sex as a medium for expressing bonds of intimacy (Cho; Seidman 199). “Feminine,” “womanly” sexuality was to be nurturing, tender, exhibit and reinforce the intimate, loving qualities of a relationship (Seidman 199).

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<sup>30</sup> These cultural feminists are by far not representative of the entirety of the feminist movement. The feminist movement was/is a diverse and complex amalgamation of people, not only “women” (Echols, 36-41).



The highlighting of male depravity had, by necessity, brought to the political spotlight hegemonic white middle-class masculinity and male sexuality (Angelides 281). In spotlighting hegemonic white middle-class masculinity and sexuality, activists on the left and right, but primarily feminists, undermined the “masculinist assumption” of male unfettered sexual access to women and children. But, at the same time, the essentialist arguments by conservatives and cultural feminists would have casualties. Through the framework of the inherent natures of males and females and the danger of male sexuality outside of intimacy, particularly white men’s sexuality, all transfeminine people and, by extension, their gender-normative partners would be problematized. As a result of their sexed (male) bodies, the fact that drag queens, transvestites, transsexuals, and gynomimesis (although, as stated before, there was no single name to yet to universally describe this type of transness) were gender nonconforming also made them sexually “deviant,” especially among cultural feminists.

Cultural feminists' criticism made all signs of “maleness” and “masculinity” incompatible with feminism (Cho).<sup>31</sup> In terms of transfeminine people, Robin Morgan, for example, accused “transvestite or transsexual males” in the women’s movement of “leeching off women.” Referencing Beth Elliot, Morgan labeled her “an opportunist, an infiltrator, and a destroyer—with the mentality of a rapist” (Meyerowitz 258). Meanwhile, Mary Daly elevated transphobia to a metaphysical precept by labeling transsexuality a “necrophilic invasion” of vital women’s space in the section of her book, *Gyn/Ecology*, called “Boundary Violation and the Frankenstein Phenomenon” (Meyerowitz 260). For Daly, men and male “energy” was

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<sup>31</sup> The feminist etic at the time meant that transsexual women, heterosexual women, and butch-femme relationships, which some feminists argued was a fetish, people once embraced, became problematic (Cho).

“destructive,” a necrophilia, at which “woman hating is at the core” (Downing, *Citizen* 165). Transness was, for these cultural feminists, metaphorically and physically dangerous.

In *The Transsexual Empire*, Janice Raymond, “The transsexual constructed lesbian-feminist,” wrote, “not only colonizes female bodies but appropriates a ‘feminist’ soul.. [they] rape women’s bodies by reducing the real female form to an artifact, appropriating this body for themselves” (Meyerowitz 260). Taking aim at doctors, especially John Money, Raymond accused them of noxious male behavior, trying “to wrest from women the power inherent in female biology.” Through transsexual surgery, Raymond argued, male doctors created stereotypically feminine women to “create their ultimate man-made woman” (Meyerowitz 260). Cultural feminist’s criticism undermined Money whose research on transsexualism was an attempt to uphold white womanhood by ensuring transness was bodily and visually non-threatening and had called for flexibility within the range of stereotypes (Meyerowitz 260). In an attempt to cleanse themselves of maleness, masculinity, and ultimately patriarchy, cultural feminists had positioned transness as an existential threat that could replace gender-normative white middle-class women (Cho; Segal 4-9). But, while cultural feminists’ arguments about transsexualism were primarily aimed at transsexuals and doctors, these feminists’ arguments about the effects of pornography would bring together men’s sexual desire and transsexualism.

