

Women & Environments

international
magazine

XYZ Transformations of Urban Space: Transgendered and Transsexual Experiences of the City

Open Log

S. BEAR BERGMAN

J WALLACE

Touching the
Terror and
Loathing of
Difference

OMISOORE DRYDEN

Trans Sex
in the City

BOBBY NOBLE

Gendered
S(h)elves

EMILY DRABINSKI



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Mission Statement:

Women & Environments International is a unique Canadian magazine, which examines women's multiple relations to their environments — natural, built and social — from feminist and anti-racist perspectives. It has provided a forum for academic research and theory, professional practice and community experience since 1976. It is published by a volunteer editorial board and contributes to feminist social change. The magazine is associated with the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University and has been previously associated with the Women and Gender Studies Institute, University of Toronto.

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Upcoming Issues

Your participation in issue teams and contribution of ideas, articles, news and funds are both welcome and important for the survival of Women & Environments International Magazine.

Editorial Committee for this issue: Alison Bain, Krista Johnston, heron mitchell (mitch), Sybila Valdivieso, Andrea Zanin.
"Write for WEI Magazine" is a call for articles, news, and information. To make a donation, please contact the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, HNES Building, Room 234, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON M3J 1P3, Canada.

ON THE COVER

Syrus Marcus Ware is the featured artist in this issue of WEI magazine. This image is called "Trans in the City" and is a pen and ink digital image on paper.

The art on the back cover is also by Syrus. It is called "Pay It No Mind/Resistor Sister — A Portrait of Marsha P Johnson". The piece is a graphite and mixed media on wood done in 2006. More information on the artist and his art can be found on page 30 of this issue.



A Word From WEI Magazine — Editorial Board

We are delighted to bring you this special issue on "Transgender and Transsexual Experiences of Urban Space". This thematic focus on trans issues, a first for WEI Magazine, inspires careful consideration of gender norms and boundaries in urban spaces, furthering our ongoing interest in gendered experiences of cities.

We thank Alison, the issue team, and all of the contributors for putting this issue together. WEI Magazine will continue to explore the connections addressed in this issue, and to build on its analysis, vision and strategy.

Thank You

The Women & Environments International Magazine, Editorial Board and Issue Editorial Committee acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Publication Assistance Program (PAP) towards our mailing costs. We appreciate the ongoing support of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Ottawa Canada as well as the support of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa. Women & Environments International Magazine is grateful for the general support of the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University.

Canada

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WE Speak

Trans-formations of Urban Space

An Introduction

Alison Bain

Urban scholars have long celebrated the freedoms afforded by cities and the spaces they provide for expressive and non-conforming styles of life. In cities, otherness, difference, and diversity are constantly remixed and communicated in uniquely intense ways. It is important to appreciate that differences between people and social groups are bound up with power relationships that are unequal. Taking difference seriously means that it is imperative to appreciate how empowerment, oppression, and exclusion work through difference. In this issue, the authors and artists critically consider how two axes of difference, gender and sexuality, intersect in the urban realm. Drawing on feminist theory, queer theory, critical race theory, and social theory the contributors consider how the categories of “woman” and “man” are constructed through a critical examination of the lived embodied experiences of transgendered and transsexual people in urban environments.

Cities are intricately heterogenous places of incoherence and flux that are made up of identifiably different kinds of spaces and people. Thus cities should be understood not just as arrangements of fixed sites with boundaries that demarcate spaces, order behaviour, and sort bodies, but also as confluences of relationships and relationalities that act to make and to remake urban space. The form and character of cities, like the bodies of individuals (that can be shaped through hormones, surgery, exercise, body art, and clothing), are dynamic — they shift and change over time, and open up possibilities for unplanned encounters and opportunities for self-realization. The everyday spaces of homeless shelters, community centres, washrooms, libraries, public transit, theatres, bookstores, bars, cafés, restaurants, streets, neighbourhoods, and the interstitial thresholds, passages, and journeys in between are the geographical background and foreground of this issue.

The internal geographies of cities with their fixed and malleable spaces can simultaneously constrain and liberate people. Depending on how individuals and social groups identify, they may find some urban spaces oppressive and other urban spaces emancipatory. They may oscillate between feelings of recognition and acceptance at one event or in one room or one building or one neighbourhood, and feelings of invisibility, fear, and rejection in another socio-spatial context. This spectrum of urban experience is explored by contributors in this issue who may variously identify as genderqueer, gender-variant, transgendered, MTF, FTM, intersexual, omnigendered, Two-Spirited, or as transvestites, cross-dressers, drag queens, drag kings, queer activists, or trans allies. The collective intent of

their reflections is a desire to materially, discursively, and imaginatively create more inclusive urban spaces where different ways of being and behaving are overtly valued and supported. The insights offered by the contributors are predominantly about North American urban experiences, however, our hope is that the ideas shared in this issue will inspire broader international dialogue and intellectual exchange. ✂

Alison Bain is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography at York University who studies contemporary Canadian urban and suburban culture. Her work examines the contradictory relationships of different social groups (e.g., artists, queers, youth) to cities and suburbs with particular attention to questions of identity formation and urban change.

Putting This Issue Together

Alison Bain is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography at York University who studies contemporary Canadian urban and suburban culture. Her work examines the contradictory relationships of different social groups (e.g., artistic, queer, youth) to cities and suburbs with particular attention to questions of identity formation and urban change.

Krista Johnston is a PhD Candidate in Women's Studies at York University, where she is doing research on anti-colonial social movements and citizenship. She is deeply committed to challenging binaries and essentialisms of all kinds.

heron mitchell (mitch) identifies as a trans boi and is a high school teacher by day and a queer and trans youth drop-in facilitator by night. He holds an MA in Education (U of T/OISE 2008) and spends his spare time engaging with transgender issues, social justice and environmental activism.

Sybila Valdivieso is an activist with a particular interest in advancing the legal interests of, and the protections for, communities that face poverty and social exclusion. Her educational background is in economics and law. She considers herself lucky to sit on the Editorial Board of WEI magazine.

Andrea Zenin has a background in women's studies and sexuality studies. She is an organizer within the queer, polyamory and BDSM communities, and an active trans ally. She frequently lectures about alternative sexuality in Canada and the States, writes for the Montreal Mirror and the Toronto Xtra!, and blogs at <http://sexgeek.wordpress.com>.

YOU

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Features

Open Log

IM on Identity

S. Bear Bergman and j wallace

We were asked about locations and we responded with one that is ethereal, rather than tangible. We both live on-line, and engage in community and organizing in places that do not exist — in a real estate geography kind of way. The internet allows disparate individuals to form community, form intimacy without touch, form connections with people we have never seen or smelled. We use Instant Message (IM) between the two of us when we are in different geographical locations or when we want to share things that are too hard to speak. We can write what we cannot say, and express things in pixels that we cannot push breath into. What follows is an IM because we want to name the internet as a place, identify it as a location. IM allows for documented spontaneity, and is one of the better ways we collaborate.

S. Bear Bergman Just to check in: what words do you want to cover? Should we do sex and gender? Transsexual, transgender, cisgender, genderqueer, transamorous? Do we address the trannygirl/transwoman; trannyboy/transguy/transman issue?

j wallace Part of me wants to start with how do you and i identify? How have we have identified in the past? Where are we going?

