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The Demystification of Love: Sentiment, Practicality, and the Body in Turn-of-the-Century Berlin

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English Abstract: This essay explores corporeality and the search for love at the turn of the twentieth century, when newspaper personal ads offered an anonymous, disembodied, rationalized, and seemingly "modern" and more efficient method of finding a mate. It demonstrates that bodies were, at every turn, surprisingly stubborn in the face of this supposed rationalization and in fact complicated the attempts of self-consciously modern individuals to disembody and de-sentimentalize the search for love. In this way, corporeality and, indeed, the body itself subverted what was potentially emerging as a "modern" affective regime. The essay then traces this triad dynamic of corporeality, rationalization, and affect into the 1920s—vis-à-vis war invalids and transvestites—and up to the digital world of the twenty-first century, when love and bodies interact in strikingly similar ways.

In a wonderful but completely forgotten short story published in a Berlin newspaper in 1911, Hans Ostwald reconstructs one of the many dingy, working-class bars of turn-of-the-century Berlin and sets readers down at a table beside young Heinrich, who is spending his first night out at a bar in quite a while. At first Heinrich stumbles, almost as if asleep, through the choreography of drinking, boasting, and carousing, and he quickly becomes the target of one beer-breathed jibe after another. But the sudden warm, tender sensation of a girl's arm around his shoulder jolts him to life, and he emerges from his shy, wallflower self to buy the girl a drink. Soon enough, intoxicated not by the drink but by her physicality, he escorts her outside the bar, where they fly into a passionate embrace. As Ostwald describes it, the "soft warmth of the other body made his muscles go slack. [...] Out of the fog flew showers of fire and sparks that covered them both in embers and tenderness."[1] This is, as Ostwald titles this short vignette, "Liebe im Rausch," or "The Rush of Love," and there is something overwhelmingly physical about it: the arm on the shoulder, the press of bodies, the touch of the girl's lips. This physicality in fact overwhelms young Heinrich's intellect, his shyness, and his reserve, which should surprise no one who has ever connected physically with someone else. After all, this is, as we know, the way love works, and there is without a doubt a corporeality to love (and

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1 Hans Ostwald, "Liebe im Rausch," *Berliner Morgenpost,* 29 May 1911, Nr. 146.

emotions, more generally) that cannot be overlooked when examining love as a historical emotion, as a force, or even as a barometer of various other forces in the past.

This is what Ostwald's short story, "The Rush of Love," demonstrates so nicely. And at the risk of spoiling the ending, Heinrich's intoxication, as it were, ends when the girl's brother catches them outside the bar. The girl is quick on her feet: "We're getting married—leave him be—he's my husband now, after all," she tells her brother. Heinrich "repeat[s] mechanically: 'We're getting married!' But that was cold, deflated, sober. That was not stammered or screamed in the frenzy of love. That was the devastating realization of a hard, bitter fate that has suddenly appeared. He was trapped."[2] Indeed, no matter how clever, how quick the girl's response, the realities of life and respectability quickly shatter the intoxicating effect of their bodies pressed together. Real life dissolves the "rush" of love and turns it into a calculation, a "sober" realization more than an all-consuming passion or a shower of sparks.

Men and women took note of this tension between the rush of love and the calculation of love at the turn of the century in Berlin, when the realities of urban life at the dawn of the twentieth century were, like the arrival of the brother in Ostwald's story, butting up against the perhaps less complicated—as they described it—passions of the outgoing nineteenth century.[3] There was, to put it differently, a marked turn among normal men and women of both the working and comfortable middle classes toward practicality in matters of love and dating and intimacy. Of course, we know Max Weber's famous notion of the demystification of the world in the nineteenth century, and emotions—alongside tradition and superstition—are usually described as the primary casualties of modernization, rationalization, and industrialization; but it seems we are nevertheless tempted to hold love aside, to view love, that most timeless of things, as somehow resistant to this Weberian idea and, indeed, to be one of the few constants of the human experience. In fact, the most popular trope among historians of love, dating, and family life has probably been the rise and triumph of the "companionate" or "love" marriage (notably at the same time as the Industrial Revolution and Weber's demystifying modernization) that was at once a product of industrialization (insofar as a wealthier society

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2 Ibid.
3 Gabriele Thießen's new book reveals a similar dynamic in turn-of-the-century "Bohemian" Munich, whose free-love-espousing members struggled to extricate love from the web of bourgeois respectability (or to do so with happy results, in any case). Gabriele Thießen, "Da verstehen ich die Liebe doch anders und besser." Liebeskonzepte der Münchener Boheme um 1900 (Nordhausen: Verlag Traugott Bautz, 2015).

could "afford" to marry for reasons other than economics) and yet also seemingly a timeless refutation of modernization's rationalizing and mechanizing processes.[4]

