That queerness and exile often go hand in hand is a well-rehearsed argument in studies concerned with diaspora and the queer subjects of (trans)national communities. While some scholars have focused on the transformative aspects of queerness in global context, others have challenged liberatory readings of mobility and what Sara Ahmed has called “the conflation of migration with the transgression of boundaries.” Furthermore, inward-looking analyses of queer people whose aesthetics and emotional allegiances rendered them out of sync with their contemporaries have taken up the tropes of exile to extend understanding of the manifestations of queer precarity. In a reassessment of what she calls Walter Pater’s “forced exile,” for example, Heather Love has argued that Pater’s “shrinking politics”—his refusal “to approximate the norms of modernist political subjectivity”—must be understood as a form of double displacement, because Pater inhabited “a threatened position as someone with secrets to keep and as someone whose particular form of secrecy was fast becoming superannuated.” In this chapter, I take the debates about the shapes and effects of queer exile as my prompt for reconsidering Hirschfeld’s final years, specifically his account of a journey through America, Asia, and the Middle East, which he undertook to escape Nazi persecution in Germany. Critics have read his published travelogue, *Die Weltreise eines Sexualforschers* (The world journey of a sexologist; published in English as *Men and Women: Impressions of a Sexologist*), as an example of Hirschfeld’s overall progressive, if historically contingent, sexual
and racial politics. I want to complicate these readings by paying attention to not only the existence of global sexual reform networks that enabled Hirschfeld’s exile—networks that challenge the Eurocentric focus of many histories of sexuality—but also his citational practices, or what Sara Ahmed calls the textual “screening techniques” that index “how certain bodies take up spaces by screening out the existence of others.” In some ways, this line of investigation is similar to the questions I ask in Chapters 1 and 3 about racial and gender violence and whose voice is admitted into writing. But here I use the concept of Hirschfeld’s queer exile to tease out his movable, sometimes moving, allegiances and disavowals during a time of political upheaval and personal uncertainty. Organized roughly chronologically, the chapter examines Hirschfeld’s visit to the United States; turns to his writings on Japan, India, Egypt, and Palestine; moves from his “straight turn” in America to the feminist allegiances he claimed in Asia despite rarely allowing women’s voices into the narrative, and concludes with a consideration of Hirschfeld’s complex political stance as an anticolonial supporter of Zionism. The travelogue reveals the connectedness of modern sexual debates across different parts of the world even as it shows that Hirschfeld’s anecdotal and epistemological efforts, while not actively screening out the existence of others, nevertheless tended to speak over their voices.

**Straight in America**

*Die Weltreise* marks an exile that was for Hirschfeld both traumatic and a respite from rising Nazism. Over the course of the 1920s he had increasingly expressed concerns about his future. In January 1929 he wrote about the financial struggle to maintain the institute. Seven months later, he claimed that he had mended his financial issues. However, by that stage it is clear that he had begun to worry about the loyalty of some of his colleagues. In his “Testament,” a diary that also functioned as a will, he noted his fallout with his former collaborator Max Hodann over the running of the institute, claiming that Hodann was not suited to combining idealism with the practical sense needed to run the facility. In contrast, Hirschfeld praised the continued support of Karl Giese, his long-term partner whose role it was to oversee the institute archive, and Friedrich Haupstein, the institute’s administrative lead. Concerned with the future of the institute, he furthermore announced the wish that his longtime colleagues Bernhard Shapiro, an endocrinologist, and Felix Abraham, who led the institute’s “transvestite work,” together with the gynecologist Ludwig Levy-Lenz take over the institute’s running after his death. As it happens all three men were Jewish. That Hirschfeld was well aware of the dangers they faced is indicated by his
proviso that they work “as long as possible.”11 The expression foreshadows the impossible conditions for Jews after the Nazis officially took power in 1933. While Hirschfeld’s three medical colleagues escaped Germany, only two of them, Shapiro and Abraham, would survive the war. Abraham took his own life in Florence in 1937. Karl Giese, who after Hirschfeld’s death and the closure of the institute ended up living impoverished and isolated in Brno (now in the Czech Republic), also committed suicide, in 1938.

Hirschfeld could not have known precisely how events would unfold in Germany. However, in 1930, on the eve of what would become his world journey, it was clear that he perceived a precarious future. In light of this it is not surprising that he readily agreed to an invitation by his old friend Harry Benjamin to lecture in America. Benjamin, a German-born endocrinologist, had visited the United States in 1913 and decided to remain in the country after the outbreak of World War I.12 Benjamin freely acknowledged that it was during “the many times in the 1920s [when he] visited Hirschfeld and his Institute” that his interest in the people whose gender did not conform to binary norms and social expectations first developed.13 Hirschfeld’s trip to New York provided him not only with an opportunity to escape from the deteriorating situation in Germany but also an emotional respite as it allowed him to renew old friendships at a time when some of his institute colleagues turned their backs on him.

Hirschfeld arrived in New York in November 1930. At Benjamin’s invitation, he first presented a lecture to a group of German-American physicians.14 Delivered in German, the talk dealt with current debates about sexual pathology, a topic that was close to Hirschfeld’s main interests.15 Other speaking engagements followed and Hirschfeld was soon busy presenting talks to a wide range of audiences.16 A pattern developed during his early days in America according to which his talks were inflected differently if they were presented to German-speaking or English-speaking audiences. While he gave his usual lectures on all kinds of sexual matters, including homosexuality, to German-speakers, his English-speaking talks were tailored more specifically to issues relating to “scientific partner selection and eugenic marriage counselling.”17 Shortly after arriving in New York, for example, the New York Times, which at the time had a daily circulation in the region of 450,000–500,000, reported that “Dr Magnus Hirschfeld ha[d] come here . . . to study the marriage question.”18 This contrasted with Hirschfeld’s reception in the German-language New Yorker Volkszeitung, a socialist daily, which at the height of its success had a circulation of 20,000 but closed in 1932 during the Depression and was replaced by a weekly paper, the Neue Volks-Zeitung.19 It announced Hirschfeld’s intention to “discuss ‘love’s natural laws,’” a turn of phrase that Hirschfeld frequently used when making the
case for the naturalness of homosexuality. While his German audiences in New York thus heard talks that were similar to the kind of lectures he gave at home in Berlin, it soon became clear that Hirschfeld sought to appeal to English-speaking American audiences by representing himself in straight terms, courting publicity as a specialist on marital love instead of advocating on behalf of the people whose desires or genders ran against the normative grain of the time.