S. Bear Bergman Also, do we want to talk about “tranny” as a good/bad word?

j wallace Here’s what mitch and Alison listed in the call: lived embodied experiences of transgendered and transsexual people. International contributions and transnational perspectives welcome from people who are genderqueer, gender variant, transgender, MTF, FTM, intersexual, and/or omnigender, in addition to those who identify as transvestites, cross-

dressers, trans youth, queer activists, and trans allies.

S. Bear Bergman And we are charged with discussing terms.

j wallace I think about how i joke that i live online, about how identities can exist without bodies in such a space. Looking at the list, i’m curious about how those terms got chosen, who got left out? Who is on the list and why?

And yet, “queer activists” are included in that list. I don’t believe queer is a word that is inclusive of trans issues, yet i know many cis queer people who do. I think about boundaries and borders and come back to you and me, how we identify our similar genders as adjacent: how others read us as same-sex-or-whatever-you-are, amorphous, confusing and comfortable.

S. Bear Bergman Your what-got-left-out question is a good point. It doesn’t list Two Spirit, which seems an unforgivable error in a Canadian journal, nor drag kings/queens; there’s no mention of cisgender either, or any of the other enculturated words for trans-spectrum folks. In fact, it doesn’t list transmasculine spectrum or transfeminine spectrum as options.

j wallace I think about a how language is a statement of claim. How some people say “i grew up in the movement” and how much more that is a statement of belonging that is than “i grew up an activist,” although both are true for us both. I think about how i am building my own movement here, outside of the city, where my voice is louder. I want to write about how we name ourselves, in isolation and the clamour of community.

S. Bear Bergman Cities clamor, it is true. And voices get lost, even though a diversity (divercity? diverscité?) of voices is good.

S. Bear Bergman But Mr. Wallace: we have 1500 words to define things. There are terms to cover. We have to explain trans-means-across-sides and cis-means-same side. We have to do the difference between gender and sex, between transgender or transsexual. These people are counting on us to /explain/.

j wallace Right, but i think about the youth i work with. About the transwoman in Georgetown who last night shared, a song that addresses homophobic bullying and a poem about the best place for picking a fight which was about the events that lead to her leaving school, and how she is creating herself in part of the shadow of a greater trans culture and more in absolute isolation.

S. Bear Bergman Wait, wait. Where’s the shadow? That’s a piece of trans-geography. **j wallace** She has a language of trans, she knows there is a greater culture out there; on social networking sites her parents do not allow her to access, accessible via Google searches of words she is not allowed to use, and in the very existence of a gender clinic in Toronto (that mythical gleaming city on a hill).

She knows there is a larger culture out there, but is describing it via its shadow. The stuff she sees on day-time talk shows.

S. Bear Bergman ::nod:: They certainly don’t know what a transsexual is. They spell it s p e c t a c l e

j wallace Culture that is disconnected from trans people, filtered through cis lenses and presented back to an assumed cis audience. And to quote a poster i love, “the only way to stop being a spectacle, is to stop being a spectator”.

Which she is doing, as we are doing. **S. Bear Bergman** It’s like... the trans

equivalent of EpcotCenter, or EuroDisney. A few "exotic" traits - a food, a hat, and a song - put together under a flag and sold as a Taste Of Wherever. They're doing Taste of Tranny.

Hm. That sounds dirty. But you know what I mean.

j wallace Perhaps in a Canadian context it is the President's Choice aisle at Loblaw's: "Memories of tranny", made palatable to a wide cis audience. "Memories of Tranny" Sauce adds spice and pickle to your life, guaranteed to lighten a meal and cause instant merriment. Without going too far.

S. Bear Bergman ::laughing:: But — what about the word Tranny? We have to talk about these /words/. The language. It's very important. There are all these new trans words, and the nice journal editors are afraid no one reading will know what the writers mean when they say genderqueer.

j wallace I hear structure and discipline in your voice.

I like tranny, but i'm not a transwoman, who i think hear and feel tranny differently. I've never been a trans sex worker, who i think also hear and feel that differently.

S. Bear Bergman ::nod:: Tranny hooker. Hot tranny mess.

j wallace "That's Mr. Tranny fag to you"

The problem with tranny is the word association game. I say tranny and you say... what? I say tranny, someone shouts back Freak! — over the laughter in the room.

S. Bear Bergman Tranny doesn't seem serious to me, the way Trans does. Tranny seems like a young word, or a party word. Trans seems more grown up. It's a word with long pants. I think; but then I don't know how much of that is the cis-colonization of trans-bodies and trans-lexicon having its rough way with me.

j wallace You are saying that trans has been sanitized. You can take the trans out of tranny, but you can't take the tranny out of the girl. It's short, edgy, and personal. I might talk about myself as a tranny but i would never say tranny communities. In the plural it's always trans communities, perhaps because trans allows for more suffixes.

S. Bear Bergman Or something? Part of my great discomfort is the whole master's

house/master's tool(s) conundrum: I want people to understand what I am saying, but I resent the fact that our linguistic legacy is a set of medicalized words designed to describe/police the boundary of Normal. I do not want to use them, sometimes, and yet I don't know how not to use them.

Plus, people in North America use gender and sex as though they were interchangeable, which, as you know, they are NOT. . But it means that transsexual and transgender get likewise conflated, and no one knows quite what they mean, and some days I just want to say "oh, fuck this" and write or draft a whole set of new words: Transit. Cyma. Fool.

j wallace And i am not at all convinced of the value in differentiating transgender and transsexual to a cis audience anyway. It still feels a bit like pandering to their puerile interest in what is in our underpants. Which, by the way, is not going to be clarified in such a conversation.

S. Bear Bergman Hm. I never considered that.

I have been going about making the distinction very clear, because I think it's important to talk about how some trans people are not making a change from a known-one-thing to a known-other-thing. Right? That gender, in all its complications, has a lot of room for trans-ing: transgressing, transforming, &c. And that transsexual is usually a sign of specific intentions, and also is a legal category.

j wallace So for both of us it is the changing part, the transition that is important. The leaving of one box matters, the destination, be it in the other anticipated box, or behind door number three, or another location entirely is less important than the leaving. Most important is that i want people to listen. Listen to the words people use for themselves, and assume they are right.

I say "allow everyone to be their own expert." My teenagers have personalized this, they say "We are our own experts", and they're right.

You seem also to be saying that transsexual is the medical establishment's word. It wears a white coat and stethoscope, it has shape and structure, it can be

measured. Transgender is more flighty, unknown, but not unnoticed by government and the medical establishment.

S. Bear Bergman And I agree. I agree, and I say "allow everyone to be their own expert," but I wonder how useful it is when cis-people have no idea what they're being told. I worry that transfolks sometimes, in our human way in which we all imagine our experience is universal, say tranny-this, tranny-that expecting cis-people to know what that means. And how they should then behave/respond/adjust.

I guess I love the words so much because I need and want to be able to talk about what has been silenced for so long — trans bodies, trans lives, trans sexuality, all of those very bright and tender things. And yet I worry and over-explain and define and redefine because I don't want to be misunderstood. I don't want any of us to be misunderstood. Even though I know the explosion of language and terms is good, really a sign of cultural power. I know that people confidently explaining words in their own definitions that are wildly divergent from other definitions is a perfect, perfect sign of people being their own expert. Of feeling and being exactly right in the world.

j wallace The agent at the passport office looked at me, my passport and at my photos, and asked if i was undergoing some kind of transition. She seemed proud of herself for asking this, proud to know the words, but it was for me as much about being unseen as it was about being seen. She sees "transition" — that i am going to a known somewhere — and informs me that i can come back and have the sex changed on my passport when i am done. She did not see me here, complete.