Cultural feminists’ epistemological framework centered sexual imagery, especially pornography, as a source for the re/production of fetishistic sexual desires that endangered the well-being of women. Andrea Dworkin, for example, argued that in pornography a “woman’s identity is reduced to a fetish whose sole purpose is to provoke a sexual response in the male viewer” (Long 77). The fetishistic, pornographic gaze of men reduces women to body parts (she is ‘pussy’ or ‘ass’) and/or appearance (she is blonde with big breasts) (Long 80). In terms of

transness, pornography's fetishistic reduction was so seductive that it taught men that their penis is a thing to "get rid of" and a vagina is something to acquire (Stryker 123-124). The connection between transsexual women and the fetishistic, pornographic gaze of men would be hammered home by Janice Raymond: the "same socialization that enables men to objectify women in rape, pornography and 'drag' enables them to objectify their own bodies," Raymond argued (Stryker 123-124). By cultural feminists' epistemological framework, all transfeminine representations and embodiments were a fetishistic reduction of women assigned female at birth.<sup>32</sup> Instead of a cure to social disorder, transness was not only emblematic of a social problem but the source of a proliferation of more. Transness, especially those who hadn't undergone a genital surgery and, thus, implicated even more so by cultural feminists' hyperbolic usage of rape, had to be brought in line with social norms of white middle class womanhood.

But, in recirculating old notions of transness as inherently a fetish, cultural feminists' criticism brought to the fore, if only tangentially, gender-normative men's explicit and active desire for them. That is, if, per cultural feminist's logic, drag, transvestites, and transsexuals appropriated bits and pieces of normative womanhood, gender-normative men's desire, too, were a characteristic reduction of normative womanhood. Arguably, men described as gynemimetophiles pieced together the pieces of womanhood. These men appropriated the trappings of womanhood to produce a "man-made woman" who is able, like Geraldine's statement, able to "please" everyone. Gender-normative men, like their transfeminine partners, then, in a hyperbolic, symbolic fashion "rape" gender-normative women. And whereas these feminists, supported by social conservatives, would attempt to end the science of transsexualism,

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<sup>32</sup> Since the start of the science of transsexualism, there were many who called into question whether transsexual women were really dysphoric or homosexuals who sought out surgery "more . . . to gratify a heterosexual man than to appease their own gender role distress" (Meyerowitz 174).

the opposite was true for John Money. Transfeminine people and their gender-normative partners had to be brought back in line, treated out of existence.

#### 4.4 “Treatment,” not Prisons

In order to address the depravity of men/males, social conservatives and some feminists appealed to the state for protection for ‘all’ (white and gender-conforming) women and children (Alexander 61; Day; Lancaster 97-100; Whalley and Hackett 2). Enabling the establishment of the prison state, activists on the right and left of politics galvanized state penal apparatuses through the enhancement and widening of sex crimes (Lancaster 97-100). Throughout the decade, as accusations of child sexual abuse scandals rocked the nation, hundreds of adults, primarily men, would be falsely accused, tried, and sentenced across the United States (Lancaster 50; deYoung 261).<sup>33</sup> The mass hysteria around childhood sexual violence would produce the modern figure of the pedophile as a modern menace; a sexual deviate who was characterized as a white man who was sexually dangerous to white children, especially boys (Lancaster 94). In an era with a dramatic increase in state penal power, the pedophile solidified the worst of the worst: a sex offender.

But, the growing reliance on the prison state as the means by which to address sexually violent men was problematic for Money (and other mental health officials). Money states, “[society’s] first thought is to catch each degenerate bastard (the public wrongly expects every sex offender to be male) and put him behind bars or on death row. Execution, insofar as it prevents sex offending, does it only one person at a time, and never for all of society, completely. Killing the offender has not been an effective method of eradicating sex offending” (Money, *Lovemaps* 2). Sex offenders, according to Money, represented a scientific problem:

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<sup>33</sup> This period is formally known as the Satanic Ritual Abuse panic (see deYoung).

“The way of science is the way that is needed also for the prevention of *paraphilic sex offending*, so that it will not be exponentially proliferated, generation upon future generation... (emphasis added) (Money, *Lovemaps* 2). As paraphiliacs, sex offenders required treatment, not punishment.