What was behind this change? It would be reductive to claim that Hirschfeld’s “straight turn” in the United States is simply evidence of internalized homophobia, often seen as the underpinning of queer silences on same-sex matters. Instead, as Heather Love has pointed out, it is important to acknowledge that while “the historical experience of shame and secrecy has left its imprint on queer subjectivity,” a more “‘homeopathic’ approach to political subjectivity” is needed if we want to “incorporate rather than disavow the causes of social inequality.” Or to phrase this differently, attention to shame alone can obscure the violent historical contingencies that prompted queer people into silence in certain contexts and at certain points in time. In her analysis of Walter Pater’s work, Love argues that Pater suffered “exclusion” from classic male same-sex culture and the emergent modern homosexual cultures of his own time. Hirschfeld, like Pater a privileged white man, similarly experienced the exclusion—and sense of a loss of support network—that comes with enforced exile. While he had chosen to leave Germany, the decision had arguably been taken out of his hands given the rise of Nazism and the dangers it brought to his life. With this in mind, Hirschfeld’s decision to present himself in the United States, initially at least, as an expert on marriage and related issues, seems to have been a direct response to the perilousness of his political exile.

At the end of November 1930, not long after arriving in the United States, Hirschfeld gave an interview to the Milwaukee Sentinel that would set the tone for how he presented what we might call his American persona. The interview was conducted by George Sylvester Viereck, the son of one of Hirschfeld’s Berlin acquaintances, the Social Democrat Louis Viereck. Unlike his father, George Viereck was politically on the far right. While it is not clear what continued to bind Hirschfeld and George Viereck even after Viereck had become outspoken in his support of Nazism, in late 1930 and early 1931 they were united in their efforts to promote Hirschfeld’s work to the American public.

In his first interview with Viereck, Hirschfeld laid out his views on marriage in the United States. The topic was controversial. Margaret Sanger’s birth control campaign, which focused, initially at least, on women and was concerned with the reproductive effects of heterosexual sex, was the subject
of considerable public debate. Hirschfeld’s marriage talk in contrast deliberately appealed to heterosexual American men in search of sexual pleasure. He set himself up as a “European” expert on “romantic love” who could help American men to capitalize on what he claimed was the country’s “sexual awakening” after World War I. In a shrewd appeal to the American capitalist imagination, Hirschfeld claimed to have observed a change in American attitudes to love. He argued that while “the American man [used to] divert into his business the libido—the desire or urge—. . . [that led] Europeans to seek romantic adventures,” after World War I American men had started to develop their “romantic” side even as they maintained their astute business sense. In other words, Hirschfeld appealed to American audiences by claiming to have identified a trend according to which American men were now developing together business and erotic capital. When Viereck interrupted Hirschfeld with a reminder that America was in fact in the middle of an economic depression, Hirschfeld was quick to retort that the Depression would pass soon, thus flattering his intended audience of romantic yet economically go-getting heterosexual American men. If the links drawn between romance and business and the emphasis Hirschfeld placed on the economic astuteness of American men appear out of tune with the general tone of his work, they show a new sense of dependency on his audience, borne from the increasing precariousness of Hirschfeld’s professional situation.

The interview, a curious mixture of confident expert talk and anxious appeal for the sympathy of an implicit straight-male American reader, hides the traumatic reality of Hirschfeld’s flight from Germany. At the time when he left the country he not only feared the rise of Nazism. He also was “shocked and disappointed” by many of his sexological colleagues, notably Richard Linsert, who together with others had opposed Hirschfeld as leader of the Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee (WhK; Scientific Humanitarian Committee). Hirschfeld had stepped down as the WhK’s leader after a tenure of thirty-two and a half years, claiming that the majority of members still supported him but that he no longer wanted to expose himself to what he called the *Kesseltreiben*, or the systematic defamation campaign conducted against him by some of his former close colleagues. The professional struggles were accompanied by, or perhaps the cause of, a bout of ill health. Early in 1930 Hirschfeld’s long fight with diabetes was compounded by a painful infection of his left arm, diagnosed as polyneuritis, which also caused pain in his thighs, face, and teeth and by his own account made him feel “very disabled.” On arrival in America some of these concerns lifted, and he “subjectively [felt] very well on this trip, certainly better than [he had] felt the past few years in Europe.”

The interview with George Viereck marks the
moment of transition when Hirschfeld, while anxious about the uncertainties of exile, started to look forward again to the future.

A main concern that would mark Hirschfeld’s final years was financial: how to make a living as a sexologist in exile? In addition to fees for his sexological work he had income from investments in a major Dutch department store, De Bijenkorf, and the production and sale of the so-called Titus Pearls, a medical remedy Hirschfeld had developed at the Institute of Sexual Science in the 1920s. In the German context, the pills were claimed to heal the “shattered nerves” of men who had survived World War I and related forms of depression that were seen to be the cause of “sexual weakness.” American advertising in the 1930s, in contrast, widened the target market for the Titus Pearls. One advertisement claimed, for instance, that the pills treated “high blood pressure, hardening of the arteries, physical exhaustion after work or exercise, dizziness, depression, neurasthenia.” Another promised that the Titus Pearls would restore “youthful strength” to women as well as men. These advertisements, which announced that the pills were created by “Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, the world-known authority on Sexology,” were placed in newspapers across the United States, ranging from the small Texas weekly the Bowie Booster to the famous anti–Ku Klux Klan Muncie Post-Democrat, which was based in Indiana. Hirschfeld’s self-representation as an expert on marital love during his early days in America was directly tied to financial concerns. By affirming his status as an expert on (hetero)sexual matters he appealed to as broad an audience as possible.

The manufacturer of the Titus Pearls would formally sever the link with Hirschfeld when the Nazis came to power in 1933. However, the sale of the pills was a source of income during Hirschfeld’s world journey. His reputation in America was boosted—and indelibly shaped—by a second interview with George Viereck in February 1931, published simultaneously in the Milwaukee Sentinel and other newspapers across the United States, from the Washington Herald to the Los Angeles Examiner. In the second interview, Viereck, who had links to the conservative Hearst press empire and hence managed to get his work widely noticed, described Hirschfeld as the “Dr. Einstein of Sex.” The moniker, which sought to capitalize on the publicity surrounding Albert Einstein’s recent arrival at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, would henceforth shape Hirschfeld’s reception in North America and beyond.

While Hirschfeld’s early appearances in the American media no doubt shaped an image of him as a (heterosexual) “sex expert,” it would be wrong to claim that Hirschfeld did not discuss homosexuality during his four months in the United States. At the famous bohemian Dill Pickle Club in Chicago,
instance, he was announced as “Europe’s Greatest Sex Authority” who would present a talk on “Homosexuality” with “beautiful revealing pictures.” The talk, which initially had to be postponed for unknown reasons, was thought to have attracted an audience of over three hundred people. In San Francisco, his last destination on the U.S. mainland, Hirschfeld presented talks on homosexuality both to a specialist medical council and to the wider public at the Plaza hotel. During his time in California he also strengthened his existing cultural and political allegiances. Visiting Hollywood, he met, for example, the Hungarian director Paul Fejos at MGM Studios. Fejos had become famous for his film The Last Performance (1927), about a menacing magician. It starred Conrad Veidt, the lead actor in the Hirschfeld-supported anti-homosexual-blackmail movie Anders als die Andern (Different from the others; 1919). At the time of Hirschfeld’s visit, Fejos was working on the silent movie Menschen Hinter Gittern (Men behind Bars), which would be released in 1931. The film, which follows the story of an otherwise upright man who drunkenly kills another man, critiques the treatment of criminals in prison. Both alcoholism and prison reform were topics close to Hirschfeld’s heart. Early in his career, for instance, he wrote a critique of the effects of alcohol on family life, and he repeatedly addressed the failings of the criminal system, especially when it came to sexual questions. In San Francisco, Hirschfeld visited the famous San Quentin prison to meet Thomas Mooney, the left-wing political activist widely thought to have been framed for a deadly bomb attack on the Preparedness Day Parade in San Francisco in 1916. The visit clearly had an impact on Hirschfeld. He returned to it in a letter written in Haifa, Palestine, in 1932, in which he argued that Mooney and his coaccused Warren Billings were victims of a national “fear neurosis” that had started to take hold during World War I.