S. Bear Bergman I don't think gender is well understood. I don't think it can be known, understood, or enumerated, which is why I never, never say someone "passes," always and only that they are "read as". Because being "read as" puts the burden where it belongs, on the spectator. "Pass," as a trans concept, seems to put the burden on the spectacle, where it does not belong, until or unless a trans person is ready to own the spectacle, the moment of being object.

j wallace Well, in some ways it is the problem of the conflation of sex and gender. My passport lists my sex, as identified at birth, but the nice lady in the hijab at Moroccan passport control was not reading my sex, she was reading my gender, which my passport does not comment on at all. She was concerned about the beard, because she reads "Sex F", understands that as sex = female, and sees beard, which she understands as a male secondary sex characteristic and as a masculine gender trait. I would rather the passport left it off entirely. The existing sex options of F, and M, are too limited and a possible T or O are problematic as my culture meets another, with my paperwork and body. I mean, use my finger prints, or some other identifying marker, do away with describing sex entirely, as any sex designation does not assist in confirming my identity and can cause delays.

S. Bear Bergman Does cause delays. All the damn time. What's interesting is that other transpeople are dead-against biometric markers, because they feel that the record would therefore be aggregative and always reveal (reveal!) their trans status.

j wallace No, do away with it for everyone, not just those of us who are trans. Perhaps what we are writing about is the geography of the body, where each person is their own country, each of us with our own culture and language, things precisely us, and yet we present as Europe, a single entity to be understood by the greater whole, and are struggling for a common currency.

S. Bear Bergman ::swoons at your smartness::

j wallace ::blushes:: It is easy to love an independence movement, easy to love the rebel, the one who is a freedom fighter (fighting for their own personal emancipation). And yet, when you are an Ambassador for the larger entity, it is hard to acknowledge and explain the claim of the freedom fighter to those that are still just coming to terms with the idea that the greater entity exists and gasp, perhaps deserves recognition.

S. Bear Bergman Or anyplace that has a million tiny enclaves, neighborhoods, cultures. All big cities have a lot of neighborhoods, each with it's own character,

culture, norms, rules.

j wallace And while the analogy fails above, i also imagine the news feed "The United Nations recognises ..."

S. Bear Bergman In the States, in South Dakota, the Lakota Sioux seceded from the US — and to prove they were serious about this, they appointed ambassadors to any country who would meet with one. Several nations sent ambassadors, and started to discuss the details. Which makes me think about what it takes to get recognized as your own whole separate thing.

S. Bear Bergman It used to be Normal People and Transsexuals. Now, there are all kinds of locations within, among, adjacent to, pick-a-helping-verb, those places.

j wallace And some days i feel like the Bosnia-Herzegovina of sex and gender.

So perhaps here i want to say: "these are words i use for me, and how i use them. I recognise these other words, and people i love use them to mean this." And "i recognise language to be expansive and expanding and i know that there are states i have not visited (although i will), locations with which i currently have no diplomatic relations (although will) and places that i may never know at all."

S. Bear Bergman And yet still say that in a way that allows everyone to be their own expert, gives every transperson agency to define every word in relation to their own experience - including those people who, after their medical transition, drop the word Trans altogether and say "I am not a trans-anything. I am a man. End of story."

j wallace The earth is not flat, and if we undertake the journey, we will not sail over the edge into the abyss. While travelling into the unknown is scary, we need to trust that there is continually more out there, which will reveal itself as necessary. If we only pay attention we will recognise that North America is not India.

S. Bear Bergman But then the colonizer in my brain jumps up and says "But you have to explain! Explain yourself! Do these people even know that we talk about trans-folks in their identified sex? Are they all now incorrectly thinking that a transman is a male person who wants to live as a woman, instead of understanding that a transman is a female person who is now a man?"

j wallace Perhaps my colonialism is coming through. And i had not even managed to tie in your Magellan of Gender joke yet.

S. Bear Bergman Better Magellan than Balboa, who encountered an entire society of peaceful men, some of whom "crossdressed", and was so horrified he slaughtered them all and had them fed to his dogs.

j wallace So perhaps we are not writing a list of terms, but an etiquette guide.

S. Bear Bergman Maybe? I don't know. I'm in love with all of these words because I need to talk about my life and the lives of all the people I love and then I am also afraid of them because I'm afraid they re-enforce more binaries, more locations to police and describe and prescribe.

I think I have the classic abuse-victim's relationship with the trans lexicon: I hate it, but I can't leave it because I don't know where else I'll go. Because I cannot *imagine* where else I will, or could, go.

j wallace I prefer Balboa's countryman (yes, man there is accurate) Bartolomé de Las Casas who argued for the humanity of the people Balboa was slaughtering. Las Casas created the first argument for human rights, an argument steeped in blood.

S. Bear Bergman Yeh, but no one knows his name.

j wallace i do. And Las Casas is well known in Latin America, because we know our own heroes (and sheroes and anti-heroes and anti-sheroes).

S. Bear Bergman ::grin:: Yes, my love. You do. And I count on you for that, as I think we are counted on for our willingness or ability to hold all of these trans words and names.

j wallace So we are saying we are flawed, and that the language is flawed. We offer to teach someone basic navigation through sex and gender, but recognize that even that can be damaging. You can still get lost with a map. We believe that asking the questions, wanting to learn, and getting down some basic concepts is helpful, that individuals should be listened to and are able to correctly identify their own locations. We agree that there can be contradictions and that the same manifestation or actions can be understood with different language and different words in

different contexts or even in the same context by different individuals. We agree to disagree. We agree that growth is happening, new words being born and new identities coming into being. We recognize that we know more than the average cis person because we live in these locations. We recognize that there are locations beyond our knowing and possibly beyond our imagination, and that with time, what we know now will also be limited and potentially wrong.

S. Bear Bergman And the Ambassadors in some ways act as the storytellers, fools, maggidim, griot, singers of corridos - we show the boundary and also the break in the fence, the argument and also its flaw. **j wallace** We agree that language is powerful and that having the ability to name oneself in one's own words is liberating, and we are willing and ready to make space to fight for that for ourselves and others.

The Ambassadors for trans would like to make an address.

S. Bear Bergman I think we would like to

/have/ an address

And then we try to turn around and explain all of that to the average group of cis-people who need Trans 101, whether they're straight or gay or whatever, and we suddenly find that all the rich good flavorful stuff seems confusing when we have to try to measure its ingredients, separate it into knowable constituent parts. This is scary, and it's scarier even for the people trying to learn, so we agree to a sort of dumbed-down definition set and apologize for it and yet we kind of go along with it because making the change would require a heroic effort. And it took us so &^%\$#@! long to get /this/ far, that we just don't. Maybe every explanation that we hope is a map is actually burying us deeper into a place we don't want to be? Tying us more tightly to an uncomfortable location?

We're not going to get any terms defined today, are we?

j wallace Nope. ☹

S. Bear Bergman (author of **Butch Is A Noun**) is a long-time activist on behalf of anyone who wants to learn and be different at the same time (particularly queer/trans youth and students). Bear continues to work at the points of intersection between and among gender, sexuality, and culture, and spends a lot of time keeping people from installing traffic signals there.

j wallace is the LGTT2IQQA Consultant for the Halton District School Board and a member of Egale's Education Policy team. j writes, trains and speaks on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity, and never gives a straight answer. He is developing a provincial GSA network while training Human Rights Commissions, educators, police officers and others across the country on LGBTQ issues.