Untangling these complexities is where the contributions of a bodily shift, a corporeal turn, come in handy. Contrary and complementary to the companionate marriage thesis, there are admittedly loads of stories about a growing practicality in matters of love at the turn of the century. To cite three delightful examples from Berlin newspaper reportage: the ringing of wedding bells fell out of fashion in Berlin because, as one writer put it, "in the turbulent, bustling metropolis one doesn't hear them anyway";[5] long, florid love letters were going extinct and being replaced by postcards or short telephone conversations (which had their own pitfalls);[6] and engagement rings, once the one-off, individualized product of a master artisan, now were being mass produced.[7] But actually measuring the extent to which love itself (along with marriage, intimacy, and even cupid) was being redefined less a matter of the heart and more one of the head is difficult, if indeed it is possible at all. And yet the body provides an interesting entry point, for navigating physicality was, as we will see, perhaps the trickiest aspect of a modern, more practical, ostensibly less passionate love. Indeed, we can in some ways test the validity of both the rationalized (anti-emotional) and companionate (persistently emotional) theses by examining them from the vantage point of the body. Moreover, if we conceive of "reason/practicality" and "sentiment/love" as competing motivations and justifications—indeed, as regimes of affective control (over relationships, marriage, intimacy, etc.)—untangling their interplay via

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4 For example, Stephanie Coontz, *Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy, or How Love Conquered Marriage* (New York: Viking, 2005); Susan J. Matt and Peter N. Stearns, "Introduction," in Susan J. Matt and Peter N. Stearns (eds.), *Doing Emotions History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 1-13; Christina Simmons, *Making Marriage Modern: Women's Sexuality from the Progressive Era to World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), especially chapter 3; Simon May, *Love. A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); Marcus Collins, *Modern Love. An Intimate History of Men and Women in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London: Atlantic, 2003); Lisa Appignanesi, *All About Love: Anatomy of an Unruly Emotion* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011); Andrew J. Cherlin, *The Marriage-Go-Round: The State of Marriage and the Family in America Today* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), chapter 3; Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (New York: Harper's Torch Books, 1979); Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (London: Collins, 1976).

5 "Wenn die Hochzeitsglocken läuten," *Berliner Morgenpost*, 14 April 1907, Nr. 87.

6 Paul v. Schönthan, "Liebesbriefsteller," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 19 January 1902, Nr. 31.

7 Hans Ostwald, "Vom Trauring," *Berliner Morgenpost*, 29 December 1908, Nr. 305.

the body will allow us to make sense of the social and emotional dynamics of the turn-of-the-century city.

   In this essay, I would like to approach these questions through the example of newspaper personal ads at the turn of the twentieth century. Newspaper personal ads were not new at the turn of the century (they date back to the late eighteenth century), but they were, as I have shown elsewhere, for the first time widely and wildly popular in Germany in the late 1890s (which had as much to do with the marketing and distribution strategies of newspaper editors as with the need for a new technology of love that the big city created).[8] We can do quite a few interesting things with personal ads;[9] but I am interested here in the extent to which the physical body—or, importantly, the very conspicuous and acclaimed absence thereof—was central to ads, both in the way people wrote ads, as well as in the rendezvous and relationships these ads encouraged. After all, part of what made personal ads so revolutionary, aside from the fact that they turned the metropolis's famously alienating features (namely its massive size and anonymity) into an advantage, was that they took the initial process of meeting (and, to a certain extent, courting) out of the public eye and, more importantly, out of the realm of the physical and corporeal. As we will see, however, Berliners in the early twentieth century found the body, indeed, the physicality of love, frustratingly but delightfully unavoidable. Their attempts to master, suppress, rationalize, or otherwise regulate their experience of love by disembodying (and contextualizing) it were consistently and ultimately unsuccessful, and while many intimacies nevertheless flourished as a product of ads, these tensions between affect and physicality—between the physical body and the emotions—can be instructive for our understanding of the history of love and of emotions, more generally. Indeed, they suggest something of the intractability of both the physical and contextualized body in matters of love and intimacy.

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8 See Tyler Carrington, "Love in the Big City: Intimacy, Marriage, and Risk in turn-of-the-century Berlin." PhD Dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2014.

9 H.G. Cocks and Pamela Epstein, in separate publications, have recently resurrected personal ads from the dustbin of historical curiosities (rediscovered in earlier books and essays by Stephen Winkworth and Marion Kaplan from the 1980s), though their interest remains primarily in the great middle-class handwringing caused by the rise of personal ads. H. G. Cocks, *Classified: The Secret History of the Personal Column* (London: Random House, 2009); H. G. Cocks, "Peril in the Personals: the dangers and pleasures of classified advertising in early twentieth-century Britain." *Media History* 10, no. 1 (2004): 3-16; Pamela Epstein, "Advertising for Love: Matrimonial Advertisements and Public Courtship," in Susan J. Matt and Peter N. Stearns (eds.), *Doing Emotions History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 120-139.

Disembodied Dating

Turn-of-the-century newspaper personal ads worked much like they have in our lifetimes: most reasonably-sized newspapers had a section of classified advertisements, and a person had only to go to the so-called Expedition Office of the newspaper of his choice, compose an ad, pay around fifteen cents per word, and then wait for the responses to pour in. Other than the initial process of posting an ad and, subsequently, corralling any responses, personal ads thus turned the whole business of selecting a mate—and, to a certain extent, performing the initial rituals of dating and courting—into a matter of letters and postcards filled with carefully chosen words. And while the ads themselves had an undeniable materiality to them (insofar as they were printed, distributed, carried about, circled, and cut out) and even served in some ways as textual extensions of real people (not least because they were, in the majority of cases, directly referential to actual lives—in a different way than, say, literary treatments of love), there was also something anonymous and non-physical about them. Indeed, notably absent in this new(ly popular) process of dating were, of course, public introductions; bows and curtsies; and other physical and intimate interactions like handshakes, embraces, and flirtatious glances. This is the choreography of love we have long known, and, with personal ads, it was instead supposed to happen in writing—writing that, however amorous, was seemingly disconnected from any specific physical or bodily presence; writing that was in many ways more rational and practical.