Hirschfeld thus maintained his connections to left-wing reformers and artistic subcultures during his stay in America. However, it was his image as the “Einstein of Sex” that captured the American public imagination. If the moniker indicates that Hirschfeld became known in the United States primarily as a sex expert rather than a defender of homosexuality, the role that had made him (in)famous in Europe, it also testifies to the psychic and financial pressures that shaped Hirschfeld’s exile.

The Travelogue

While in America, Hirschfeld realized that it would be impossible for him to return to Germany. Having anticipated the possibility of a more permanent exile, he hatched a loosely formed plan to continue his travels by moving eastward. In due course, the journey would take him across Asia and the
Middle East before returning him to Europe, where he eventually settled in French exile. Hirschfeld’s written account of his travels, *Die Weltreise eines Sexualforscher*, has been examined primarily for what it can tell us about Hirschfeld’s resistance to and complicity in the perpetuation of colonial power dynamics. Liat Kozma, for instance, has argued that “the uniqueness of Hirschfeld’s narrative [in *The World Journey*] lies in his awareness of power relations that dictate social norms and practices: colonialism, gender inequality and heteronormativity.” But while the narrative is often astute in its comments and offers many unique insights into an international network of sexual reformers willing to host Hirschfeld during his time in exile, it also raises questions about what Anjali Arondekar and Geeta Patel, in a different context, have called the “citational underpinnings” that shaped Hirschfeld’s apprehension of the people he met on his travels. Arondekar and Patel use the expression *citational underpinnings* in their reappraisal of the relationship between queer studies and area studies. They critique the elevated role played by the United States (and some European contexts) in studies of sexualities in global perspective in which, as they point out, “geopolitics provides the exemplars, but rarely the epistemologies.” Arondekar and Patel are not mainly concerned with the forgotten or obscured histories that are at the heart of my project. Instead they explore “why certain vocabularies of the geopolitical achieve prominence while others get relegated to the ash heap of (queer) history.” Yet their observations on the (Euro-)American centrism of twenty-first-century queer scholarship also lend themselves to tracing the apprehensive boundaries of Hirschfeld’s *Die Weltreise*. Attention to the book’s “citational underpinnings,” by which I mean Hirschfeld’s points of reference in the text, not only reveals the global travel of ideas and people before World War II. It also shows that despite Hirschfeld’s developing critical understanding of racism and colonialism, there are gendered limits to whose voices he admits into the narrative: he aligns himself with local male elites, some of whom he had first met back in Berlin, and relegates women’s voices to the exemplary rather than the epistemological.

Primarily a travelogue—the *Canadian Jewish Chronicle* called it “rambling, un-literary [but] an interesting conversation with an elderly man who has seen much and is moved by nothing”—*Die Weltreise* is a personal account of Hirschfeld’s exiled journey through Hawaii, Japan, Taiwan, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, India, Egypt, and Palestine. The narrative, which is often somewhat disjointed and mostly impressionistic, was first published in German in Switzerland in 1933 and then translated into English by Oliver P. Green in 1935. It was published in America under the title *Men and Women: The World Journey of a Sexologist*. The change of words grammatically links men and women, thus adding a heterosexual gloss to the original
title that might appeal to Hirschfeld’s straight American audience. The British edition of the book, in contrast, which was substantively the same translation by Oliver P. Green, was glossed in colonial terms as *Women East and West: Impressions of a Sex Expert.* The English edition of what I henceforth refer to as *The World Journey,* furthermore deliberately linked the book to works such as Hermann Heinrich Ploss, Max Bartels, and Paul Bartels’ colonial anthropology *Woman,* a three-volume compendium that in translation from German was also published by Heinemann in 1935 and is advertised on the dust jacket of *Women East and West.* If, according to Homi Bhabha, the narration of nation is achieved via “complex strategies of cultural identification and discursive address that function in the name of ‘the people’ or ‘the nation’ and make them the immanent subjects of a range of social and literary narratives,” the translations of *The World Journey* suggest that the representation of the nation’s other(s) were similarly inflected according to circumstance. It is surely no coincidence that a work by the “Einstein of Sex,” unpublishable in his own home country, was figured in implicitly heterosexual terms for the depression-hit British and American markets, with the British edition further adding a nostalgic allusion to the heyday of the country’s colonial power.

The English titles obscure the book’s actual content. *The World Journey* no longer engaged in the kind of heterosexually focused self-marketing that had characterized Hirschfeld’s arrival in the United States. Instead it signals a return to Hirschfeld’s queer concerns. While he claimed that it was a worldwide interest in sexology that helped him cover the “not insubstantial cost of the world journey,” it was in fact the personal and professional friendships Hirschfeld had forged over the course of his career that enabled his journey, by offering paid lecture engagements and, not infrequently, a place to stay. As director of the Institute of Sexual Science in Berlin and copresident of the World League of Sexual Reform, which in a series of meetings in the 1920s brought together sexual reformers and scientists from different parts of Europe, America, China, Japan, and elsewhere, Hirschfeld had forged alliances that would enable him to tour the world as an expert on a wide range of sexual topics.

During these travels, while in Shanghai, Hirschfeld met a twenty-three-year-old man, Tao Li, who would become his companion henceforth. Throughout *The World Journey* he represented their liaison as an idealized “teacher-pupil relationship,” emphasizing their professional connection, for instance, by noting that Tao Li was already well versed in European sexology when they first met. Tao Li’s father threw a farewell party for the two men, expressing his hope that “his son would become the Dr. Hirschfeld of China,” figuring their relationship in teacher-pupil terms that would later be picked
up in public discussions of their relationship, such as a short commentary in a Viennese paper that announced Hirschfeld’s completion of a world journey in the company of Tao Li, who was planning to complete his medical studies in Europe. The World Journey does not linger on their relationship. Instead it shifts attention from the personal to the sexological as Hirschfeld holds up Tao Li as an example to support his argument that personal circumstance but most of all “congenital characteristics and inclinations” shape humans across the world. “The 400 to 500 million Chinese people are individually just as distinct,” he writes, “as the 100 million Germans or 50 million English people.” While Hirschfeld did not publicly represent his relationship with Tao Li in intimate terms, he frequently wrote about their companionship, and plenty of other evidence survives of the life they forged together until Hirschfeld’s death.