Further Reading and Resources:

CARUSO: www.unites.uqam.ca/gmf/caruso/caruso.htm

COMERN: www.unites.uqam.ca/comern

CINBIOSE: www.cinbiose.uqam.ca

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An Open Letter About Our Use of the Master's Tools

Omisore Dryden

Dear Sistahs/Sisters, In the past few years, there have been increasing amounts of incidents receiving public attention regarding trans bodies who have been evicted from "women and lesbian/dyke-only spaces." Vancouver Rape Relief took a case all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada to ban a (trans) woman from volunteering at that centre. Additionally, many women's centres have developed policies to clarify which "woman" bodies are welcome within their domain. The Toronto Women's Bathhouse Committee has a trans inclusion policy, however this has not mitigated the hostile and antagonistic reception with which trans bodies, and their play dates, are met in these bathhouse spaces. Lesbian dances exclude trans bodies, and Michigan Womyn's Music Festival continues to exclude trans bodies. Sometimes these excluded trans bodies are "male-to-female" bodies — post / pre / non-op bodies. Sometimes these excluded trans bodies are "female-to-male" bodies — post/pre/non-op bodies. However, there are some occasions in which "male-to-female" trans bodies are mistakenly included in these spaces, by virtue of the fact that they are not visually identifiable as trans bodies. There are also occasions in which "female-to-male" trans bodies are mistakenly included in these spaces, by virtue of the fact that "we" are unable to conceive of these "female-to-male" bodies as anything other than merely woman bodies (though masculine looking).

Sistahs/Sisters, we have a complicated and varied history with this space. What is evident is that not only did we construct these women's spaces, we also constructed their meanings. However,

"This clinic is for women," the receptionist smiled.

I nodded. "I know. I have a vaginal infection," I whispered.

"A what?" she asked.

I took a deep breath and spoke in a stronger voice. "A vaginal infection."

Stillness fell over the crowded waiting room. The silence punished me. The receptionist looked me up and down. "Are you kidding?"

I shook my head. "I have a vaginal infection. I came here for help."

The receptionist nodded. "Have a seat, sir."

... for my baby; for my sistahs

Jess, Stone Butch Blues (Feinberg, 1993, 234-235)

their meanings are neither static nor unwavering. As we have seen, whether it has been race, sexuality, or (dis)ability, these spaces have shifted, been modified, and trans-formed (if you will). These changes have not been smooth, nor easy, nor (in many cases) even welcomed, but they have quite necessarily occurred. Yet here we are taking up the very roles that were once used so viciously against us — that of border guards. Do we still believe that only "men" perpetrate patriarchy and misogyny against "women?" Are we still convinced, that trans bodies are the secret operatives maliciously breaching our borders to continue this vile practice?

For some time now many of us have felt this to be true. It is presumed that trans bodies are terrifying, loathsome and alien (creatures) bodies whose presence is adversely invading women-only and lesbian/dyke-only spaces. The hostilities present at the threshold of these spaces have, like most border wars, resulted in unnecessary violent encounters resulting in injury, destruction and impairment —

"our" impairment. And I wonder... what are we doing?

Injustice is our rallying cry — against racism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, poverty, and violence. We demand protection, policy changes, access and recognition, not only to be heard, but also to be seen, on our terms and in no uncertain terms. We know our silence will not protect us, that the master's tools will betray us, that only we can define who we are, as others' definitions would be detrimental to us. We are confident that our noise, our tools and our own definitions will liberate us. We've taken to the streets, to the courts and to the academy, to the open mics, to the bathhouses and to the play parties. We've met at coffee houses, at our kitchen tables and in our women's/community centres. And somewhere in this mix our experiences with racism, sexism, misogyny and homophobia fueled our identities as "black," "of colour," "woman," "female," "homosexual," "gay," and "lesbian." We believe that our pursuit of liberation, freedom and emancipation are affiliated with

these very names and labels. As much as these names and labels provided us a sense of identity and purpose, they also effectively differentiated who were inside these movements and who were outside, who belonged and who didn't. The labels effectively constructing an "us" and a "them."

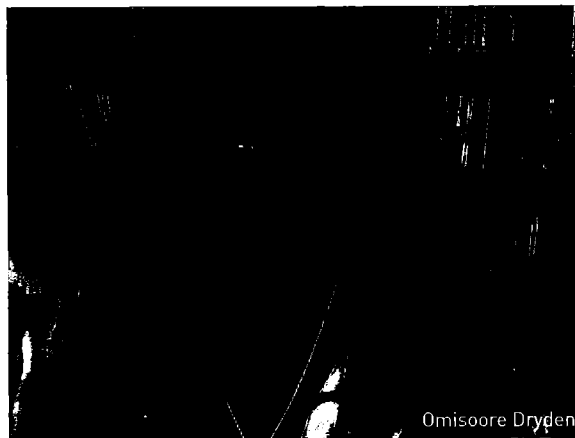
As we know, words and language have always been a struggle. The detrimental results of what we have been named and labeled have often fueled our own attempts to get out from under the imposed labels in order to claim ourselves for ourselves. Names and labels have many meanings, sometimes similar, sometimes conflicting. They have shifted, changed, evolved and even devolved over time. However, problems arise when we forget that names and labels have multiple and at times conflicting meanings and usages and we assume not only what is meant by the names and labels, but also *how* they are being used.

Having said this, while we may challenge and confront some of the assumptions evident within these names and labels, at the same time, we also willingly accept and submit to assumptions which pass as self-evident truths. For many of us, we believe that "female" = "girl" = "woman" = "feminist"; that "heterosexual" means "opposite" sex/gender attractions (man and woman) and "homosexual" means "same" sex/gender attractions (man and man / woman and woman). We believe that women who have sex with men are "heterosexual" (straight) and women who have sex with women are "homosexuals" (lesbian/dykes). The words "lesbian" and "dyke" have been used interchangeably, even though there are lively debates on whether or not these words have the same meaning, herstory or symbolism. Sistahs/Sisters, we emphatically believe that our identities (how we know ourselves) are bound up in these very words, names and labels. We feel these words are the absolute essence of who we are.

Bodies were excluded based on scientific/medical racism that dictated that "raced" bodies were not human — creating "us" ordinary bodies (white) and "them" abhorrent bodies (not white).

Bodies were excluded based on scientific/medical misogyny which dictated that "sexed" bodies were not fully human, too weak to be fully human — creating "us" usual bodies (male/men) and "them" unusual bodies (female/women). Bodies were excluded based on scientific/medical homophobia which dictated that "homosexual" bodies were defective humans — creating "us" normal bodies (heterosexual) and "them" abnormal bodies (homosexual). Naming ourselves as normal, ordinary and usual was/is important.

However self-naming, while important, is an initial step, not a concluding one. Names and labels effectively function as borders resulting in similarly disturbing phobic exclusions that, once again, target the vulnerable among/of us.