This, the disembodiment of ads, their anonymity, was revolutionary, and it was also their most celebrated aspect. Anonymity was, on the most basic level, about posting an ad without giving your name; but it was, perhaps more crucially, also about not being physically identified alongside an ad, not meeting or rendezvousing in public, in person, in the flesh. Anonymity of course also meant refashioning: recreating oneself textually as an advertisement based not necessarily on reality but on marketable fantasies of the self; and it meant doing so using the conventions of classified ads with their diagrammatic display, their terse, cryptic writing style, and their reliance upon codes and abbreviations.
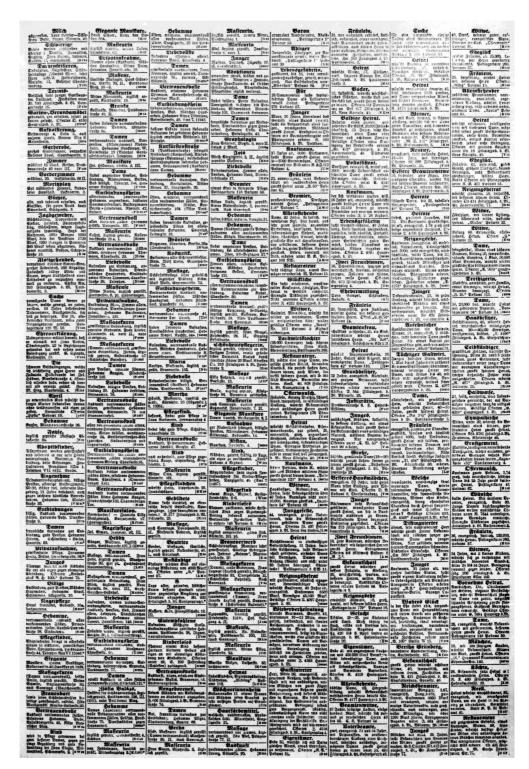
Figure 1: A typical page of personal ads in the turn-of-the-century daily newspaper.[10]

10 Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger, 2 April 1911, Nr. 170.

This textual refashioning, this removal of the physical body from the romantic equation was, in the words of early personal ad advocates, profoundly liberating. In what was one of the earliest defenses of (and advertisements for?) personal ads, the author of a 1900 feature piece on "Marriage Through the Newspaper" pointed out that personal ads were so groundbreaking because the anonymity of the medium allowed people to be transparent, state exactly what they wanted, what they were like, and where they stood financially—an important consideration for Berliners living in the so-called "struggle for existence." "The anonymity under whose protection these [ads] are written," the author wrote, "makes anything possible." "I can well imagine," he continued, "that people with very particular tastes" are able to find exactly the soul mate they seek." The sheer number of potential romantic interlocutors, in other words, actually made one more likely to find a compatible mate via the personal ads. And the fact that the first contact was written—not among family or friends—removed the necessity, as the author wrote, of a "personal meeting, which, no matter what, implies a certain moral commitment and makes a later termination of relations embarrassing for both parties." Instead, the meeting-in-writing allowed for a longer, more meaningful thought-exchange and the settling of "all important questions of life," after which an in-person meeting was not only less uncomfortable but also more likely to lead to something with which both people were happy. Personal ads, he concluded, "guarantee a larger freedom of choice" and thus represented a significant improvement over "fortuitous encounters made at parties, in theaters, at balls, etc. or those encounters that are set up by the friendly arrangement of others." And if, he wrote finally, there really are people who are meant for each other even though they might live far away from each other, "it is precisely through the newspaper that they have a real possibility of coming into contact with one another. So there is a poetry to personal ads, which are said to be so prosaic."[11]

Echoing this early champion of personal ads but challenging the idea of ads as a rationalization of love, historian Pamela Epstein has argued that matrimonial ads, as she calls them, actually allowed the emotions to flourish in a time when—all of the deconstruction of the notion of the unemotional, stiff-upper-lip Victorian era notwithstanding—society at least claimed to value a sort of romantic stoicism. As she puts it, "Matrimonials gave a rare opportunity to speak openly in an era that prized serious, unemotional behavior."[12] This may be true to an extent: personal ads do, indeed, seem to have opened a space in the

11 K. S., "Die Ehe durch die Zeitung," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger,* 10 August 1900, Nr. 371.
12 Epstein, 128.

newspaper—the public sphere *par excellence* (as we know from Habermas)—for the flexing of certain emotional muscles inasmuch as one was looking for love in a very public way; and Epstein suggests that it was the publicness of these emotions—"putting oneself on display for others to accept or reject"—combined with the "fundamental sense that finding romance in a public place [...] is wrong" that ultimately doomed personal ads.[13]

On the other hand, the ads themselves in fact reveal very little emotional language. Instead, it is talk (as we will see) of finances, of chaste honor and anonymity, and, in any case, of values that seem very un- or even anti-emotional that pervades the language of personal ads. Reading ads through the lens of the body offers a different answer, namely that that it was not the publicness of emotions that doomed ads but rather the stubborn corporeality of the emotional practices of love and intimacy they were being used to facilitate.