Citational Limits in Japan

It was an invitation by a Japanese colleague, Keizō Dohi, that prompted Hirschfeld to embark on his travels from America to the East. Dohi, whose first name Hirschfeld spells as “Keijo,” was a dermatologist with a special interest in venereal diseases. Born in 1866, he trained in Germany and Vienna before returning to Japan, where he became an influential medical figure. Dohi maintained close links with the German-speaking world, including via the German translation of his Beiträge zur Geschichte der Syphilis in Ostasien (Contributions to the history of syphilis in East Asia) (1923), which claimed that syphilis was introduced to Japan by Spanish and Portuguese traders in the sixteenth century. Dohi died only a few months after Hirschfeld’s visit. His friendship and instrumental role in kick-starting Hirschfeld’s world lecture tour was evidence that by the 1930s there existed a global network of researchers with a shared interest in sexual matters, even if Dohi’s professional training suggests that sexological research remained oriented toward Europe. Jana Funke, who examines the intersections in The World Journey between sexology and anthropology, has argued that Hirschfeld “was positioned both at the centre and on the margins of Western discourses,” that while his role as a Western sexologist implicated him in the colonial transfer of power, his “creative dialogue” with the people and objects he encountered on his travels also broadened what she calls “the scope of the Western sexual imagination.” Yet the Japanese narrative suggests that Hirschfeld kept control of whose voice was heard in this dialogue.

Hirschfeld often sought out, at least initially, the Western colleagues who had settled in the countries he visited. On his first stop in Hawaii, for instance, he met with two resident German doctors who had set up practice in
Honolulu. In Indonesia he spent time in the company of the South African ethnologist and lawyer F. D. Holleman, who had trained in the Netherlands and became an influential legal anthropologist in the Netherlands and South Africa. During Hirschfeld’s final days in Tokyo, the German director of the Japanese-German Cultural Institute, Wilhelm Grundert, acted as Hirschfeld’s translator. In *The World Journey* Hirschfeld argued that the “distinguished” scholar Grundert should be given a chair at a German university, a hope that would come true not long afterward, when Grundert joined the Nazi Party in 1934 and two years later was appointed as the head of Japan Studies at the University of Hamburg, followed by a rapid promotion to the role of the university’s chancellor in 1938.

In the main, however, Hirschfeld’s time in Japan was characterized by his meetings with Japanese colleagues, new acquaintances and people he had previously met in Berlin. He reconnected, for instance, with his old friend “S. Iwaya,” who had been a Japanese tutor at Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität (today’s Humboldt University) between 1900 and 1902. During his time in Berlin, Iwaya was introduced by a friend to the WhK and wrote an article on pederasty in Japan for the *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* (Yearbook for sexual intermediaries). Iwaya’s work is an example of the complex travel of sexual ideas between Japan and Germany in the twentieth century. He took Hirschfeld to Tokyo’s Meiji Theater to meet his son, who worked there as the technical director. Iwaya junior introduced Hirschfeld to female impersonators of the Kabuki, a traditional dance form. The meeting marks a return of Hirschfeld’s long-standing interest in sexual and gender questions. While there is no surviving record of the conversation between Hirschfeld and the two men from the Iwaya family, he claims that one of the Iwayas acted as his translator, allowing him to have a conversation with a young actor who sought affirmation that he really looked like a woman. At this point the narrative turns its back on Hirschfeld’s hosts. Embarking on a discussion of the Kabuki tradition, Hirschfeld does not cite his local guides, even though one of them is a theater professional. Instead he mentions a work by the Western observer Maria Piper as the source of his knowledge of Japanese theater. On the basis of Piper’s analysis, Hirschfeld then applied his sexological schema to the “female impersonators” of the Japanese stage, classifying them as “normal,” “transvestite,” or “homosexual.”

The citational evidence gleaned from Hirschfeld’s account of Japanese theater suggests that he privileged his existing, European (and at times North American) frame of reference, thus screening out the knowledge he might have gained from his Japanese hosts. Instead he recast Japanese people and traditions in a Western frame of reference. The Japanese narrative problematizes Hirschfeld’s famous argument that the “individual sexual type is
stronger and more important than a racial type,” by which he meant that sexuality in all its manifestations exists across all parts of the world. It problematizes the claim because it raises questions about how he came to formulate his arguments. This critique is not about disputing that all kinds of sexual acts may exist in all kinds of places but to question the naming practices of Western observers such as Hirschfeld who seemed convinced that sexological classification could be applied across the world.

**Speaking for Women in India**

The question of whose voice is heard in sexological discourse has preoccupied scholars concerned with the relationship between scientific and “lay” cultures in the articulation of modern sexuality. It is specifically the voices of women that have been marginalized, or rather, spoken for and over, both in sexology and the related scholarship. In *The World Journey* the denial of women’s voices is somewhat obscured by the fact that Hirschfeld frequently lavished enthusiastic praise on members of the women’s movement. He claimed, for instance, that his “most remarkable encounter” in Japan had been with the leaders of the Japanese feminist movement—“Shidzue Ishimoto; Fusaye Ishikawa; Hannayo Ikuta.” In the account of his time in Egypt he further argued that the local feminists occupied a “high intellectual level,” citing as his example an encounter with the famous Egyptian feminist and publisher Hoda Charaoni, who, he claimed, was the same “type of woman” as other strong women leaders he had met, including in China a certain “Mrs. Ma,” which most likely refers to the Hong Kong–based YMCA member and advocate for Christian women Ma Huo Quintang, and in India “Lady Bose,” the wife of the scientist Jagadish Bose and aunt of Hirschfeld’s colleague and host in India, Girindrashekhar Bose, and the scientist Debendra Bose, who would later coedit *A Concise History of Sexual Science in India*. Despite his praise for these feminists and global feminism more broadly, Hirschfeld rarely admitted the voices of women into the narrative of *The World Journey*, however.