I have found familiarity in a variety of words, however I do not use or write simply, cleanly or unthinkingly. I understand and attempt to disrupt the conventions and honour the tensions surrounding these words. When called upon to describe myself strategically, I use and write these words — "woman," "lesbian" and "dyke" to trouble the spaces and conventions they mark, just as I use and write the names/labels to disrupt the conventional uses of "black," "african," "femme," "stone," "top," "caribbean," "jamaican," "canadian," "feminist," "womanist," "of colour," "with a disability" and "student." Sistahs/Sisters, what, if anything, do you know of me when I describe myself as a Jamaican-Canadian Dyke, Stone Femme-inist Top of African descent?

The "us"/"them" border is seductive.

Why wouldn't we want to be included, to belong and to benefit from being a member — to be on the inside (not the outside), in the centre (not on the margins)? The benefits of human rights, citizenship, person-hood, freedom and shelter are traditionally reserved only for the "us" and modified or withheld from the "them." We've challenged the practices and assumptions that only a select few deserve the best at the expense of others.

Sistahs/Sisters, I'm sure you'll remember, we fought the master narratives in order to have our voices heard and our herstories accounted for. We fought the destructive ideas that said we were alien and that our alien-ness was dangerous. We fought to be included in the national record - to be considered citizens, to have our political voices heard and to be out of the margin and into the centre.

We fought to reconstruct that centre... or so I thought. Were we fighting to be considered members of the "us" or to have our "them" tolerated and respected? Did speaking of double and triple jeopardy, who was more discriminated against than whom and who had it harder than who, really legitimize our voices or did it just pit us against ourselves? Weren't we justifiably offended when asked to indicate if

we most identified with our "race," "sex," or "sexuality" as if we should and could prioritize, as if our bodies were these simplistically constructed puzzle pieces?

I thought we fought for the right to live our lives without apology — for more than just rights, but for systemic change, and for more than just tolerance, but for inclusion. It seems, though, that we have become women, lesbian/dyke nationalists, patriotically policing "our" borders against a "new" insidious threat.

Sistahs/Sisters, why are we using the same colonial/imperial systems of inclusion and exclusion with and against trans bodies? Trans bodies are born of us. They are quite literally born of our bodies, born of our herstories and born of our political work. Why the repulsion, hostility and antagonism? Sistahs/Sisters, I just don't

get it, especially since trans bodies are neither new nor a phase. Trans bodies are here with us in the present because trans bodies were there *with us* in the past.

Have we gotten so caught up in our belief that names and labels accurately and appropriately capture the essence of our bodies and our selves that we have forgotten our struggles for the protection of our bodies, against *all* phobias?

Perhaps it is difficult to conceptualize gender, sex and sexuality as being more diverse than the simplicity of these words leads us to believe. There are more diverse options available to us even beyond the limits of the misleading binary of "male" and "female." Are we unable to acknowledge that "male" is an umbrella term that covers a wide range of possibilities and "female" is another umbrella term that also covers a wide range of possibilities? Are we doomed to thoughtlessly and ferociously believe that "male" and "female" are separate, clear, and distinct opposites of a singular, solitary pole?

There are no easy answers, yet we continue to seek, invent and formulate them. Conservatism and fundamentalism are founded upon the simple easy answer. Sistahs/Sisters, doesn't this make us gender/genital conservatives and gender/genital fundamentalists?

There is a lot of confusion and consternation about how trans bodies become trans bodies. Are they truly trans bodies if they are surgically altered? Is a trans body more or less trans depending on the amount of surgery the body has endured? Are trans bodies selling out to heteropatriarchy when they engage in surgically altering their bodies, or are they challenging heteropatriarchy by surgically altering their bodies? Can trans men be "men" if they don't have scientifically/medically declared penises? And don't they become *the* man? Can trans women be "women" if they do have scientifically/medically declared penises? And aren't they still *the* man? The answers to these questions do not matter. These questions are a diversion from what they represent. These questions represent our gender/genital conservatism and fundamentalism. In other words, they represent our use of the

master's heteropatriarchal tools. And these heteropatriarchal tools effectively erase the intersections of racism, homophobia, poverty and misogyny with and through trans bodies.

Sistahs/Sisters... in our hubris, we have betrayed ourselves.

Instead of seeing new possibilities and opportunities of masculinity through trans male bodies and new possibilities and opportunities of femininity through trans female bodies, we instead see fraud, betrayal, misappropriation and danger. Sistahs/Sisters, could it be that our ambivalence is showing? It seems that trans bodies are a mirror to our own contradictory attitudes and feelings we have not only with our bodies, our gender ("masculinity," "femininity," and everything in-between), but also with our sex ("male," "female" and everything in-between). We also may be having difficulty acknowledging the bargains we have made with heteropatriarchy and the master's tools. It's time we set-down our seething denials and our not so repressed fascinations with the "penis" instead of conveniently pimping out trans bodies by treating them like the abject. Perhaps it's time we reclaim our agency and take responsibility for our anxieties, fears, confusion and doubt. Sistahs/Sisters, the politics of gender, sex and sexuality continues to change, whether we want it to or not. If we cannot acknowledge this, we

will become melancholic. We must continue to think of new ways of belonging. Anti-racism queer feminisms have paved the way for trans bodies (our trans sons, our trans daughters, and our trans children), so that they can step into the authentic-ness of themselves. It doesn't make sense to violently discard bodies we have loved, played with, desired and fucked, simply because they have now 'come-out' as trans. As Judith Butler (2004, 9) states, in *Undoing Gender*, "... phobic violence against bodies is what joins antihomophobic, antiracist, feminist, trans and intersex activism".

We owe it to ourselves — all of ourselves — to not only remember this, but to begin (perhaps continue) to act on it — without apology!

In solidarity,
Omisoore

Omisoore Dryden is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education at OISE/UT. An anti-racist feminist, queer and trans activist, Omisoore is proudly her mother's daughter. Mafererefun Egungun! Mafererefun Ifa!

Further Reading and Resources:

Butler, Judith (2004) *Undoing Gender*. New York and London: Routledge.

Feinberg, Leslie (1993) *Stone Butch Blues*. New York: Firebrand Books.

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*Bervin Sumilang, Executive Chef
Liz Dexter, General Manager
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**UNDER
GROUND**