Corporeal Stubbornness

Indeed, while there were all sorts of stories about people—real people—meeting this way (and having quite successful and meaningful relationships), this talk of the advantages of personal ads and anonymity and controlling emotions and sorting out everything by mail was all theory. It made for wonderful fiction, this idea of falling in love by letters and then meeting, finally, in person, which at that point was merely a confirmation of a love already aflame.[14] But in reality, and more often than not, those who used personal ads simply could not resist making the personal ad encounter a known, non-anonymous, and ultimately *physical* one right from the start. Textualized selves led, it seems, almost irresistibly to the physical bodies they represented. Authors of ads (and I should note here that it was mostly men who did this) quite frequently wrote that "anonymity is pointless" (or simply "no anonymity") when posting their ads—a fact one woman complained about in a 1908 reader letter to the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* newspaper. "Why do men insist on this condition?" she asked, arguing that such stipulations only delegitimized the entire medium of the personal ad. "A woman from [better] circles and, in my opinion, such a man, too, cannot simply throw

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13 Ibid., 136.
14 See Lenelotte Winfeld's short story, "Begegnung" ("Encounter"), which imagined the fortuitous encounter of a man and a woman who had long been carrying on a very intimate relationship via letters without having ever met. Lenelotte Winfeld, "Begegnung," *Berliner Morgenpost*, 6 November 1910, Nr. 305.

about her name by immediately providing it to an anonymous ad."[15] Already in the initial penning and posting of ads, then, the central feature of ads—their anonymity—was being subverted, and although this applied only to the private responses successful ads elicited, one-sided anonymity was naturally no anonymity at all.

More interestingly, most personal ads, especially those by men, made a very specific point of requesting that anyone responding to the ad should send a photograph. One distraught woman in fact wrote for advice to a newspaper about how to get her photograph back, and the response she received can hardly have been very comforting. "Try to get the name of the person behind the ad to whom you sent your photograph with a request to the newspaper delivery office," the advice columnist wrote. "Once you have that, demand your photograph back. You may ultimately have to go to the police."[16] Here, again, anonymity was under assault, and while photographs are perhaps better understood as (at best) two-dimensional enactments of the "purely" physical or of "real" bodies as such, their physical roots ran deeper than a textual description of a person's appearance and thus quite clearly made personal ad users a little more cautious about the whole enterprise.

But photographs were not the only problem; picking up the responses to one's own ads often proved difficult, too, as the editors of the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* acknowledged in response to a reader letter written by a woman complaining that someone had picked up all of the responses her ad had generated. "[This kind of thing] is unfortunately a very common occurrence," the editors acknowledged, noting that the delivery office was not required to verify people's identities when picking up responses. Some Berliners had apparently taken to ripping a numbered streetcar ticket in half, including one half with the ad order and requesting that the delivery office require the person picking up the responses to show the other half—but "this doesn't always help," they admitted.[17] Indeed, the delivery office workers themselves were often dishonest and used their access to names and ads for devious ends, as happened in a 1902 case.[18]

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15 "Öffentliche Meinung: 'Anonym zwecklos,'" *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 5 April 1908, Nr. 176.

16 "Briefkasten," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 25 March 1905, Nr. 143.

17 "Öffentliche Meinung: Verfehlte Annoncen," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 12 December 1909, Nr. 800.

18 In this case, a man who owned a delivery office used his access to ads (and, more importantly, the identity of their authors) to propose to an ad writer (who was desperate to get married) and essentially swindle her of her dowry. "Unerquickliche Heirathsgeschichten," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 8 May 1902, Nr. 213.

For that matter, matching the ad respondent with a real person was also difficult and led not infrequently to swindlings, violent crimes, and, less seriously, a variety of pranks and mix-ups like the personal ad encounter thematized by Rudolf Kessler and A. Stein in a 1910 stage comedy called *Die Heiratsannonce* (*The Personal Ad*). Here, a young woman named Annchen thwarts her father's attempt to marry her off through a personal ad by intercepting the responses and disguising her country-bumpkin boyfriend, "Bummel," as the refined, monocle-wearing cavalier her father had selected for her.[19]

There were, then, a variety of ways in which the revolutionary potential of anonymous, practical, disembodied love ran into the corporeal insistence of the men and women who wrote ads. To be sure, and in Epstein's estimation, it was often as much the publicness, the laying bare in the open of the process of getting to know one another that was as decisive here as ads' unavoidable physicality. Authors of ads perhaps did not object so much to the sending of photos to a future lover as they were afraid of being exposed, unmistakably and with photographic proof, by a lover that did not pan out, indeed, as someone who used this method of finding a mate. Anonymity, too, was to a certain extent only desirable insofar as it protected the advertisement respondent from blackmail or public shaming; after all, for those users of ads with marriage intentions (and it seems most users were, indeed, actually eager to marry), anonymity was in fact the very thing they wanted to end by means of a new, exciting, and meaningful intimate relationship. But the body itself seemed to create the greatest number of problems for ads and expose their users to the greatest amount of risk (of embarrassment, of swindling, of physical danger), because the disembodiment (and thus avoidance of risk) vis-à-vis love was constantly being thwarted.