Hirschfeld’s account of his time in India most clearly illustrates his habit of speaking for women. While he commented favorably on many of the women he met, he largely excluded their words from his text. He arrived in India in late September 1931 and stayed there until mid-November, when, sick with malaria, he boarded a Middle East–bound ship in Bombay. The account of his relatively short time in the country, which forms the central part of *The World Journey*, has received considerable critical attention, partly because of Hirschfeld’s engagement with Indian sexology, from which developed his long-standing interest in what he called “the Indian art of love.” Veronika Fuechtner, for example, has argued that the Indian narrative can be
understood as “a complicated reaction against the rise of fascism,” a reaction that both enacts “power relations” and “unfolds a counter-hegemonic potential.”\(^7\) While Hirschfeld’s account of his time in India is where he articulated most clearly his anticolonial stance, this was not the first time that he spoke out against colonialism. During his time in Indonesia he criticized the Dutch colonization of the archipelago. Despite his critical stance—he compared colonialism to slavery—the Indonesian account remained curiously indebted to the language of nineteenth-century scientific racism.\(^9\) This is most apparent in Hirschfeld’s focus on the perceived difficulties of white women and men to adapt to Indonesia’s tropical climate. He claimed, for instance, that white women found it harder than white men to adapt to tropical heat, evoking an old stereotype about the climatic contingencies of gender.\(^8\) According to Hirschfeld this apparent physical difference forced many European women to return to Europe—or indeed never to leave home in the first place—while white men were able to settle in Indonesia, where they often ended up marrying indigenous women.\(^1\) Hirschfeld’s account here uncritically repeats the sexist and racist assumptions about gender and climate that had been a mainstay of nineteenth-century scientific—including sexological—discourse. By the time of his visit a European middle class had emerged in Indonesia, which was made up of both women and men.\(^2\) Hirschfeld argues elsewhere that professional European women, mainly doctors, seem to adapt well to life in a tropical climate, yet in the Indonesian chapters his reduction of women to their bodies—and throwaway remarks about the “romantic conflict” caused by attempts to “import” European women to the tropics—draws gendered boundaries around Hirschfeld’s apprehension of colonial agency.

Hirschfeld arrived in India when the independence movement was gathering momentum. He was well received as “the foremost sexologist of Berlin.”\(^3\) His work appealed to a wide range of outward-looking Indian political activists, who were, in Sanjam Ahluwalia’s words, “especially keen to project a ‘modern’ image of India” and who imagined \textit{swaraj} (freedom and independence) “as an inauguration of modernity.”\(^4\) Hirschfeld in turn aligned himself with members of “the Indian elite,” arguing that they were “in character and knowledge entirely able to lead their nation.”\(^5\) By “elite” he meant the influential men who hosted Hirschfeld in India. He stayed, for instance, with Jawaharlal Nehru in Allahabad, having first met the man who would become India’s first prime minister in Berlin.\(^6\) Hirschfeld’s main host was Girindrashekhar Bose, the first president of the Indian Psychoanalytic Society and a member of an influential family of scientists, who looked after Hirschfeld directly or via recommendations to friends for most of his stay in India.\(^7\) Perhaps it was partly these friendships that prompted Hirschfeld to claim that he had “supported Indian freedom for fifty years” because “it is one of
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the biggest injustices in the world that one of the oldest civilized nations . . . cannot rule independently.” Birgit Lang has argued that Hirschfeld’s identification with Indian anticolonial activists constitutes a form of “anticolonial mimicry,” an allegiance that expressed itself affectively and as an intellectual affinity rather than an actual involvement in political action. Indeed his support of Indian independence appears to have been largely a private expression, as Hirschfeld’s public talks in India, as elsewhere, continued to focus on topics such as “love, sex and marriage,” “sex pathology,” and the question “Is homosexuality in man and woman inborn or acquired?”

The one major intervention made by The World Journey is in the controversy surrounding the publication of Katherine Mayo’s Mother India. Published in 1927, not long before Hirschfeld’s arrival in India, Mayo, an American historian, articulated a sustained attack on Indian society, which was built around a critique of sexual politics and practices in the country. Mother India was attacked by Indian audiences because, as Mrinalini Sinha has argued, it “painted a highly sensationalized picture of rampant sexuality and its consequences in India: masturbation, rape, homosexuality, prostitution, venereal diseases, and, most important of all, early sexual intercourse and premature maternity.” Indian activists, including Mahatma Gandhi, who also critiqued child marriage, attacked Mayo’s work, arguing that it deliberately fueled the British imperialist agenda by suggesting that Indian sexual customs were cruel and out of hand unless checked by British rule. Hirschfeld aligned himself with Mayo’s critics, dedicating a whole chapter of The World Journey to what he called the “sexual caricature” Mayo presented of India. Arguing that Mother India “falsified” evidence to provide “England-friendly propaganda,” Hirschfeld stressed that sexual exploitation and oppression were not exclusive to India. He argued that every country has its own “sexual scandals,” noting that in his youth a sexual scandal had rocked England itself, alluding presumably to the child prostitution controversy prompted by W. T. Stead’s investigative journalism in the 1880s. Veronika Fuechtner has pointed out that Hirschfeld “reject[ed] the category of the [Indian] exotic altogether,” arguing that, according to Hirschfeld, “what is moral, sittlich, always stands in relationship to local custom, Sitte.” However, while Fuechtner is right to point out that Hirschfeld challenged colonial views of India such as those expressed by Mayo, it is also important to note that the cultural relativist terms in which Hirschfeld formulated his response remained embedded in a Western frame of reference. Or to say this differently, while Hirschfeld clearly distanced himself from the outright racism that propelled colonial discourses, he too spoke for, rather than with, the girls and women whose lives had become a discursive battleground in the debates about English rule over India.
Hirschfeld’s arguments in some ways echo the work of contemporary anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski, who shifted the critical framework from a moralistic to a relativistic understanding of cultural difference. Yet while Malinowski, in the words of Havelock Ellis, no longer considered the “peoples [who are] not completely under the influence of our own civilisation” merely as scientific objects but as “witnesses to unfamiliar aspects of our common human nature,” this kind of anthropological endeavor remained subject to an unequal transfer of power, which often remained unacknowledged. The titles alone of many of Malinowski works—*Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (1927) or *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia* (1929), for example—indicate that cultural relativists retained much of the conceptual baggage of scientific racism as well as a Eurocentric frame of reference. A similar charge can be levied against Hirschfeld in relation to his writings on the role of women in India. While his narrative at times overtly sought to resist racial hierarchies, it nevertheless retained a fairly uncritical belief in the accuracy of Hirschfeld’s own observations on the people and cultures he encountered.

*The World Journey* shows that despite Hirschfeld’s sympathies with anticolonialism and a loosely defined global feminism, his narrative only rarely let women speak. Instead his encounters with Indian girls and women are typically represented as fairly superficial anecdotal curiosities. For instance, his critique of practices such “contempt of widows” or the sexual exploitation of young girls who were forced to become “temple women,” a position that made them vulnerable to sexual abuse including by the temple’s priests, was indebted to the narratives of others, including Western observers such as Mayo and an English doctor named N. J. Balfour, as well as Indian men of privileged social standing such as Nehru. While Hirschfeld might not have heard the voices of disenfranchised Indian women because of linguistic difficulties and the structural inequalities that would have made it difficult for him to gain unmediated access to the poorest, most exploited women, there is little evidence that he attempted to speak with the women he wrote about. Gayatri Spivak, in her influential critique of poststructuralist conceptions of the subject, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” has criticized “the unrecognised contradiction within a [Western] position that valorises the concrete experience of the oppressed while being so uncritical about the historical role of the intellectual.” The *World Journey* shows little awareness of its own limits and exclusions. Instead Hirschfeld’s account, for all its anticolonial claims, continued to speak for—and over—Indian women.