Trans Sex in the City

On the Terrors of the Trans Body

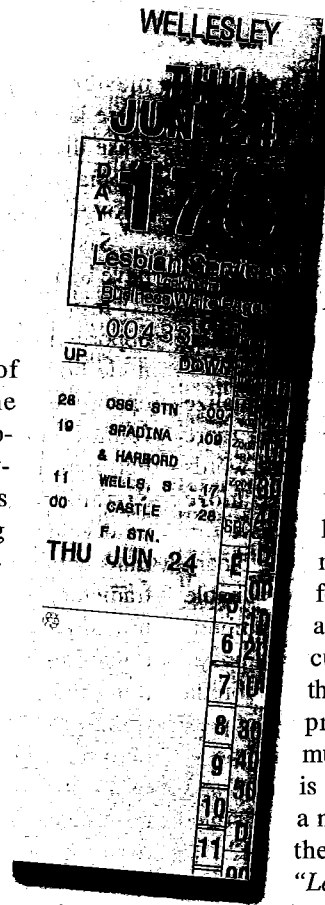
Bobby Noble

Open this series of trans queries about sex, bodies, race, and a Toronto queer neighbourhood with the story of a bus transfer. I arrived in Toronto from Edmonton, Alberta in mid-summer 1993. Then, I was a scrub-cheeked white dyke, fresh from thirteen years in the Canadian prairie city where I had completed a couple of degrees at the University of Alberta. At the time, Edmonton seemed like a big city to me. It boasted its first GLB Pride events in the late 1980s, which I helped to organize. There were less than ten of us and, as I often joke, we "marched" a couple of blocks and headed directly and quickly to the local gay bar to take cover. Even then, I felt like something of an elder in gayandlesbian years. I had first come out as a lesbian in 1978 and after spending much of that time in the gay bars in Edmonton, my move to Toronto and its sheer size alone rendered me feeling quite young and new. The bus transfer is an artifact of a trip I took across the city after first arriving as that scrub-cheek dyke. According to the information on the transfer itself, I accessed the TTC that day on the Ossington Subway station, exited onto the Harbord Street bus past the intersection housing the Toronto Women's Bookstore (formerly the home of the bombed Morgentaler Abortion clinic) and continued on the bus traveling just east of the Church and Wellesley neighbourhood (aka, the large, primarily white centre of Toronto's gay village) where I exited the system at the Wellesley subway station to have a coffee in Toronto's queer village. This is, to someone who doesn't know Toronto, a non-descript urban mapping. To someone who has traveled this route or who lives inside these Toronto neighbourhoods, these are quite readily imagined as the social geographies of Toronto's queer cultural landscapes. I write now from an

entirely different part of Toronto and more to the point, from a different subject position as an FtM having transitioned six years ago. My own crisscrossing of genders has been equally as complex; I live publicly as a trans man, still retain "F" on my identification papers and have written extensively on the ensuing life of incoherence that such political indeterminacies can — and must — generate in an age of empire and consolidating white supremacies.

From time to time, I pick up the bus transfer to remind myself that — again, in queer years but also in personal terms — fifteen years is a long period of time and my own relationships to *then* and *now*, as much as to here and there, remain profoundly transformed and yet strange. As I prepared to write this piece, I once again returned back to the transfer as way to begin raising a series of questions about where I think *here* is in relation to *now* and through a metaphor of a GLBTQ house in a very gay Toronto neighbourhood.

The bus transfer is from the transit system in Toronto — the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) — and in many ways, it is completely non-descript. Printed on inexpensive white paper, marked with a date, with times, and with specifics of various bus routes, it looks like a bus transfer from any city, one authorizing points of transfer from one city bus to another. Bus transfers are a form of currency authorized by larger institutional systems to enable travel across space. Such items like tickets or transfers are, in some ways, indexes of a city infrastructure and remain both



meaningful as mobility through that infrastructure but completely non-functional outside of it. This particular transfer, however, is a little different. Square in its middle is a small green block for advertising. Again, in the age of corporate advertising cultures, to see ads on even the smallest or seemingly most private space is no longer much of a surprise. But this ad is a little different. Underneath a notation of the date, appears the following advertisement: "Lesbian Services. Look in the Business White Pages."

The TTC's story of how these quite curious ads came to be on the transfer is itself a story of simultaneous success and failure. A coalition of gay and lesbian service providers purchased advertising space on TTC bus transfers in 1992 (Royson, 1993). Numerous city drivers refused to hand out the transfers once printed because they objected to the gay content. However, after two years of negotiation, the TTC finally agreed to give some drivers a leave of absence, if the drivers produced a letter from their clergy stating that they, in fact, had a documentable religious objection to handling and distributing the transfers. Still, however, the TTC was ordered by the Human Rights Commission to comply and on the day in question, lesbian and gay services became front and centre of the largest transit system in Canada.

But for the cultural critic, the story of the TTC transfer as cultural artifact is more compelling for what it signifies as a fascinating and contradictory *text*. As text, it might tell us something about the social, economic, geographical and cultural conditions that produced this very strange con-

vergence of queer culture, city neighbourhoods, capitalist advertising, municipal government, its transit system and its management of a large network of transport/subway/bus routes, fees, scheduling, etc., in the first place? It betrays a complex correlation between two techniques by which 'peoples' and mobility across vast distances inside this city are governed: on the one hand, it indexes the physical infrastructure and government management of a large urban subway system (routes, schedules, fees, etc.). On the other hand, the transfer also functions to identify both a capitalist authorized system of commodity exchange through visual language and mass distribution. But in this case it also signifies, through the invisible imperative of a state human rights protection authority (the Ontario Human Rights Commission), a legally enforced imperative to honour the advertisement regardless of its 'objectionable' content. So, again, on the one hand exists a legally protected gayandlesbian subject with full rights to enter into the terrain of commodity capitalism while on the other hand exists a need for the purchase of such advertising in the first place: infrastructural services designed to reach those seemingly not in the majority inside of heteronormative cultures. On the TTC transfer, these disparate practices and queer tensions both of government but also of various layers of social reality intersect. But the cultural artifact indexes yet another set of tensions. On the one hand, the social organization of heteronormativity certainly produces violence, oppression, harassment and so forth as effects for queer folks. That these might well be mitigated to a certain degree by the size of queer communities in Toronto cannot be disputed; but queer bashings continue to occur in large as well as small cities. On the other hand, when queer community infrastructures themselves have resources to purchase advertising space like that which appears on the TTC transfer — and win lawsuits and/or tribunals when faced with discrimination — the degree to which historical changes have occurred in the legal, political, economic and geographical landscapes of queer identities and desires must be acknowledged.

It is precisely in similar tensions between what seems to be incommensurate and incoherent realities that my own trans subject position in this city needs to be located. What does it mean, as a white trans man with a long lesbian history, to live in what continues to be, figuratively speaking, a gay house in a queer neighbourhood? That this house exists — and that the need continues to exist — goes without saying or challenge. But here's my rather sticky predicament: I'm a late forty-something trans person/female-to-male transguy who has now lived seven years as said trans-guy, but previous to that, twenty-four years as an out-dyke-activist who helped build this house; why do I now find myself strangely evicted by folks speaking a language of disenfranchisement? Such evictions — accidental, deliberate or some combination of both — are telling of these strange tensions and convergences that tunnel under the surface like the subway itself. If an ad for lesbian services can appear on a TTC transfer and the TTC itself ordered by state to honour its contract to distribute such ads, how is it possible to continue to operate within a rhetoric of categorical disenfranchisement? And what to make of that rhetoric when outside of this house stand yet another group of people with keys that no longer work?

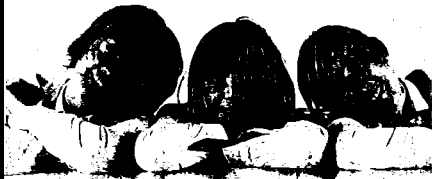
On 18 May, 2008, I was a panelist at a Toronto based symposium called *Queer Here, Queer Now*, programmed through Inside Out: Toronto's Gay and Lesbian Film and Video Festival and co-sponsored by the Toronto-based Canadian independent film distributor VTape. A great deal of care and thought went into the design of the event so that it could be one where critical, intellectual and artistic practices could be explored in a public dialogue between queer artists, programmers, curators, filmmakers and academics. Questions underlying the organization including those about conceptual frameworks — like, the concept of queer, for example; or about the nature and function of film and video production, curating and programming as a critical practices; or about engagement with past, present and future political queer projects and histories.

These and other questions were on the agenda both in the structure of the symposium but also through the public profiles of those invited to participate.