In framing sexual violence through the language of paraphilia, “a condition occurring in [primarily men but women, too] of being compulsively responsive to and obligately dependent upon an unusual or personally or socially unacceptable stimulus, perceived or in the imagery of fantasy, for optimal initiation and maintenance of erotosexual arousal and the facilitation or attainment of orgasm,” Money medicalized and individualized the problem (Downing, *A Disavowed* 49). Because rather than an inherent trait of normative masculinity, sexual violence and non-normative sexual desires were the result of a perverse social environment, poor socialization during childhood: paraphilias occurs as a result of abuse, of a traumatic experience that then gets eroticized in the service of preserving sexual feeling, or simply owing to inadequate education about sex and lack of appropriate “rehearsal play” with other children (Downing, *A Disavowed* 49). In line with earlier sexologists, the problem of the 1980s was the result of white middle-class men’s sexuality being contaminated, which led them to become so fixated on sexual pleasure they were unable to fulfill their “natural” gender and sexual roles. And, rather than a natural trait, through the medical language of paraphilias, sexually violent men or merely men who deviated from normative sexuality represented a perverse “others.”

Further, through the pathologization of non-normative sexuality and criminal sex acts, paraphiliac served as a “negative model[s] of masculinity” whose conduct as not only “unnatural” but “both strange and horrible” (Angelides 285; Douard 36). Paraphilias, thus, individualized sexual violence and nonnormative sexuality and in doing purified normative white

middle-class masculinity. Logically, if the paraphiliac emerged as a means to purify normative white middle-class masculine, the paraphiliac gynemimetophile, too, served a similar function.

However, the framing of non-normative sexuality and criminal sex acts as pathologies, which are induced by the social environment, meant childhood innocence was being endangered. The proliferation of sex offenders, for Money, was symbolic of a perverse social environment, a breakdown of the white nuclear family. In order to address the “danger” cultural feminists argued that transfeminine people presented and, by extension, their gender-normative partner, the social environment would have to be cleansed, made safe for children, ensuring reproduction of “normative” masculine and feminine, heterosexual and homosexual people.

To end paraphiliac sex offending, Money sought to create a taxonomy of paraphilias that “extended to others with a kinky sexual fixation or paraphilia that does not offend the law but offends only themselves or their partners” (Downing, *Normophilia* 282). Through treatment of all non-normative sexuality, Money would bring paraphiliac back into “conformity with the standard as dictated by customary, religious or legal authority” (Downing, *Citizens* 164). Or, more to the point, through the eradication of non-gender normative sexuality, through the security of the “safety” of children, a white patriarchal middle-class hetero/homo normative social order would be maintained.

#### **4.5 The Visibility of Transfeminine People**

In terms of gynemimetophilia, the security of a white patriarchal middle-class hetero/homo normative social order via the “child” had to contend with the shifts taking place throughout society. Because while some men, white, are born with a predisposed disposition towards a “lady with a penis,” an individual’s developmental history (socialization) informs the variations that this desire may ultimately take (Money, *Lovemaps* 96-99, 293). That is, a child

raised within the normative boundaries of a gender and sexually conforming environment, primarily the family, should, regardless of disposition, ideally develop into proper heterosexuals (Money, *Lovemaps* 24).<sup>34</sup> Paraphilias, including gynemimetophilia, are the result of a juvenile sexual experience, “a strategy for turning tragedy into triumph” by preserving “sinful lust in the lovemap by dissociating it from saintly love” (Downing, *Normophilia* 280-28; Money *Lovemaps* xvii). The black male child, then, is inherently perverse and raised within a perverse social environment, one of matriarchs, welfare queens, criminal predators, which produces and reproduces the desire for transfeminine people with male genitals. But the white male child, who may be predisposed, but within their white middle class communities, should still develop idealistically into a normative masculine heterosexual partner. If the predisposed white child does develop an active and explicit desire for transfeminine people with male genitals, which would be evident by adolescence, it is the result of childhood trauma. The solution as to gynemimetophilia, and paraphilias generally, is to cured, corrected, and, ultimately, bring gynemimetophiles back in line with the institutionalized norm white middle-class norms gender-normative long-term monogamy, aka heteronormativity (Giami, *Paraphilia* 1132).<sup>35</sup> In the 1980s, however, the evidence for widespread poor socialization which would enable the proliferation of gender and sexual nonconformity would’ve been visible throughout the media as the visibility of trans people rapidly increased.

In popular culture, transsexuality reappeared in new forms of media outside a medical context. In the 1970s and 1980s, transsexual themes appeared in feature-length films.

