

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Exeter		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 27 English Language and Linguistics		
Title of case study: Improving the visibility, wellbeing and public understanding of LGBTQ communities through collaboration with LGBTQ organisations and cultural institutions		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2010 – 31 December 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Jana Funke	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Associate Professor	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2010-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 1 August 2014 – 31 December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>LGBTQ people often remain invisible in heritage/cultural institutions, which can result in a decreased sense of community and pride. The general public frequently lack opportunities to improve their understanding of gender and sexual diversity. Funke's research has addressed these problems by building new collaborations with major LGBTQ organisations and heritage/cultural institutions. Her work on histories of gender and sexuality, and her development of innovative models of co-working with LGBTQ artists, organisations and communities, have had profound impacts, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling new creative collaborations and generating new artistic LGBTQ outputs. • Improving the life chances and wellbeing of LGBTQ people. • Enhancing the work of LGBTQ organisations by developing new engagement practices that enable creative approaches to support stakeholders. • Improving the visibility and public understanding of LGBTQ communities in the heritage and cultural sectors nationally and internationally. 		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Prof Funke's research has pioneered new understandings of literary and sexological constructions of gender and sexuality in the period 1880-1940. It has received support from the British Academy (2012-14), AHRC (2016) and from the Wellcome Trust in the form of a major Joint Investigator Award for the <i>Rethinking Sexology</i> project (2015-21) and a subsequent Research Enrichment Award for the <i>Transformations</i> project (2018-20), which Funke directs as Joint PI with Prof Kate Fisher. Funke's in-depth archival research on LGBTQ modernist writers like Radclyffe Hall, H.D., Bryher, Virginia Woolf and Vita Sackville-West, has explored previously overlooked intersections between lesbian, bisexual, transgender and heterosexual identities [3.1, 3.2, 3.3]. It has expanded understandings of literary modernism by revealing how LGBTQ authors drew critically and creatively on sexological knowledge to articulate diverse models of gender and sexuality, thus offering rich insights into the diverse ways in which individuals can understand their own and other people's gender and sexual identities.</p> <p>Funke's research on the <i>Rethinking Sexology</i> project has demonstrated that sexology (ca. 1880-1940) was an interdisciplinary project shaped by diverse forms of knowledge, including literature, history, anthropology and sociology. As part of this major six-year project, Funke and Fisher have led a team of three post-doctoral fellows and a PhD student to offer the first sustained examination of the interdisciplinary history of sexology. Showing that sexologists drew on various non-medical forms of knowledge, Funke's individual and collaborative research has demonstrated that sexological constructions of gender and sexuality were far richer and more unstable than has previously been assumed [3.4, 3.5, 3.6]. By revealing the complexities of sexological knowledge and examining how people in the past engaged with sexology, this research has enabled new critical thinking about medical and scientific authority, diagnostic categories and LGBTQ identities past and present.</p>		

Funke's research on modernist literature and the history of sexology has led to significant funding for a series of follow-on impact projects, which Funke has directed in collaboration with leading LGBTQ organisations (Gendered Intelligence, Intercom Trust, YAY Cornwall, X-Plore Youth, Exeter Pride), heritage/cultural organisations (British Film Institute, National Trust, Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, Wellcome Collection) and creative artists. Through these partnerships, Funke has demonstrated that her historical research provides powerful tools to enable LGBTQ individuals in the present to articulate their own views on gender and sexuality, and to enable broader publics to challenge damaging assumptions about LGBTQ communities.

The Wellcome-Trust funded *Transvengers* (2104-15), *Orlando: The Queer Element* (2016-17) and *Transformations* (2018-20) projects, and the National Lottery Heritage-funded *Queering the Museum* project (2018-21) share a commitment to processes of engaged research and co-production through which LGBTQ people are empowered not only to gain an understanding of sexuality and gender in the past, but also to articulate their own insights and to share these with wider publics through creative outputs. Funke has collaborated with creative artists, dramaturgs, performers, LGBTQ organisations and heritage organisation across the country to develop these innovative methods of engaging LGBTQ communities and the broader public with her historical findings.