As the only trans panelist invited to participate in this forum, I will say that the goals of the symposium were indeed met, albeit in profoundly strange and troubling ways. I was on a panel called "The Fighters" with two filmmakers and I presented on a new Morty Diamond documentary/docuporn screened this year as part of the Inside Out program: *Trans Entities: The Nasty Love of Papi and Wil* (2007). The film details the sex politics and play of Wil and Papi, two non-operative, FtM folks of colour from NYC. Located in a different urban landscape — New York — *Trans Entities* is structured around three sex scenes punctuated by interviews where Wil and Papi frame their lives, bodies, desires, and sex play. We watch as the camera follows Wil and Papi through another cityscape on the subway as they shop in secondhand clothing stores for performance "props". Both are people of colour; both are non-operative (that is, they identify as transgendered but have opted not to have surgeries or take hormones at the time the film was made); and both identify as transed although they do not take up the language of 'trans' sexuality or transgenderedness directly. They coin the term "trans entity", to materialize different kinds of trans bodies, those which move through social and discursive territories outside of binary sexes; bodies flagged in the process of "self-making" as one way to trouble the overdetermined systems of power producing "Gender Identity Disorder" in the first place. Their transed bodies are those whose intelligibility requires nuance, complexity, sophistication, political tenacity and ultimately, a desire to trouble a passion for ignorance in the first place.

But to return back to the symposium and despite my careful mapping of these complexities, what occurred around reading practices in the panel Q&A was anything but nuanced. After I screened selected clips and presenting a brief analysis, my fellow panelist, a white American lesbian filmmaker, immediately pre-empted all discus-

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sion with the following statement: "I don't see anything other than two butch dykes when I look at this clip. To me, they are women. That's all I see". Needless to say, pandemonium broke loose for the duration of the discussion as trans-literate folks in the audience — again, tellingly, two dykes of colour — challenged the transphobia and were answered by unbridled and violent racism (one lesbian of colour, Board member of *Inside Out* and Programming Director of Mpenzi: *Black Women's International Film Festival Film Festival*, was told directly to "just shut up"). That such hostilities occurred so publicly could be explained as a failure of the moderator. But such explanations circumvent the complex borderlands, bodies and political stakes converging in these now very complex public spaces, even if the complexities are willfully disavowed. Throughout the event, and since, I remain transfixed by a number of questions for which I have no immediate answers. What was at stake in the disavowal? Is this the measure of success for the 'queer nation', to be able to impose hegemonic reading practices on bodies exiting outside of its logics? Is this stabilized neighbourhood and infrastructure the very measure of success that queer activists of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s worked so hard to accomplish? Is this the liberated future we had hoped for? The self-identified gayandlesbian demographic in the audience seemed terrified to find itself on the other side of *Other*. Such incredulity seems to signal the re-emergence of a hegemonic (homo)normativity, stammering in the face of its own reproduction and naturalization of a very unqueer and normative sense of time and space. What happened when incoherently sexed, destabilized and indeed, trans sexed bodies found themselves located in charted gayandlesbian space? A hostile, violent and racist eviction. The assertion that *one does not "see anything"* actually means that one "*cannot see anything other than which must always already be true*". Otherwise, how might it be possible to know *the real queers* (i.e., gay and lesbian folks with stabilized sexes) from *the not queer or not queer anymore or the queers that do not look like me*. Such an imperative to not see is indicative of how hegemonic

and homonormative power works. The effects of such truth regimes are not in content; instead, they are to be found in what is rendered taxonomized, demarcated and defined as material in the first place ("*that's all that can be seen*").

I wanted to bring some form of "T" back into GLBTQ spaces like neighbourhoods and into neighbourhood events like film festivals to query how homonormativities have, in the drive toward full citizenship rights and same-sex marriage over the past fifteen years, territorialized and whitened space, folding T bodies back into the GLB as imperative: *Be a coherent part of our system of desire, or shut up and leave*. It is clearer than ever that both the symposium and the video accomplished important pieces of work. Both outed homonormative spatial-historical dimensions of space despite the anti-foundationalist imaginings of that queer geography. The film, in particular, outed whiteness as the currency — like that transfer — with which such homonormative subjects travel through that space. The lesson: the shared fantasy of an "LGBTTIQ" subject which not only transcends geography, time, place but also its own embeddedness in history is, as demonstrated at the symposium, a fantasy bound within power in very dangerous ways. Such subjectivities remain, as James Baldwin (1985, 410) wrote in 1965, "impaled on their history like a butterfly on a pin". ❧

Bobby Noble is Associate Professor of Gender and Sexuality studies at York University and works in cultural studies on twentieth century constructions of sex, sexuality, bodies, race, gender, especially masculinities, as well as transgender and transsexual identities in culture and social movements.

Further Reading and Resources:

Baldwin, J. (1985) *White man's guilt. The Price of the Ticket: Collected Non-Fiction 1948-1985*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Royson, J. (1993, 9 June) TTC rejects transfer ads for gay, lesbian services. *Toronto Star*, A8.

On the DownLow (Abigail Child; 2007)

TrannyFags (Morty Diamond, 2003)

Trans Entities (Morty Diamond, 2007)

I Am Becoming

Something about the way the sun shines on the
empty lines left on my forearms, outlining the new trails of hair,
makes me aware that I am becoming.

Every morning I wonder, where will the newest addition be?
slowly designing me all over again, brand new.

Blank slate doesn't describe it.
What's left still lingers and figures it's way into this
ocean of opportunity, full of exploration, rejuvenating, body of mine.

Now, full stance of a man, I allow myself more than ever
to expose the delicacies of femininity that could never leave my being.

Standing tall, I have no expectation of this body;
only a sense of flirtation with the raging wars of hormones battling below my skin.

This time testosterone wins!

These winds of change arrange my afternoons talking to myself out loud,
realizing I've heard this voice before. For a decade, no, more;
Rattling in my head, waiting to be lead out through my vocal chords;
the first words unsure of themselves.

But words are the fruit of the mind, and I am sure these words are mine.
It is a gift to be able to share them with you; to be able to fill a room with my views.

I am becoming.
And I will become until I can find a way to define an end,
or decide not to,
because I could.

Why settle for simplicity when we're all capable of becoming the change we need to see?
Representing the range between you, me and the trees is only fair for what we receive.
To live and breathe among family is the greatest gift.
Be thankful for this.

Appreciate the bliss that is new beginnings and waves of possibility.
Estranged anonymity is nothing when you can show your face as you age.

Clohë Mac Donald is an 18 year old queer, transsexual male poet and activist from Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Gendered S(h)elves

Body and Identity in the Library

Emily Drabinski

Queers of all kinds have always found a home in the library. Books are often the first refuge of the outsider, and the trope of feeling alone until finding that single magical book on the library shelves that makes the self make sense is a common one. (Mine was Tom Robbins' *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*, when I was around 14. When Sissy Hankshaw and Bonanza Jellybean had fantastic queer sex in a field, so fantastic it caused the cranes to alter their migration patterns, my body told me I was probably whatever that was!) This will to identity is strong and persistent, perhaps, as Foucault (1977, 101) writes, "the highest temptation... the longing to be another, to be all others; it is to renew identifications and to achieve the principle of time in a return that completes the circle". This article seeks to complicate the romantic notion of the library as a space of uncritical identity formation. Rather than imagining the library as a deep well where anything and everything can be found, articulating the library as a space of rigorous organization and discipline allows us to understand both the limits and potentially libratory aspects of library space.