Transsexuals themselves routinely spoke to a national audience on new tabloid television talk

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<sup>34</sup> Money doesn’t explain the development of homosexuality or bisexuality.

<sup>35</sup> Money refers to this as “normaphilias:” “a condition of being [sexually and romantically] in conformity with the standard as dictated by customary, religious or legal authority” (Downing, *Citizens* 164).

shows" (Meyerowitz 256). The visibility of trans people constituted a new problem for medical officials. The representation of trans women/transfeminine people challenged the norm of "transsexuality," which had long normalized the notion 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" (Benjamin 11). According to medical authorities, transsexuals were supposed to transition and disappear into gender/hetero normativity. Money remarks on this visibility in pop culture:

For most of the general public, gynemimesis may be construed as a medical or psychiatric condition, though more likely as an egregious insult to common sense, a defiance of the social definition of male and female, a conspiracy against sexual morality, or a criminal offense to be apprehended and punished. Conversely, the general public also condones gynemimesis provided it is institutionalized within the entertainment industry on stage, in movies, or on television, where the impersonation does not need to be unmasked because it is advertised in advance (Money, *Lovemaps* 212).

Simultaneously, by the 1980s, a number of private doctors discovered a lucrative practice in transsexual surgery and began to specialize in sex-change operations (Meyerowitz 256). With surgery more readily available, the number of people obtaining medical treatment increased (Meyerowitz 256). As a result of these private clinics, people who were able to "pass" in their new gender identity were becoming more visible (Valentine, *Imagining* 35).

The material shifts are inferred in Money's account of Geraldine, the black trans woman (gynemimesis), who he documents for ten years and likely in Baltimore (Money, *Lovemaps* 198). Geraldine wants "silicone injections," a practice that can lead to long-term pain, infections, and serious injuries, such as scarring and permanent disfigurement, embolism (blockage of a blood



vessel), stroke, and death,” and is involved in street-based sex work (FDA; Money, *Lovemaps* 201, 203). Moreover, by the mid-1980s, John Money and Margaret Lamacz were categorizing gender normative males who desired transfeminine people with penises in "large cit[ies]," "historical port area of the city," or in "large cities in the West" (Money, *Lovemaps* 104, 202, 212). Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that: for one, private practices for gender-affirming care, which were already allowing more people who could afford it to transition, likely also expanded the underground market that materialized in the 1960s onward (Meyerowitz 273). And the greater ability of silicone meant more transfeminine people could change their secondary sex features, like breast development. Silicone enabled transfeminine people to blur the visible distinctions of the sexed body. And as the underground market would have likely coincided with a growth in street-based sex work in big cities as people from working-class and minority backgrounds attempted to access care and faced discrimination, which was made harder by the economic shifts of the 1980s, transfeminine people like Geraldine presented a new problem (Alexander 61). The growing visibility of transfeminine was problematic for Money, since males are more vulnerable to paraphilias due to prenatal hormones which lower their threshold for “visual erotic arousal.” (Money, *Lovemaps* 27). The effects of being sexually aroused by a representation of a transfeminine person in childhood would lead to the eventual men to develop a paraphilias for transness.

Consequently, as the visibility of trans people was expanding, so too was the desire for transfeminine people and bodies. Money’s documentation of a bar for transfeminine people and gender-normative men is representative of a widening expansion of sexual desires for transfeminine people. In the 1980s, as transfeminine became more visible than in prior decades,

gender-normative men were wrestling with their distinct desire (Money, *Lovemaps* 203).<sup>36</sup> But further, in this period gender-normative males who explicitly desired transfeminine people would become more aware of their desire as distinct from the hetero/homo binary as they wrestled to articulate their desire. In "*Trans-Attraction: Not Kink or Fetish,*" but a *Legitimate Sexual Orientation\**," Randy, at the risk of oversimplification, states