Ads were indeed very risky. It was supposed to be the great advantage of ads—and of the disembodied, practical, anonymous search for love, more generally—that they circumvented all of the problems and risks of the conventional search for a partner or spouse: the publicness, the potential shame of a failed relationship, the risk of falling for someone with other-than-amorous intentions. Disembodying and rationalizing love were supposed to remove these wildcards from this, the normal deck of dating and courting. However, in their attempt to shroud the body under a cloak of textual anonymity—indeed, in the creation of textualized or mediated bodies—personal ads ran continually into snags. Photos, names, and the retrieval of responses all pierced the

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19 Rudolf Kessler and A. Stein, *Die Heiratsannonce* (Berlin: Verlag von Kühling & Güttner, Theater-Buchhandlung, 1910).

fabric of rationalization and disembodiment, and the physical body appears in this sense to have been a rather unruly subject in the regime of rationalized emotions this whole enterprise of personal ad romance represented. Indeed, where scholars of emotions like William Reddy often speak in terms of emotional regimes, what we observe here is a regime of rationalization via disembodiment, a sort of anti-emotional regime whose strategy was to remove physicality from the process of finding love.[20]

The Logic of Love

Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that removing the physical body—or attempting to, at least—even shifted users' expectations and experience of love ever so slightly. In the (initial) absence of a photo or, really, very much physical description in ads (most ads noted hair color at most), what nearly every ad emphasized was the level of financial stability being offered or sought. Was this merely a placeholder for the process of visually estimating a potential partner's finances by the quality and cut of his clothes, the presence or absence of rings and other jewelry, and the overall effect of his appearance? This seems likely on many counts. But the emphasis on finances, spelled out as they were in black and white, may also have altered something in the experience of dating and courting. For one, it often stopped the whole project before it even started, as one frustrated Berlin woman lamented in a 1908 letter to the newspaper. "One for many," as she called herself, described how she often found ads whose requirements she met ("honorable, loving, thrifty") but found herself excluded from consideration "because I don't have any 'assets'. It's surely the same for many others, too." "Should we all become old maids?" she asked.[21] This last line of course speaks to a certain shared frustration, and, sure enough, her letter set off such a firestorm of similar letters to the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* that the editors, who kept trying to stop the debate, finally, after over a month of argument, told readers that they would throw any additional responses in the garbage.[22] We might note here that the heavy emphasis on assets also perpetuated a certain gender inequality in dating, for while men

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20 William Reddy, The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
21 "Öffentliche Meinung: 'Vermögen erwünscht,'" *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 16 February 1908, Nr. 85.
22 "Öffentliche Meinung: 'Vermögen erwünscht,'" *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 22 March 1908, Nr. 150.

and women largely wrote similar ads, men were seemingly able to get by with requesting savings but rarely revealing anything about their own financial strength. Women, on the other hand, and as Joachim Werner concluded in his 1908 study of several thousand personal ads in Berlin newspapers, rarely requested savings but nearly always felt compelled to refer to their own (if they had any).[23]

Most importantly, though, the rationalization and, in this case, economization of dating seems to have lessened something of the frenzy—the *Rausch*, or intoxication, as it were—of courting. As one Berliner put it, the problem with personal ads was that they had "too much of a business-like character," what with their sterile, "cold words" and stipulations about money.[24] To be sure, this was (lest we forget) the great promise of ads, to wit, their function in making the whole process easier, more rational, somehow less personal; but it seems even users of ads were perhaps not so convinced that there was not something lost in this rationalization. Indeed, most public accounts of successful personal ad pairings made a point to argue that this way was no less poetic than the traditional methods. The author of the defense of advertising for love quoted above even went as far as to suggest that personal ads might be considered as the opening lines of a romance so maudlin as to please readers of Eugenie Marlitt, a popular nineteenth-century German novelist well-known for her tales of great love affairs.[25] One wonders, though, if all of this was not perhaps a case of the lady—or man—(doth) protest[ing] too much.

Of course, we must consider the fact that ads served a great many ends, not all of which had love *qua marriage* in sight. For that matter, what love meant to users of ads naturally varied greatly, and it is compelling to ask what role newspaper ads—with their disembodying potential—played in the search for connections that were more explicitly physical, sexual, or even narcissistic. Here we might look specifically at the many ads for "masseuses," which were mostly thinly-veiled propositions for casual sex (both same-sex and heterosexual in nature), and it is interesting that, in these ads, the body featured so prominently.[26] After all, ads that were clearly aimed at marriage relied

23 Joachim Werner, *Die Heirats-Annonce: Studien und Briefe* (Berlin: Verlag Martin Aronhold, 1908), 16.

24 "Das Publikum: Der Weg zur Ehe," *Berliner Morgenpost*, 6 August 1911, Nr. 214.