That Hirschfeld’s way of speaking over women was not restricted to the loss of the voices of the poor and uneducated is illustrated by the account of a talk he presented at the women-only Lady Hardinge Medical College in
Delhi. Here he commented not on the intellectual insights of the students but on the “lovely view” he encountered when faced with a large lecture theater full of “good-looking female students in their Indian dress.” The objectification of Indian women in *The World Journey* is underscored by the inclusion of a photograph that shows Hirschfeld “talking to a thirteen-year-old mother.” It depicts him side on, wearing a light-colored tropical suit, literally talking down to the young girl, whose eyes are directed away from him and toward the sleeping child in her arms. The composition of the bodies and the way they are hierarchically linked via the direction of Hirschfeld’s gaze reinforces the unequal transfer of power between the European sexologist’s gaze and the young Indian mother who is turned into the object of his study.

While Hirschfeld refers to quite a number of encounters with women in India—he laments, for example, a cancelled meeting with Annie Besant and mentions that his talk “Love in the Light of Science” at the “Bombay Ladies-Branch National Indian Association” had attracted an audience of three hundred women—the only example of his citing a woman occurs in a description of his time in Darjeeling, when he asked a European woman if she was afraid of the “natives” while walking alone, and the woman responded that her only worry was “English soldiers.” The references to “highly educated” Indian women such as Kamala and Krishna Nehru, in contrast, are not substantiated by similar quotations. Sara Ahmed, writing in the context of twenty-first-century debates about sexism and institutional racism, has argued that citation practices are a “successful reproductive technology, a way of reproducing the world around certain bodies.” Hirschfeld’s *The World Journey* illustrates how Western, male-centric knowledge is (re)produced. Despite the evidence it presents that Hirschfeld met with both female and male sexual reformers, women, and Indian women specifically, tend not to figure through their own words in *The World Journey*. These silences appear doubly problematic given the text’s anticolonial framework and emphasis on the existence of localized yet internationally connected feminist and sexual reform movements. *The World Journey* is a reminder that prejudice can lurk in unacknowledged ways even in projects that overtly proclaim their own progressiveness and solidarity with oppressed people.

**Retrospection and Zionism**

The geographical arc of Hirschfeld’s journey back to Europe was accompanied by an increasingly reflective, paradoxically retrospective and forward-looking mood. He had already started to think about what might await him on return to Europe during his time in India. In a diary entry from October
1931, for instance, written while in the Indian city of Patna, he reflected on his relationship with Tao Li, describing it as one of the biggest “Gewinne” of his travels, a word that carries connotations of both “gain” and “victory.” While he still portrayed the “loyal” and “affectionate” Tao Li as a “pupil,” he added a note in English to the German text that expands on their close relationship and anticipates a precarious future. Formally written, signed and dated in the manner of a will, it pronounces Tao Li to be Hirschfeld’s beneficiary and asks that, in the event of Hirschfeld’s death during his travels, Tao Li take his ashes to Berlin to hand them over to Karl Giese and Fritz Haupstein at the institute. Hirschfeld further stipulates that Tao Li “shall keep everything I have with me, especially also my manuscripts and money,” concluding with the plea that Tao Li be “considered in every way as a quite confidential friend.” If the informal will expresses fears about what would happen to Tao Li, and to Hirschfeld’s body, after his death, the diary also increasingly reveals a sense of nostalgia. The entry for Christmas Eve 1931, for instance, written in Alexandria, records Hirschfeld’s plans to take Tao Li to a “Bavarian beer hall” in the city because he missed his Institute of Sexual Science. Nishant Shahani has argued that queer experience is defined by “a certain kind of retrospection” that may take any number of forms—“returning to a primal scene” and “belated cognition” are just two of the examples provided. In The World Journey, which is primarily an account of historic transformation rather than psychic life, Hirschfeld’s backward glances to the time before exile are noticeably rare. This lends extra force to the fleeting moments of retrospection, which indicate not only some of the emotional pressures on Hirschfeld but that he tried to keep them in check by issuing forward-looking pleas to “keep going: work, hope, don’t give up.”

Besides the Middle East’s geographical proximity to Europe, Hirschfeld’s encounters with old acquaintances from Berlin might have prompted his thoughts to turn toward the Institute of Sexual Science. On arrival in Cairo he found that medically informed sexual debates were thriving, sustained both by the renewed interest in Egyptian, Arab, and Ottoman histories that developed in response to the British occupation and, as Liat Kozma, has shown, by the work of people such as the medical doctor and self-styled sexologist Faraj Fakhri who “presented [himself] as liberating [his] readers from the hold of custom and organized religion and thus situated [himself] as the vanguard of a modern and enlightened East.” Fakhri had spent time at Hirschfeld’s institute during the first half of the 1920s, and while Hirschfeld does not mention him in The World Journey, he lists numerous encounters with Egyptian medical colleagues, representing Egypt as a place in which sexual science was thriving. Hirschfeld’s claims are supported by historical developments in the country that, from around the 1880s, turned attention
to matters relating to gender and sexuality, including broader debates about feminism and masculinity, as well as more specific concerns with marriage, prostitution, and masturbation.\textsuperscript{114} Hanan Kholoussy has shown that the “monitoring and medicalising of sexuality”\textsuperscript{115} at the time affected the lives of both men and women as the emergence of a sexual science in Egypt was imbricated, in Kozma’s words, in the “construction of productive citizens whose bodies, habits, inclinations and practices were increasingly regulated by the state and tied to the construction of new middle-class mores and values.”\textsuperscript{116} Hirschfeld, like many of his colleagues, considered sexology a harbinger of progressive social change, noting, for instance, that his university lectures were attended by European as well as Egyptian women—some of them veiled—whose presence he considered the marker of new times.\textsuperscript{117} His talk “Love in the Light of Science” covered topics as diverse as the “natural laws of love,” “marriage,” and “sex pathology,” but his reception in the popular press—which also carried advertisements for the Titus Pearls—supports the argument that the primary audience for sexology was Egypt’s emerging middle class.\textsuperscript{118}

While Hirschfeld emphasized the scientific foundations of sexual modernity, he also claimed in his private notes that “to the Arabs . . . homoerotic love practice is something natural [and that] Mohammed could not change [this attitude],” picking up on a prevalent trope about Arab sexuality.\textsuperscript{119} Writing in \textit{The World Journey}, in contrast, Hirschfeld mentioned a meeting with the Egyptian minister for health, Mohamed Shahin Pasha, who according to Hirschfeld considered homosexuality an “illness” but whom he nevertheless represented as a progressive figure.\textsuperscript{120} Hirschfeld, praising what he considers Pasha’s willingness to engage in dialogue, made space for Pasha’s voice, reproducing a quotation according to which the Egyptian politician expressed his joy at having met Hirschfeld. Here Pasha argued that the “illness” he calls “aberration of the sexual drive” needs the “careful attention of doctors and the implantation of preventive measures” that would allow a new generation to thrive.\textsuperscript{121} Hirschfeld’s alignment with a man who explicitly argues for the treatment—and hence future eradication—of homosexuality seems out of keeping with his views. It suggests that in the early 1930s his allegiances were not only to same-sex cultures but also the thriving international scientific community. Homosexuality is noticeably marginal to Hirschfeld’s extensive account of his time in Egypt, which instead picks up on national debates about gender and colonial rule. He commented favorably, for instance, on Egypt’s thriving feminist movement and made the case for Egyptian independence from British rule, cementing his argument with the observation that “the average ethical and intellectual level [of Egyptians] was equal to that of European nations.”\textsuperscript{122} While \textit{The World Journey}’s Egyptian narrative thus
focuses on Hirschfeld’s involvement in debates about the social dimensions of scientific progress, his diary entries from his time in Egypt reveal a nostalgic retrospection, as anxieties about the future were compounded by ill health, diabetes, and malaria, which Hirschfeld traced to his stay in an “Indian-run hotel” in Agra.\textsuperscript{123}