3. References to the Research

- 3.1. Jana Funke, ed. and intro, *The World and Other Unpublished Works by Radclyffe Hall*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2016.
<https://doi.org/10.7765/9781784997663.00014>
- 3.2. Jana Funke. "Intersexions: Transgender, Cross-Dressing, Dandyism", in Marcus L, Mendelssohn M, Shepherd-Barr K (eds) *Twenty-First Century Approaches to Literature: Late Victorian Into Modern, 1880-1920*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198704393.013.27>
- 3.3. Jana Funke. "The Queer Materiality of the Past: H.D., Freud and the Bronze Athena", in Funke J, Grove J (eds) *Statuary, History and Sexuality*, Basingstoke: Palgrave: 2019.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95840-8_10
- 3.4. Jana Funke. "Navigating the Past: Sexuality, Race and the Uses of the Primitive in Magnus Hirschfeld's Travel Writings", in Fisher K, Langlands R (eds) *Sexual Knowledge and Receptions of the Past*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199660513.001.0001>
- 3.5. Jana Funke (and Fisher K). "Cross-Disciplinary Translation: British Sexual Science, History and Anthropology", in Bauer H (ed) *Sexology and Translation*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvrf88r8.12>
- 3.6. Jana Funke (and Fisher K). "Let Us Leave the Hospital [...]; Let Us Go on a Journey Around the World": Sexual Science and the Global Search for Variation and Difference", in Fuechtner, V, Hayes D, Jones R (eds.) *Towards a Global History of Sexual Science, 1880-1950*, Oakland: University of California Press: 2017.
<http://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520293373.003.0003>

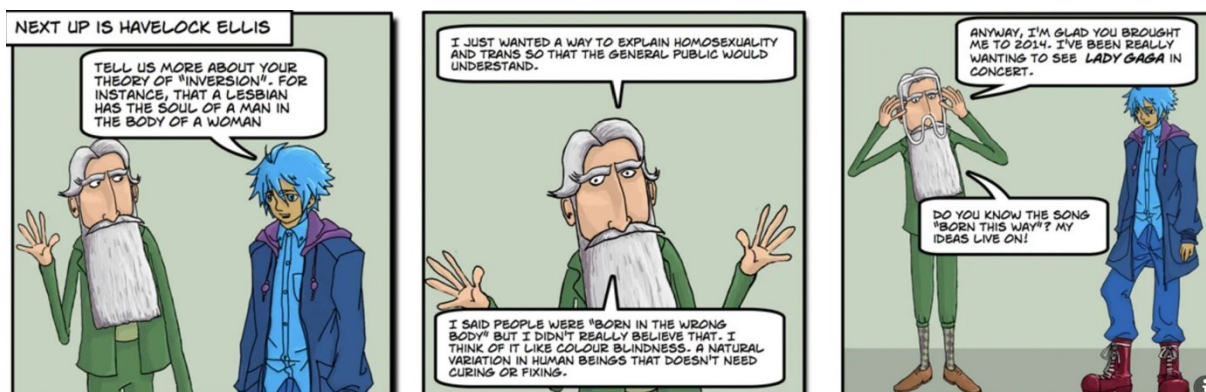
Related Grants:

British Academy Small Research Grant (2012-2014), PI. £6,868; AHRC Being Human Festival Grant (2016), PI. £2,000; Wellcome Trust Joint Investigator Award (2015-21), Joint PI with Fisher. £845,667; Wellcome Trust Research Enrichment Award (2018-20) Joint PI with Fisher. £147,315; National Lottery Heritage Funding (2020-2021), PI, £79,900.

4. Details of the impact

1) Enabling new creative collaborations and artistic LGBTQ outputs

Funke's research has directly shaped and led to commissions for a wide range of innovative creative works, providing support and promotion for artists and performers who are LGBTQ and/or engage with LGBTQ themes in their work. These creative outputs were developed through a process of collaborative engagement with Funke's research on sexology and modernist literature. The creatives enhanced their practice and generated new outputs that reflect diverse LGBTQ experiences past and present. Funke was a core collaborator on the Wellcome Trust-funded *Orlando: The Queer Element* project (2016-17), led by arts company Clay & Diamond, which resulted in a new immersive performance inspired by Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*. Aimed at secondary school pupils and the general public, it encouraged audiences to explore sexuality and gender. It was performed at the BFI in London and eight times at the National Trust's Knole and Hanbury Hall. Funke facilitated workshops at each [5.1].



In 2014-2015, Funke collaborated with artist Jason Barker and Gendered Intelligence, a leading UK charity for transgender youth, on the *Transvengers* comic on trans history and the history of sexology. The comic was co-created by Barker and young trans people through roleplay utilising Funke's research. It was displayed as part of the major Wellcome Institute of Sexology exhibition (2014-15). Funke, Barker and Gendered Intelligence subsequently extended their formal collaboration through the *Transformations* project (2018-20). Barker worked with Funke, the *Rethinking Sexology* team and a new group of young trans and gender-diverse people from Gendered Intelligence to write a performance entitled *Adventures in Time and Gender*, a time-traveling journey based on Funke's research on trans and queer history. This process enabled Barker to develop new skills in socially engaged creative practice and to engage with historical materials, which have particular value for trans communities. As Barker stated: 'Feeling connected to something that was very ancient was very powerful. That this [trans identity] is nothing new.' [5.2] Launched in October 2020, the drama was produced by Barker in collaboration with other leading trans creatives and performers, such as director Krishna Isthia, and released as a three-part podcast [5.2].