25 K. S., "Die Ehe durch die Zeitung," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 10 August 1900, Nr. 371.

26 For example, *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 2 April 1908, Nr. 171. That these ads were not really for non-sexual massages was made clear by a 1905 case charging a so-called "Massage and Manicure Institute" with running a prostitution ring. "Die Geheimnisse eines Instituts für 'Massage und Manikure,'" *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, 19 November 1905, Nr. 577.

(in theory) on the erasure of the physical. Here, though, ads made direct reference to "bodily punishment" and hinted at sadism with other fairly straightforward keywords like "strict" and "energetic."[27]

Figure 2: Ads for masseuses and massages (here "Masseurin" and "Massage") fill the columns of a standard page of classified ads in the Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger, one of Berlin's largest daily newspapers at the turn of the century).[28]

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27 See, for example, the ads Paul Näcke reprints in his 1902 article on same-sex ads. Dr. P. Näcke, "Angebot und Nachfrage von Homosexuellen in Zeitungen," *Archiv für Kriminal-Anthropologie und Kriminalistik* 8:3/4 (1902): 339-350, here 341.
28 Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger, 2 April 1908, Nr. 71.

There was indeed no hiding of the physicality of the advertised connection, and while the ads remained thoroughly anonymous (to have been anything but anonymous would have resulted in surefire trouble with the police, who, initially, even went as far as to track down authors of relatively chaste matrimonial ads), they relied on the language of the body to indicate the purely sexual or erotic purpose of the relationship being sought. In this sense, ads for sex evince an awareness of the physicality of love that ads for marriage endeavored to avoid, suggesting that the physicality of intimacy at the turn of the century was not only resistant to Berliners' attempts at control but also a tool that could be manipulated and employed for other, more sexual and perhaps narcissistic ends. Wielding this tool was dangerous, however, and the authors of these blatantly corporeal ads often found themselves under police investigation.

The Advertised Body in the 1920s

Interestingly, the problem of the body in personal ads continued into World War I and beyond, too. German cities were naturally quite different as the 1920s began, and the topography of love and dating also shifted to conform to the new postwar landscape. But bodies remained problematic irritants in personal ads' regime of affective control. Otto Dix made famous the broken and mangled bodies of WWI veterans in Berlin and elsewhere in the late-teens and early-twenties, but these men were, in fact, in a different way sketching their own portraits, namely in the personal ads they wrote after the war. Beginning in the middle of the war and continuing into the 1920s, ads started popping up in newspapers with the bolded headline, "War Invalid." Others relegated this piece of information—namely the presence of some injury, physical or psychological—to the body text of the personal ad; but what is fascinating is that the authors of these ads volunteered this information so freely (even, as in one case, where the injury was "unrecognizable").[29] They felt, perhaps, that it would be revealed eventually or that it was dishonest or disreputable to conceal this information (though, to the extent to which veterans were seen by many as irritants to a society trying to forget, not to mention as freeloaders trying to leech pensions off of the government, identifying as a wounded veteran was potentially

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29 The text of this particular ad reads: "War invalid—middle twenties with a small pension (injury unrecognizable)." *Münchener Zeitung*, 5 October 1918.

even more disreputable).[30] A more compelling reading might be that they could not help but identify as wounded veterans. As Sabine Kienitz argues in her excellent book on wounded veterans, war injuries "remained for the afflicted soldiers, as well as their families, an inescapable material reality whose concrete effects had to be overcome and interpreted each day."[31] Kienitz suggests that their war injuries in fact became part of their self-images (*Selbstbilder*), and while this may have had a sort of "productive effect" inasmuch as it provided these men "with a coherent, meaning-laden autobiography" in a time where they perhaps felt their lives and wider worlds were void of meaning (a feeling expressed so famously by anti-art movements like dada and stream of consciousness), war injuries naturally also had a profoundly demoralizing effect.[32] Bodies, in this case, were stubborn enough fixtures of these soldiers' self-images as to find their way into textualized, newspaper copy versions of their bodies.

War injuries were, in a strange way, also uniquely marketable in the early 1920s, and this might also help explain the presence of marriage ads that feature them so prominently. On one level, and in spite of the manifold problems with the Weimar government's system of awarding pensions to injured veterans, the promise of or potential for a steady income may indeed have counted as a sterling trait worth advertising.[33] Kienitz confirms that this was commented upon at the time, as well.[34] It is also true that war veterans counted as especially desirable suitors in at least some circles (Kienitz has located a handful of personal ads written by women who were seeking war invalids specifically);[35] the newspaper *Vorwärts* even ran an article already in 1915 titled "War Invalids as [covetable] Marriage Objects," though it is also fair to read the article as sarcastic.[36] Contemporary observers indeed interpreted this strange popularity of war veterans as the result of a massive shortage of marriable men ("a man at any price!" was how one author

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30 Paul Lerner, *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry, and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890-1930* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2003), especially 223-248. On veterans as irritants, see Ann Murray, "Reformed Masculinity: trauma, soldierhood and society in Otto Dix's War Cripples and Prague Street." *Artefact: Journal of the Irish Association of Art Historians* 6 (2012): 16-31.

31 Sabine Kienitz, Beschädigte Helden: Kriegsinvalidität und Körperbilder 1914-1923 (Pader-born: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2008), 307.