In high school, I was a big slut, adding another notch on my masculinity belt with each girl I slept with. I enjoyed it but never had any lasting relationships. During that time, I began getting confused sexually because although I enjoyed having sex with girls, afterwards I kind of felt empty like there was something missing. At this time I had no idea about what trans even was, but I started being attracted to very androgynous guys. This was in the '80s, and androgynous presentation was popular. I was particularly attracted to a guy that dressed androgynously and wore make-up... One night I was walking in the park in the town square, and I ran into one of my old friends who asked "What's it with you being a homosexual? I heard you were dating a guy." Immediately a rush of shame flooded my body...I was confused because I didn't think I was gay because I wasn't attracted to men- at least not masculine men. The "Boy Georgesque"

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<sup>36</sup> The moment reflects Foucault's argument that power and pleasure move in a perpetual spiral. Foucault states, [t]he pleasure that comes of exercising a power that questions, monitors, watches, spies, searches out, palpates, brings to light; and on the other hand, the pleasure that kindles at having to evade this power, flee from it, fool it, or travesty it. The power that lets itself be invaded by the pleasure it is pursuing; and opposite it, power asserting itself in the pleasure of showing off, scandalizing, or resisting... These attractions, these evasions, these circular incitements have traced around bodies and sexes, not boundaries not to be crossed, but perpetual spirals of power and pleasure (Foucault *History* 45).

That is, the will to knowledge that scrutinizes, parses out, classifies sex, and, in this case, gender creates the means for making particular sexual activity visible and knowable. Sexual and gender differences are marked by their differences in clinical and scientific knowledge. This scientific discourse, then, produces new people and pleasures. Simultaneously, however, the intensification of scrutiny on perversity (sexual and gender, in this case) creates awareness of one's pleasures, an awareness formed as a response to that scrutiny. The person thus becomes more aware of these pleasures and comes to value them more. This heightened awareness and sense of value led him to discover sexual pleasure, where the person may not have noticed it before. Thus, the "perpetual spirals of power and pleasure" is a productive force producing people and pleasures.

relationship faded and I was back having sex with women... I felt this is what I was missing. I never felt part of the LGBTIQQA community or felt gay, although I labeled myself that for a while because there was not yet a word for a man who was trans-attracted. I was in my first relationship with a transwoman for 3 years. A few years after that relationship ended I moved to Los Angeles and was in a relationship with a transwoman for 10 years (Ashley and Robertson).

Randy's journey from the 1980s onward is evidence of one knowledge being displaced by newer knowledge. In another narrative, Matt struggled with how to identify and understand his desires in the 1980s. After coming across a model pictured in his "Hustler-esque magazine," Matt wasn't sure if he was gay:

In the 1980s, it was particularly daunting for a trans amorous man to confront his sexual identity. 'The stigma that went along with being gay at that time in my youth was horrible,' Matt said. 'There was nowhere to go, no LGBT Center. Most people when I grew up didn't even have cable.' He felt he had a lot to lose—not the least of which was an attachment to his identity as a heterosexual man (Tourjée).

And Joseph McClellan, too, speaks of this desire in the 1980s: "My first exposure to a trans woman was some time in the mid or late 1980s while watching the Phil Donohue Show, or something like it, on a little TV in my family kitchen....she looked lovely, like any number of video vixens I had admired on MTV. Though quite young, it was not lost on me what was different about her, but it didn't bother me at all; it even intrigued me, though I would not think of it again for many years" (McClellan xiv).

Before the 1980s, Randy, Matt, and Joseph would've been classified as homosexual. But, whereas "gay," in the traditional sexological sense of homosexuality, was understood simply as a

male-bodied person who desires other male-bodied people, and thus could've included Randy, Matt, and Joseph, the gender-conforming same-sex ethos of sexuality in the 1980s made Randy, Matt, and Joseph's sexuality illegible. The man Money interviews for categorization document the lack of legibility under normative sexual categories: when asked about his sexual identity, the interviewee, who is when known to be exclusively attracted to black transvestites and transsexuals, identifies himself as "bisexual" (Money, *Lovemaps* 205). Bisexual served as a category that has historically traveled with transness to explain gender identities and sexualities outside of binaries, indicated by Geraldine's simultaneous usage (Meyerowitz 21-26). Thus, in the 1980s, in Foucauldian fashion, gender normative males were becoming more aware of their desires, leading them to discover sexual pleasure where before, they may not have noticed it as separate from homosexuality or heterosexuality.