In 2016, Funke worked with award-winning artist Natalie McGrath to develop a new performance based on Funke's research on Radclyffe Hall; it was staged as part of the AHRC Being Human Festival at the Exeter Phoenix (November 2016).

'To engage with this material and Jana [Funke]'s expertise has been a new way of working for me. It allowed me to develop my voice as a lesbian writer in a new way, or even a gender-fluid writer has emerged on the page, bringing about new resonances and possibilities in my work for the future in style and content.'

– Natalie McGrath [5.3]

McGrath was empowered to collaborate with other academics, leading to a commission to write a new play on LGBTQ+ lives and loneliness for the Northcott Theatre/Wellcome Centre for Cultures & Environments of Health in Exeter [5.3]. Funke and McGrath's initial collaboration led to the *Queering the Museum* project (2019-21), which they jointly direct and which utilises creative methods of engagement developed by Funke on previous projects. This enabled McGrath to take up a new paid role as RAMM's writer in residence, writing an original LGBTQ heritage piece in dialogue with Funke's research and the museum

collections. Funke and McGrath have also commissioned a series of creative responses to RAMM's collections (by Charice Bhardwaj, Carina Miles, Caleb Parkin and Oren Shoosmith), thus providing new opportunities for other LGBTQ artists to develop their practice and reveal otherwise invisible LGBTQ histories [5.4].

2) Improving the life chances and wellbeing of LGBTQ people

Funke has empowered young LGBTQ people to engage with historical research and collaborate with creative practitioners to share their insights on gender and sexuality with wider audiences. The ca. 100 individuals who participated in the *Orlando*, *Transvengers*, *Transformations* and *Queering the Museum* projects benefited from increased pride and confidence and a decreased sense of social isolation and loneliness [5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5].

Participants in *Orlando*, which engaged young people through performance, reported positive outcomes on their sense of self: 'This mattered today, because it's one step closer to showing that I matter.' [5.1]

The *Transformations* project involved a series of in-depth workshops over the course of one year, using performance, collage/drawing and creative writing. Its independent evaluation has shown substantial and often life-changing positive impacts on the ca. 20 participants' sense of empowerment, identity and belonging [5.2]. They commented on how learning about trans people in the past made them 'feel a sense of belonging that I've never felt before', that simply 'seeing that we have existed is really validating and special' [5.2]. They also developed new skills in research, creativity, curation and performance, providing transferable skills and important career experience. One participant stated: 'The fact that I can now say I've been part of a writers' room for a play that's going to be made should be an enormous help professionally.' The project enabled some participants to make particularly life-changing decisions. One young person stated: 'I have been referred to GIC [Gender Identity Clinic] and came out to my family because I was motivated by the workshops.' [5.2] Trans people who listened to the podcast resulting from the *Transformations* project said it made them feel 'proud', 'seen', 'accepted' and 'affirmed' [5.2]. LGBTQ+ people who engaged with *Queering the Museum* reported similar feelings of affirmation and validation [5.4]. According to Gendered Intelligence, the collaboration with Funke 'demonstrated the value of historical and creative approaches for young people's wellbeing and life chances' and 'provides the foundation for trans and gender-questioning people to find a deep sense of pride' [5.2].

3) Enhancing the work of LGBTQ organisations through new engagement practices

Funke's work has significantly improved the way that a range of LGBTQ organisations, including award-winning national charities like Gendered Intelligence and the Intercom Trust, engage with their stakeholders. In partnership with Funke, they have developed new historical and creative methods of engagement. For Gendered Intelligence, the success of *Transvengers* led to the large-scale *Transformations* project, making it possible to develop the *Adventures in Time and Gender* drama podcast and website through collaboration between young trans people, artists and researchers. As a result, Gendered Intelligence staff felt inspired to use historical materials when working with young trans people or delivering trans awareness training [5.2]. Since 2018, Funke has also worked with X-Plore Youth and YAY Cornwall to engage young LGBTQ+ people with LGBTQ+ history through regular workshops [5.4]. LGBTQ+ organisations have repeatedly showcased their collaborations with Funke to influence best practice across the sector. For instance, the CEO of Gendered Intelligence, Dr Jay Stewart, repeatedly highlighted *Transvengers* at national events and in publications, stating that it successfully 'raise[d] awareness about transgender lives, and [...] generate[d] debate about gender identity.' [5.5].