32 Ibid, 308ff.

33 Lerner, Ch. 8 ("The Pension Wars").

34 Kienitz, 246.

35 Kienitz, 245.

36 Cited in Kienitz, 245. "Kriegsinvaliden als Heiratsobjekte," *Vorwärts*, 5 June 1915, Nr. 153.

put it);[37] others thought that women might feel a patriotic duty to couple with veterans.[38]

Either way, what is interesting about personal ads by wounded veterans is that we see again here the oft-touted advantage of personal ads that authors could be honest and forthright about themselves. As before, however, bodies—in this case, scarred, mangled bodies—continued to pose a problem in this new calculus of a straightforward, practical, rationalized love. Pursuing love in the personal ads and thus disembodying the search for love may have been technologically possible (and in certain limited ways advantageous to injured war veterans), but it was at best complicated, a delicate calculus of what to reveal and what to keep secret, and its benefits were a long shot. Personal ads by wounded veterans, like those written by civilians, thus underscore the ways in which bodies—injured or healthy—were not just deeply embedded into the search for love but also often disruptive parts of the emotional experiences that went with it.

The 1920s also saw the rise of another kind of ad that was complicated by corporeality: for the first time, ads by transvestite men and women started appearing in newspapers. Berlin's *Berliner Inseratenblatt*, for example, featured a whole host of marriage ads by self-identified "Transvestit[en]," and where such ads would, at the turn of the century, have been censored out of existence (and their authors probably charged by the police), in the relatively permissive world of Weimar-era Germany, they resided peacefully alongside ads for straight and same-sex marriages, items for sale, and various job openings.[39] As with ads by war invalids, we observe here the simultaneous *physical* subversion of bodies (dating or courting not in person but in text) and the rationalization or at least textualization of love, on the one hand, and the textual persistence and even stubbornness of those bodies that were, to their inhabitors, frustratingly inconsistent with their psychological, emotional, and/or sexual identities. After all, like the war

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37 Quoted in Kienitz, 246.

38 Kienitz, 246. For additional (and excellent) analyses of war invalids as husbands (and some of the interesting marital dynamics surrounding the issue of war injuries), see Sabine Kienitz, "Der Krieg der Invaliden. Helden-Bilder und Männlichkeits-konstruktionen nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg," *Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift* 60 (2001): 367-402. On the nexus of the body and self-images of masculinity, see Sabine Kienitz, "Body Damage: The First World War and the Construction of Gender Relations in the Weimar Republic," in Karen Hagemann and Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (eds.), *Home/Front: The Military, War and Gender in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2002): 181-203.

39 *Berliner Inseratenblatt*, 2. Jahrg. (1924), Nr. 27; *Berliner Inseratenblatt*, 2. Jahrg. (1924), Nr. 38; *Berliner Inseratenblatt* 2. Jahrg. (1924), Nr. 40.

invalids, these transvestite men and women did not simply advertise themselves as such (that is, as men or women) but felt compelled (or liberated, perhaps?) to note their physical transvestitism. As with war invalids, it is interesting to ask why, and while this was surely part of a larger sexualization of visual and print culture in the Weimar era, more generally—where the mention of transvestitism perhaps conferred a certain aesthetic and/or erotic appeal—we can of course imagine that many other transvestites left this line out of their ads. Either way, what we might interpret as yet another example of the disembodying potential of personal ads remains, therefore, a more complicated example of the stubborn corporeality of love in the early twentieth century.

Conclusion: Analog Love and Digitized Bodies

Taken together, what newspaper personal ads—and the nexus of bodies and love, more generally—suggest is that, try as it might, the turn-of-the-century city (and the fascinating social dynamics it set into motion then and in the decades that followed) had at best limited success disembodying the search for love and intimacy. To be sure, physical bodies were an enormous problem in the turn-of-the-century metropolis (there were too many of them; housing was a problem; finding work was a problem; and getting bumped and jostled by bodies was one of the biggest sources of complaints by the newspaper-reading public); and newspaper personal ads offered the tantalizing possibility of removing the physical body from the equation altogether, of streamlining the process of finding a mate by shifting at least the initial sphere of interaction to the printed word (and textualized or mediated body). This had a great many advantages, not least for gay and lesbian (and, later, transvestite) Berliners; and for all Berliners, it used the city's massive size in favor of lovers by increasing exponentially a person's list of potential mates. Indeed, the rationalized, calculated love under consideration here must not be dismissed as negative or somehow unsuccessful (even as it failed, ultimately, to disembody the search for love), for it is clear that personal ads of all stripes (for marriage, for other sorts of hetero- and homosexual intimacy; ads written by injured veterans and by transvestites) played an important and unjustly dismissed role in creating real, meaningful intimacies at a time when these at least seemed ever harder to locate. Time and again, men and women who used ads reported successes where all other ways of meeting had failed.