But, amid the sex panic of the 1980s, Randy, Matt, Joseph, and countless others growing visibility was problematic. As Money sought to create a grand taxonomy of "unnatural" desires to treat out of existence gynemimesises and gynemimetophiles would have to be documented too. At a moment when traditional gender and sexual roles were being reinforced, transfeminine people who didn't desire to undergo vaginoplasty and the gender-normative males who desired them would come under the medical gaze. The racialized trans embodiment of gynemimesises had to be treated and made to align with gender norms. Meanwhile, the racialized desire of the gynemimetophiles had to be treated and made to align with the norms of sexuality. In the wake of the separation of gender and sexuality, which made transfeminine people and their gender normative male partners visible as distinct from homosexuality and, thus, made their documentation possible would collide with the restoration of traditional white middle-class gender and sexual roles, which would necessitate their documentation. In this moment, then,

trans-attraction emerged as a distinct sexual desire. And the chaser as a distinct type of person had emerged. Ultimately, the documentation of gynemimesises and gynemimetophiles was thus part of a larger project to reinforce traditional gender and sexual norms of the white middle-class.

#### 4.6 Conclusion

According to Judith Levine, “the sex offender is a social menace to make the renewed old order more attractive” and who “tends to crop up in times of social transformation” (Levine 29,31). In the 1980s, the transformations and institutionalization of a gender normative model of homosexuality, via the separation of gender and sexuality, collided with racialized and classed anxieties around gender and sexuality, the proliferation of transfeminine people in the media, and subsequently a growing acknowledgement of gender-normative men's desire for transfeminine people. The documentation of gynemimetophile, the earlier reversion of the modern chaser, circulated a narrative of an “unhealthy,” “abnormal,” and sexually dangerous desire that would inform the conduct primarily for white middle-class men but also transfeminine people.

Highlighted earlier, the categorization of gynemimetophilia as a paraphilia of the stigmatic/eligibic type put gender-normative men and the desire for a transfeminine partner with a penis alongside some of the most loathed sexual activities. Stigmatic/eligible paraphilias was a category held alongside gynemimetophilia, pedophilia, incestuous father-daughter sexual abuse, or bestiality (Money *Lovemaps* 96-99). In various ways, these ideas had traveled together: Freud, for example, grouped bestiality, pedophilia, and homosexuality together as examples of deviation in terms of sexual object choice (Freud *Sexual* 45-61). In another example, a primitive, animal-like lust was attached to the pathological homosexual: the sexual psychopath of the 1930s into the 1950s, for example, was often constructed, more often than not, as a homosexual man who was “all instinct and impulse,” sexually abusive to children, girls, and boys, and who often

killed his victims (Freedman 83-106).<sup>37</sup> Invoking the homosexual sexual psychopath of the 1930s and foreshadowing the modern discourse of the chaser, gynemimetophiles are lust driven, unable to commit to monogamous relationships and fall in love, fixated on the genitals of transfeminine people, and may eventually kill. In the 1980s, by grouping of these activities together, Money, like Freud and others had done decades earlier with homosexuality, outlined "inappropriate" choices to engage in sexual relations with for gender-normative males.

Throughout the 1930s and into the 1950s, the figure of the sexual psychopath served a productive force in the construction of heterosexuality. Laws across the United States that targeted white middle class men whose "utter lack of power to control his sexual impulses" made him "likely to attack . . . the objects [read women and children] of his uncontrolled and uncontrollable desires," stigmatized extreme acts of violence and ultimately helped legitimize nonviolent, but nonprocreative, sexual acts, within marriage or outside it (Freedman 84). The circulation of the narrative of "sick" middle-class white men who were confined to mental institutions (unlike black men who were sent to prison or executed), served as an omnipresent threat that restricted women's sexual behavior and maintain a patriarchal order (Freedman 102; Lancaster 36). Simultaneously, the sexual psychopath informed white middle-class men that women were appropriate for sexual relations, while making off-limits other people assigned male at birth and children (Freedman 102). In the end, the sexual psychopath helped legitimize less violent, but previously taboo, sexual acts while also stigmatizing unmanly rather than unwomanly, behavior as the most serious threat to sexual order (Freedman 87). With the sexual psychopath in mind, the question then emerges: how does the gynemimetophile inform

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<sup>37</sup>It should also be noted that since the 1960s, horror movies frequently featured transfeminine people as serial killers who commit violence against women. Most Notably, in the late 1980s, *Silence of the Lambs* would continue the circulation of this narrative (Nelson and Carney).