The tone of Hirschfeld’s writing changes when he arrives in Palestine, where a new, albeit contingent, optimism begins to mark his words. He initially takes on the tone of a tour guide, mocking the tourists who pass through the Holy Land on three-day itineraries in pursuit of “illusions” supported by “belief” and “fantasy.”\textsuperscript{124} Contrasting their travels with his own five-week stay, he lays bare his attachment to Palestine, claiming that he had “never found it so hard to tear [himself] away from a place than it was to leave Jerusalem, that [he] had never found it harder to leave a country than it was saying farewell to Palestine.”\textsuperscript{125} The affective introduction to Jerusalem as the \textit{Glanzpunkt}, or highlight, of Hirschfeld’s travels stands out in a narrative that generally reveals little about Hirschfeld’s own feelings. Here we find another example of retrospection, this time, however, harking back to Hirschfeld’s seldom-mentioned Jewish background. He claims to experience \textit{Jugenderinnerungen}, or memories from a young age, which lent familiarity to the figures, stories, and places associated with Palestine, a familiarity that is derived from his knowledge of the Old and New Testaments.\textsuperscript{126} The passage reveals Hirschfeld’s biblical knowledge, as he mentions, for instance, the stories of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham and Isaac, the Cave of Machpelah, Jesus and Pilate, and Jericho.\textsuperscript{127} However, he is quick to reject religion, claiming that “Gottesfurcht,” a German synonym for religious belief that literally translates as “fear of God,” “is nothing but a real kind of physical fear similar to the fear of death.”\textsuperscript{128}

While Hirschfeld’s connection to Palestine is not presented as a religious expression, he openly admired the “adoringly moving and heartwarmingly natural” young Jewish “pioneers” who were forging new lives in Palestine.\textsuperscript{129} Praising Tel Aviv for having established itself as “the only uniformly Jewish city in the contemporary world,”\textsuperscript{130} he speaks out in favor of Zionism, influenced by his own experiences of the “success” of Zionism in Palestine.\textsuperscript{131} Hirschfeld, like many supporters, was critical of certain aspects of Zionism, predominantly in relation to internal debates. He disagreed, for instance, with racial definitions of Jewishness on the grounds that “pure races” cannot exist “among white people if one acknowledges that every individual has a genealogy of fathers and mothers [that] might encompass thousands, or possibly even hundreds of thousands of generations.”\textsuperscript{132} He also disagreed with the introduction of Hebrew as the lingua franca, going as far as to claim that if it was not for the linguistic barrier, he might have considered retiring to Palestine.
It is not difficult to see why in the 1930s Jewish life in Palestine seemed so appealing to Hirschfeld. In addition to the escape it offered from antisemitism, especially in its violent escalation in Nazi Germany, Jewish settlers—also known as the *yishuv*—had begun to experiment with radical new forms of living that were far removed from the restrictions of bourgeois European society. Sexual reform was part of this process and both psychoanalytic and sexological work circulated readily. By the time of Hirschfeld’s visit, his former student at the Institute of Sexual Science the medical doctor Chaim Berlin had established a sexological practice in Tel Aviv, and shortly after Hirschfeld left Palestine another doctor who had trained at the Berlin institute, Avraham Matmon, would open the Tel Aviv Institute of Sexual Science. By his own account Hirschfeld gave around a dozen well-attended talks during his time in Palestine—in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, kibbutz Beit Alfa, kibbutz Ain Charod, and elsewhere. Given the popularity of sexual science in the *yishuv* it stands out that *The World Journey* paid little attention to the “sexual intermediaries” that preoccupied Hirschfeld elsewhere, focusing instead on *Lebenslust*, *Lebenskraft*, and *Lebensbejahung*—roughly “lust for life,” “vitality,” and “affirmation of life”—among Jewish settlers. While Hirschfeld mentioned that he had observed all kinds of sexual concerns in Palestine except for transvestism, the main part of his discussion deals with collective ways of living, including the fostering of what we might today call body-positive attitudes and the benefits of communal child-rearing.

Hirschfeld expressed admiration for the *Kolonialisten*—the colonizers—who according to him were able to shed old taboos and inhibitions and start a freer life. Today the cost paid by the Arab and Muslim inhabitants of Palestine has been well documented in critiques of the unequal conditions of livability in the region. At the time of Hirschfeld’s visit the full-scale military occupation of Gaza and the West Bank undertaken after the founding of Israel in 1948 was yet to come. There was, however, already violence between Jews and Arabs that anticipated later events. When Hirschfeld visited Jerusalem, for instance, the city was recovering from the bloody aftermath of the 1929 fighting over access to the Western Wall. Hirschfeld was aware of the disputes, making space in his account of Palestine for a section on what he called the “Arab claim.” He recalled the arguments for Arab independence put to him during a meeting in Cairo with a man he called “Anni Abdul Hadis,” who according to Hirschfeld was a member of “Istik Cal.” “Anni Abdul Hadis” presumably refers to Awni Abd al-Hadi, founder of *'hizb al-istiqlal al-'arabi*, the Arab Independence Party, which was opposed to the Zionist effort. Abd al-Hadi was a founding member of the Paris-based *al-fatat* group, which supported Arab independence and unity. According to Hirschfeld Abd al-Hadi, an influential and well-connected figure, spoke...
“fluent German” during their meeting, setting out his case for why Palestine should not be called a “Jewish land.” Given Hirschfeld’s tendency to ignore other voices, it is significant that he made room for Abd al-Hadi’s account of the history of Palestine, including his critique of English rule and the arrival of “100,000 Zionists.” Yet rather than engaging with Abd al-Hadi’s claims, Hirschfeld shifted the focus to the “extraordinarily difficult situation in which Zionism has placed Judaism in Palestine,” extolling the virtues of the “brave, joyful, and optimistic” outlook of the Jewish “pioneers” in the face of adversity.