Personal ads nevertheless remained mostly on the margins; writing a personal ad remained something that most people concealed, knowing, as they did, that using ads clashed too basically with the prevailing qualities of turn-of-the-century life, to wit, reliability, predictability, stability, and respectability. Bodies posed an additional problem for the popularity and longevity of newspaper personal ads, and this was simply that love for Berliners seems to have been inescapably and irresistibly physical, material, and corporeal. The allure of love for most Berliners did not reside in the personal ads. On the contrary, as beloved as personal ads were, most men and women (whether working- or middle-class) believed that love was found in the suburban dance halls (and house parties and balls) to which they flocked on weekend afternoons and nights; it was in the swaying of bodies in a waltz; the swishing of a skirt in a tango; the fervor of dancing close, breathing, sweating; smelling hair or perfume or aftershave; feeling as intoxicated by attraction as by drink. This was the intoxication of love, the rush of love that Hans Ostwald described in "Liebe im Rausch," and this was what personal ads could not replicate so well. Indeed, it is compelling to consider the dance hall as the more strictly physical (but, in the masses of people looking simply to have a good time in dimly-lit rooms, partially anonymous) counterpart to personal ads, both of which in any case have a common root in the urbanizing effects of industrialization. Were dance halls more successful, more mainstream than personal ads because of this relatively anonymous physicality, this relatively immediate pathway to the physical? Perhaps. It is also possible that dance halls offered the right blend of anonymity and physicality while ads were both too disconnected from the physical meeting they promised to effect and, frustratingly, too much anticipation and not enough consummation. There were, in fact, a number of stories about people who met and fell in love via personal ads but for whom the moment of meeting face to face, body to body, ruined it, was too quotidian or somehow disappointing.[40] Some couples tried in vain to postpone this moment or to avoid it; but it almost never worked. This—the stubbornness of bodies—is important for the way we understand personal ads at the turn of the century and for how we make sense of this demystification of love, not to mention the importance we must grant physical bodies vis-à-vis emotions. Physical bodies seemed at every turn to flip this rationalization of love on its head and to wage war on the regime of affective control, for bodies were central to love in Berlin, and these bodies largely resisted being rationalized, silenced, or subverted.

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40 Lenelotte Winfeld, "Begegnung," *Berliner Morgenpost*, 6 November 1910, Nr. 305.

I and others have elsewhere noted the remarkable similarities between the emergence of love in the personal ads and love on the internet;[41] and this problem of the body, indeed, the tension between virtual encounters and physical, real-life encounters, is yet another facet of the ways in which the many issues and debates surrounding online dating and even cyber- or digital-love are in fact a digital reprise of the changes in love and dating at the turn of the century. One thinks, for example, of Spike Jonze's excellent 2013 film, *Her*, which wrestles with the pleasures and pitfalls of purely digital relationships and our urge to make even these somehow physical. In one particularly interesting scene of *Her* (where the protagonist, Theodore, who has fallen in love with the female voice/personage of his new operating system, tries, unsuccessfully, to copulate with a human surrogate), this problematic nexus of digital and physical is especially clear.[42] Another example of this nexus is Tinder, the popular smartphone application, which melds cyber and physical in an interesting way vis-à-vis dating: Tinder offers possible amorous partners based on the user's GPS-based proximity; the user need only "swipe" left or right. For that matter, various online dating algorithms now claim to give weight to a user's physical location.[43] Surely other examples abound, as well. It will, in any case, be interesting to see how our contemporary world navigates this issue of corporeality and love as digital technology gets ever more advanced and an increasing number of people meet online (as opposed to "IRL," a phrase that has become popular—and, apparently, necessary—to refer to "in real life").[44] If the story of the early technology of newspaper

41 For example, Pam Epstein, "F, 18, Seeks Victorian Gentleman," *The New York Times*, 14 February 2010, WK10; also Tyler Carrington, "Analog Love, Digital Love: Navigating Love and Intimacy in the Modern Age," presented at the Women's and Gender History Graduate Symposium, University of Illinois, March 2014.

42 *Her*, film, directed by Spike Jonze (Burbank, CA: Warner Bros. Pictures, 2013).

43 "The Science of Online Dating," *Science Focus*, 14 February 2011, http://www.sciencefocus.com/feature/psychology/science-online-dating, accessed 2 July 2016.

44 In a recent "Room for Debate" segment in *The New York Times* about the advantages and pitfalls of online friendships, one contributor's comments on this matter recall early personal ad disciples: writes Jazmine Hughes, a blogger, "The web provides a space where the normal barriers to friendship—namely, the confusion about the appropriate way to start one—don't apply. Online, you can choose to opt in—friend, follow, favorite—any person that peaks your interest, because of your pre-existing knowledge, again gleaned from the Internet, of their interests. The web doesn't preclude people from making IRL friends. It actually makes it easier." Jazmine Hughes, "The Internet Can Make Real Life Friendships Easier," *The New York Times*, 26 March 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2015/03/05/real-relationships-in-a-digital-world/the-internet-can-make-real-life-friendships-easier, accessed 30 June 2016.

personal ads (and their susceptibility to the stubbornness of bodies in matters of love) offers any hints, any attempts to decouple the navigation of love from the physical realm altogether likely face long odds.[45]

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45 This, indeed, is what Aziz Ansari and Eric Klinenberg conclude in their fascinating (and wonderfully entertaining) study of romance in the digital age. Aziz Ansari and Eric Klinenberg, *Modern Romance: An Investigation* (New York: Penguin, 2015).