“healthy,” “normal” sexual conduct primarily for white middle-class men but also transfeminine people.

According to Lancaster, the pedophile is a white man who “circulates fear of crime beyond the inner city and into the outer suburbs. He thus fosters security measures and watchfulness in places far removed from any crime scene. He anchors the culture of control firmly within the far-flung redoubts of the white heterosexual middle-class family” (Lancaster 94). Arguably, then, the gynemimetophile is a white man found in “gynemimetic communities” in “large cit[ies],” “historical port area of the city,” and in “large cities in the West” are urban figures (Money, *LoveMaps* 104, 202, 205 212). The gynemimetophile fosters security measures and surveillance in gynemimetic communities by ensuring gender-normative men desires travel through the norms of gendered sexuality, aka “happens to be trans,” not the sexed body. Money discreetly makes this point through the description of gender-normative males’ eroticization of transfeminine people as “paraphilia” for a “lady with a penis, more than to a lady without one” (Money, *LoveMaps* 103). To ensure their own safety and health, transfeminine people should uphold and reproduce traditional gender and sexual norms of the white middle class to maximize her legibility as a woman by being nonsexual, pure, and, ultimately, gender-conforming. In this way, the gynemimetophile has a dual purpose to delegitimizes transness in and of itself and legitimizes sexual relations between gender-normative men and transfeminine people if the eroticization travels through gender.

Further, through the eroticization of gender, men who engage in sexual relations with transfeminine people are in the norms of manhood (though for Money and perhaps society in general, these may be of lower standing in the social hierarchy of manhood, like gender-normative homosexual men) (Money, *Lovemaps* 105). The gynemimetophile, on the other hand,

is a queer, pathological, anti-social other. The gynemimetophile who sexually and gender non-conforming is outside of the norms of white middle-class manhood. In the end, the categorization of gynemimetophiles as sex offenders operate to manage relationships between gender-normative males and transfeminine people through the reproduction white middle-class norms and, thus, non-threatening to the social order. The gynemimetophile/ chaser is a tool of white supremacist gender-normative-hetero patriarchy.



## 5 CONCLUSION

The emergence of the gynemimetophile, a medical version of the modern day chaser, represents a long progression of racist, classist, sexist, homophobic, and transphobic thought that began with the nineteenth century pathological homosexual. As racialized ideas of masculine black women and lust-driven black men traveled through the decades, gender researchers, who were attempting to reinforce femininity as a trait of the female body and masculinity as a trait of the male body, drew on ideas of perversity attached to the black lower-class and homosexuality to inform a “healthy,” heterosexual sexual ethic for transsexual women and their gender-normative male partners. Scientific knowledge informed transsexual women's and gender-normative males' relationship with the transsexual body. Gender researchers deemphasized the trans body and elevated gender expression. Normalizing the transsexual penis as perverse to transsexual women themselves and gender-normative males, medical officials constructed gender-conforming pairings in line with the norms of the white middle-class. The construction of a “normal,” “healthy” would come to inform the sexual ethic of “happens to be trans.” But, by the 1980s, the transformation of homosexuality, via the separating gender and sexuality, collided with racialized and classed anxieties around gender and sexuality, the proliferation of transfeminine people in the media, and subsequently a growing acknowledgement of gender-normative men's desire for transfeminine people, would enable and necessitate the categorization of gender-normative men who actively desire transfeminine people. The gynemimetophile would emerge as a sex offender as part of a larger project to reinforce white middle-class gender and sexual norms. Thus, the gynemimetophile would inform the knowledge that would inform the idea of the chaser decades later.