The encounter between Hirschfeld and Abd al-Hadi illustrates the deep opposition that already marked lives and politics in Palestine. Elsewhere in the text Hirschfeld recounted the fate of a Jewish settler from Poland who had set up home with his family near Haifa and was shot dead in his own living room one night, killed by an unseen assassin who hid in the darkness outside. It is likely that this murder was a real event rather than merely anti-Arab rhetoric. Yet Hirschfeld’s inclusion of it in *The World Journey* nevertheless draws attention to what he does not discuss: the impact of Zionism on the Arab and Muslim inhabitants of Palestine. While he mentioned elsewhere positive encounters with Arab Christians in Palestine, acknowledged that both Jews and Arabs have suffered and caused suffering, and emphasized the need for reconciliation, framed in terms of “panhumanism,” “cosmopolitanism,” and *Menschenliebe*, or the love for other humans, *The World Journey* is weighted toward “the achievements of the Zionists in Palestine” in the face of Arab resistance.

From our vantage point today Zionism in 1930s Palestine points to the future formation of the state of Israel and what Palestinians call *al-nakba*, or the catastrophe of the forced expulsion from their home. At the time when Hirschfeld was visiting Palestine, however, his attention was primarily on the deteriorating situation in Germany, which made the prospect of a “state-like” form where Jews could escape from persecution clearly appealing. The devastation of the Holocaust would later play an important role in the case for the state of Israel.

Hirschfeld closed the written part of *The World Journey* with a couple of lines from Ferdinand Freiligrath’s poem “Trotz alledem” (Despite everything; 1843), which was inspired by the Scottish poet Robert Burns’s 1795 celebration of socialism “Is There for Honest Poverty” (also known as “A Man’s a Man for A’ That”) and published by Karl Marx. The poem gained popularity in early twentieth-century socialist and communist circles for its emphasis on egalitarianism. Yet Hirschfeld’s plea for equality is somewhat undermined by *The World Journey*’s visual denouement. The final page of the book is given over in its entirety to a photograph of two men. Titled “Arab merchant with
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(boy)friend,” it replaces the political focus of the previous discussion with a visual reminder of Hirschfeld’s concern with same-sex sexuality. The picture alludes to Hirschfeld’s discussion of his time in Egypt when he had praised what he called the “sexual tolerance” of Islam. According to Hirschfeld this “tolerance” does not express itself as an overt prohomosexuality stance but as the ability to discuss the topic and disagree over it. Dialogue, however, is precisely what is avoided by the use of a photograph that reverts to a representation of Arab men as objects of the gaze of a Western observer, an observer who here apprehends their existence primarily in sexual terms. If the image can perhaps be read as a utopian expression of Hirschfeld’s hope that same-sex affinities will transgress political and racial divides, it nevertheless also shows how easily his focus on homosexuality screened out the lives of the people he met on his travels.

(After)Life

Hirschfeld died unexpectedly on May 14, 1935, his birthday, in exile in Nice. The last years of his life had been precarious. He had already received news of the deteriorating political situation in Germany while still on his travels in India and the Middle East. On arrival in Europe, where his first stopover was in Athens, Hirschfeld noted that the same kind of “hounding” he previously experienced had already caught up with him and that he considered “the situation at home more atrocious than ever.” In the 1920s Hirschfeld had experienced hate in a way that occasionally left physical damage, as discussed in the Introduction. However, it was only when he returned from his travels in the spring of 1932 that he actually feared for his life. “I can hardly believe it,” he writes in his diary, anticipating a future that would bring death in exile.

Hirschfeld’s last major appearance among the international sexological community was during the congress of the World League for Sexual Reform in Brno (Brünn). His account of it is brief, focused on describing his ill health and the support of Tao Li. Hirschfeld’s colleague Edward Elkan later remembered that “Hirschfeld was already a very sick man” when he met him in Brno, noting that Hirschfeld “was always accompanied by his close friend Dr Giese” but claiming not to know “the Chinese doctor” (Tao Li), whom he photographed together with Hirschfeld. Elkan, a Jewish socialist and birth control advocate who had a medical practice in Hamburg, would soon experience himself Nazi violence at firsthand. At the beginning of 1933, he “was almost beaten to death . . . by a gang of Nazi thugs who attacked him. . . . He was dragged from prison to prison and finally, his arm still in a sling, allowed to emigrate to London.” The year would be decisive for Hirschfeld too, starting with an attempt by Bernard Shapiro to remove him
from the directorship of the Institute of Sexual Science and culminating in
the Nazi destruction of the institute, which prompted Hirschfeld to leave
Ascona “secretly” because he feared that his former colleagues would betray
him and provoke events that could lead to his arrest or even death by Nazi
hands.\textsuperscript{158} To escape this threat he fled to France, where he initially lived in
Paris with both Karl Giese and Tao Li. He retired to Nice after Giese was
arrested, imprisoned, and eventually deported from France after “unhappy
circumstances”—Hirschfeld also described them as a “trifle”—led to this
chain of events.\textsuperscript{159} Hirschfeld does not give further details, but according
to a contemporary observer the events started with an “occurrence” in the
swimming baths.\textsuperscript{160} After the traumatic time in Ascona and Paris—in a letter
to his old friend the sexologist Norman Haire, Hirschfeld writes about his
“depression” about the events in Berlin—Nice seemed to offer a glimpse of
hope for Hirschfeld.\textsuperscript{161} He notes an improvement in health, starts to make
plans for a new institute, and is emotionally buoyed by meetings with old ac-
quaintances, including Eden Paul, who together with his wife, Cedar, would
translate and posthumously publish Hirschfeld’s \textit{Racism}, and Ernst Maass,
Hirschfeld’s great-nephew, who would be with Hirschfeld on the day of his
death and oversee the funeral arrangements.\textsuperscript{162}

Despite Hirschfeld’s own life and death being subjected to violence be-
cause of his sexual reform work and Jewishness, his account of his travels
shows that contrary to his political claims he did not always fully apprehend
everyone on equal terms. By examining Hirschfeld’s queer exile, then, this
chapter troubles the European and North American focus of many histo-
ries of sexuality by teasing out some of the coeval developments of modern
sexuality across the modern world. But most of all it turns attention to the
lingering influence of long histories of oppression even on those who overtly
claim to reject racism and sexism. \textit{The World Journey}, despite its accounts of
friendship and hospitality, is a text that largely speaks for, rather than with,
its subjects, and as such is symptomatic of the limits of Hirschfeld’s global
homosexual rights activism, which often brushed over localized contingen-
cies and individual experience. \textit{The World Journey} reveals how a degree of
detachment\textsuperscript{163} allowed Hirschfeld to screen out the voices of the people he
encountered on his travels, limiting, to adapt Arondekar and Patel’s words,
their lives to the exemplary and not the epistemological.\textsuperscript{164} Given Hirschfeld’s
avowed support for anticolonialism, feminism, and social justice, \textit{The World
Journey} is perhaps most accurately understood as an example of insidiously
transmitted, rather than necessarily overt, sexism and racism, which exposes
how affirmative global homosexual politics could retain and perpetuate prac-
tices that support discrimination and exclusion even when speaking out for
justice.