In 2020, Funke's work on *Queering the Museum* enabled new partnerships between RAMM, Intercom Trust and Exeter Pride, inspiring these leading regional LGBTQ organisations to embed historical and creative forms of engagement in their work. According to Simon Bowkett, co-chair of Exeter Pride, one of the biggest Pride organisations in the country, 'our collaboration with Funke and McGrath has opened up new ways of reaching out to and providing support for LGBTQ+ communities, and provided added resilience and adaptability to the Pride movement itself' [5.6]. Andy Hunt, CEO of the Intercom Trust, the largest LGBTQ

charity in the South West, stated: 'Our work with Funke is helping us to explore and develop new ways of engaging with and providing support for LGBTQ+ people.' [5.6]

4) Improving the visibility and public understanding of LGBTQ communities in the heritage and cultural sectors

Funke's collaborative research with LGBTQ communities, artists and organisations has enabled cultural institutions and heritage sites across the UK to share insights about gender and sexual diversity with broader audiences, improving acceptance of LGBTQ people [5.1; 5.4; 5.5, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9]. Her research featured in the major *Institute of Sexology* exhibition at Wellcome Collection in London (2014-15). The exhibition attracted more than 220,000 visitors and received broad international media coverage [5.7]. As part of the accompanying event programme, Funke shared her research at events in London and Manchester, reaching ca. 300 participants [5.9]. The *Transvengers* comic was displayed both as part of the exhibition and online, where it has been viewed more than 20,000 times [5.5]. Viewers commented that the comic made them 'ask serious questions about how we treat those outside of heteronormativity and the gender binary' [5.5]. Dr Simon Chaplin, Director of Culture & Society at the Wellcome Trust, in his keynote address at the National Alliance for Museums, Health & Wellbeing Conference (2016), highlighted *Transvengers* as a key initiative that allowed Wellcome to reach more diverse audiences and improve participants' wellbeing [5.5].

Funke's work on the *Orlando* project allowed the National Trust to 'open up our spaces to new experiences, audiences and perspectives' [5.1]. The independent evaluation of the *Orlando* project, which reached 316 students and 337 adults, demonstrated that it achieved significant changes in attendees' understanding and respect of LGBTQ people [5.1]. RAMM testifies that *Queering the Museum* has allowed it to reach more diverse audiences, 'expanding its engagement with LGBTQ+ communities, co-creating alternative interpretations of the collections and identifying stories from people that are underrepresented as a result of intolerance' [5.4]. In May 2019, RAMM launched the Rainbow Trail, developed by Funke and McGrath together with young LGBTQ+ people from X-Plore Youth. It reframed objects on permanent display to reveal neglected LGBTQ+ heritage and is available as both a physical and digital trail. In addition, in November 2020, four new LGBTQ creative responses to the RAMM's collections were shared online, reaching more than 600 people by the end of the year. Viewers stated that the outputs significantly increased their understanding of LGBTQ+ culture [5.4]. The *Adventures in Time and Gender* podcast has reached more than 2,000 listeners across Europe, Australia, North and South America. The project website, with its additional historical and creative resources, has been accessed more than 12,000 times [5.2]. As such, Funke's work with Wellcome Collections, the National Trust, RAMM and other partners has significantly improved the visibility of LGBTQ history and communities.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1 *Orlando* Project (Clay & Diamonds testimony; independent audience evaluation; National Trust website)
- 5.2 *Transformations* Project (online analytics; press coverage; Gendered Intelligence website (<http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/>); interviews/surveys with audiences, creatives, young trans people and Gendered Intelligence staff by external evaluator)
- 5.3 Testimonies from Natalie McGrath
- 5.4 *Queering the Museum* Project (online analytics; RAMM website; press coverage; interviews/surveys with museum staff, artists, audiences by external evaluator)
- 5.5 *Transvengers* Project (online analytics; annual reports and statements from Gendered Intelligence; statements from young people)
- 5.6 Testimonies from Andy Hunt/Intercom Trust and Simon Bowkett/Exeter Pride
- 5.7 *Institute of Sexology* Exhibition (visitor figures; press coverage; public responses, blog)
- 5.8 AHRC Being Human Festival (visitor surveys)
- 5.9 *Sexology Season* (public responses to events led by Funke; visitor surveys)