Thus, in regards to the question of whether gender normative males who are sexually and/or romantically attracted to trans women are heterosexual or homosexual, straight or gay, the answer stands, in the final analysis, as yes and no, both and neither. Gender-normative males' attraction to trans women spans sexual categories. The erotization of trans women can happen through gender, the body, or both. The diversity of this population is made possible because the eroticization of trans women, like all sexuality, was constructed. Throughout the twentieth century, medical and scientific knowledge converged to create not only a new type of person but a new type of desire. Sexologists thus created the knowledge by which trans-attracted gender-normative males have come to be known by trans communities and others today.

Unfortunately, this project hasn't yet uncovered how or why this figure emerges in transgender politics. It is, therefore, vital that further research reveal how and for what purpose this figure appears amid this "leftist" movement. But, with the onset of trans normativity which demands adherence to the gender binary, the chaser, it can be assumed, functions as a disciplinary device that ensures that gender-normative -trans relationships adhere to the logic of gender (Aizura 295-296).

It's tempting to say that nobody, or hardly anyone, would know these ideas are obscure ideas and theories. However, anyone who makes such an argument fails to consider how knowledge operates. Michel Foucault posits that power is based on knowledge and makes use of knowledge; conversely, power reproduces knowledge by shaping it in accordance with its anonymous intentions (Foucault). In other words, the established knowledge of sexuality allows for the reproduction of power relationships (relationships are not only top-down but bottom-up and between people), which in turn reproduces the knowledge of sexuality. If, then, one considers that knowledge builds on other knowledge, the institutionalizing of a gender-normative

hetero/homo binary in medicine (one site of institutionalized sexuality) gives continuous ground for the explicit erotization of transness to be understood as a fetish. The fetishization of transness is a “truth” supported by the knowledge of “natural” sexuality, informed by the separation of sexuality and gender.

The continuous circulation of the eroticization of transness as always and only a fetish reinforces the norms of sexuality. “Natural” sexuality, however, reinforces transness as undesirable. Instead, the norms of the gender model of sexuality dictate that desire for trans people travels through gender, just “happen to be trans,” by which attraction travels exclusively through gender. But by positioning transness as inherently undesirable, trans people, primarily trans women of color, become more vulnerable. That is, systems of oppression always position black people, people of the lower class, and other marginalized people as gender and sexually nonconforming. These trans people are always at risk, unworthy of “love.” Gender and sexual conformity are intrinsic qualities of the white middle class. As such, the reinforcement of the bi-gender sexual system valorizes some trans people and bodies over others. Put another way, the “production of transgender whiteness” is a “process of value extraction from bodies of color” (Snorton and Haritaworn 67). Black trans and gender-conforming people become the raw material on which white trans people find value (Snorton and Haritaworn 67).

Furthermore, the notion of non-normative sexuality as inherently dangerous is always and already deployable, especially when one considers the marginalized. The idea of sexual danger is the bedrock on which the Western world emerges (Rai 539). It’s even more so applicable because paraphilias continue to circulate in psychology/psychiatry as “unhealthy” desires/activities that deviate from hetero norms. “Natural” sexuality and sexual danger taken together, the idea of the chaser is predetermined and readily available to speak to a type of

sexually dangerous personhood. A type of personhood whose omnipresence shapes and manages social relationships to ensure trans people and their gender-normative partner's compliance with the norms of gender and sexuality, reproducing society as a whole.

However, it's not the case that the chaser/ trans-attracted men should be made respectable and legible for "love." Doing so, as the project highlights, merely redraws the line, producing new "perverse" people, which reinforces racist and classist notions of sexuality and gender. More precisely, the sanctioning of new types of sex and desires is insufficient because fetishism is about an outside gaze: fetishism relies on the "... underlying ability to define someone else as guilty of overvaluation. Corollary to that is the inevitability of having your own values labeled as fetishes.... Fetishism is a dialogue premised on the logic of the fetish triangle... in which one's claim of fetishism entails contamination by the thing it voices" (Logan 135). The only way forward is to abolish the bi-gender and bi-sexuality systems. Instead of prohibiting sex and desires, a radical way forward is to do the hard work of focusing on harm, more effective ways of communicating, and strategies for the transformation of society.

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