The Library as a Classified Space

Criss-crossed with categories, the library is a highly classified space that contains representations of reality within a rigorous structure that is informed by and productive of other social spaces and identities. Classifications are built of two parts: subject headings that locate materials intellectually, and call numbers that translate the intellectual map into the linear reality of library shelves. Subject headings form a controlled vocabulary that pins materials into an intellectual structure that is both hierarchical — constructed of broader and narrower terms —

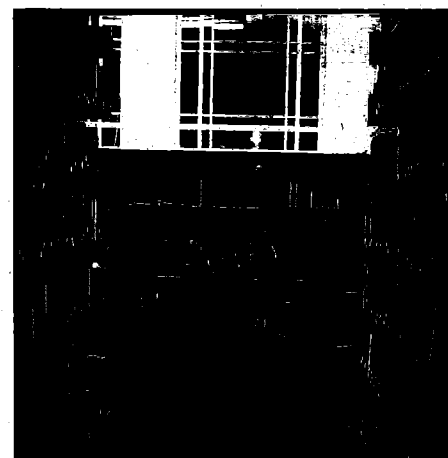
and syndetic — including related terms that connect disparate subjects across the classification and produce a kind of limited dimensionality. Where subject headings fix books in stable intellectual space, call numbers fix them in physical space. Each subject heading is correlated with a number that places the book in linear order on library shelves. This is an inescapable material constraint; each book can occupy one and only one space on a library shelf.

As books enter the library, they are embedded in the classification system and shelved in call number order, rendering the abstract space of the classification scheme real in the form of books on shelves. Subject headings allow users to locate single titles of interest through keyword or subject catalog searches while call numbers enable browsing. In self-exploration, as in academic research, looking at the titles around the book you want is a time-honored strategy for finding other materials. Take, for example, *Christine Jorgensen: A Personal Autobiography*. Christine Jorgensen was one of the first publicly-visible transsexuals. Following sex-reassignment surgery in Denmark in 1952, Jorgensen's return to the United States as a woman was greeted with enormous publicity, including a story in the December 2, 1952 edition of the *New York Times*, proclaiming "Bronx 'Boy' Is Now A Girl." In 1967, Jorgensen published her autobiography. Where media coverage of her identity helped create a social category of 'transsexual' — men could now begin to envision themselves as women, albeit through the narrow lens offered by the sensationalized and medicalized presentation of the Jorgensen story — the entrance of her memoir into the library classification rendered 'transsexual' an accessible identity

for library users. Using the subject heading *Sex change—Biography* and browsing the call number area RC 560.C4, a user could find the story of Jorgensen's identity transformation and potentially locate themselves in the trajectory of her story.

Libraries as Other Space

The space of the library, then, consists of locating books in a coherent and totalizing classification system. The classification system is marginally flexible insofar as it can generally expand to accommodate new knowledges that emerge historically (e.g., *Transsexuals*) but remains structurally limited (*Transsexuals* must be embedded within the existing hierarchical and syndetic structure, and once placed there cannot be moved). This process produces a space that both disciplines and reflects reality. Foucault (1986, 27) articulates this geographic formation as a kind of heterotopia, with the role of the library being "to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled... the heterotopia, not of illusion, but of compensation". Where material reality might be



After Claude Cahun. Intervention #1.

unfixable and unnameable, the library functions both to fix and to name, producing a space that is reflective of a particular version of reality.

Gender troubles such a highly structured space. The library, in Foucault's (1986, 26) articulation, represents "the will to enclose in one place all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes, the idea of constituting a place of all time that is itself outside of time and inaccessible to its ravages". Gender and sexuality are not immutable categories, and shift according to and against time and space. In her seminal essay, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination", Judith Butler (1991, 15) discusses this fundamental aspect of identity, 'coming out' as a lesbian while simultaneously marking the limits of such a named category: "To claim that this is what I am is to suggest a provisional totalization of this 'I.' But if the I can so determine itself, then that which it excludes in order to make that determination remains constitutive of the determination itself". In other words, at the moment identity is fixed, it constitutes an unnamed excess, the 'stuff' of other ways of being that are not represented by, in this case, the named category *Lesbian*.

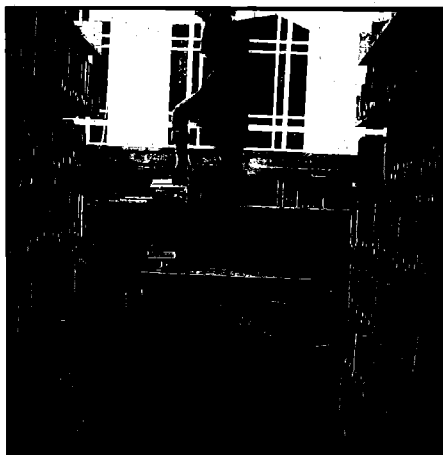
The classification schemes that structure library space cannot account for this excess. In the case of Jorgensen's work, we might imagine the ways the marking of her identity creates space for other ways of being both Woman and Transsexual; by coming out, Jorgensen makes possible a category of Transsexual while simultane-

ously making possible categories of 'like Jorgensen, but not *exactly*.'" Communities of queer gender practice have richly elaborated and constantly shifting named identities that take up and mark their own excesses in a movement similar to Butler's claiming of Lesbian: trans, tranny, trans dyke, MTF, M2F, FTM, F2M, genderqueer, femme, boi, butch, bear, aggressive, etc. These terms represent shifting and overlapping sexual and gender identities, deeply contextual and highly relational. In the space of the library, however, books about these identities will be assigned static subject headings that collate sometimes widely divergent representations of gendered selves. Books that articulate gender identity according to a medical model (e.g., the work of Harry Benjamin) and those that determinedly articulate gender as a political category (e.g., contemporary work on 'genderqueerness'), will be reduced to one another in the classification.

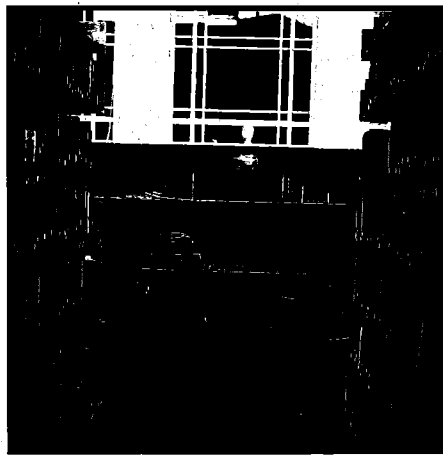
This trouble only becomes more acute at the level of physical shelf space. On library shelves, books can occupy one and only one space on the shelf, and once slotted are physically related to the books that carry the same call number and distanced from those carrying different call numbers. This can result in some strange separations. For example, Joanne Meyerowitz's (2002) *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* carries the subject heading Transsexualism-United States-History. Beginning with a discussion of Christine Jorgensen and placing her

story in the context of developments in gender scholarship and activism, the book is related in content to Jorgensen's and would seem to be of potentially informative interest to browsers seeking articulations of transsexual identity and experience. Because of the artifactual nature of the classification system, however, the two titles are separated by a large swath of the alphabet, with Jorgensen's work sitting at RC 560.C4 and Meyerowitz's at HQ77.95.E85. Jorgensen's text is placed according to the dominant theoretical frame of its time, one that considered gender a phenomenon purely of the mind and body, hence its position in the classification at the point of Psychiatry. Meyerowitz's work, however, is seen in the context of history and society, and is placed in the HQs, a sub-class reserved for *Sexual life* under the broader category Social sciences.

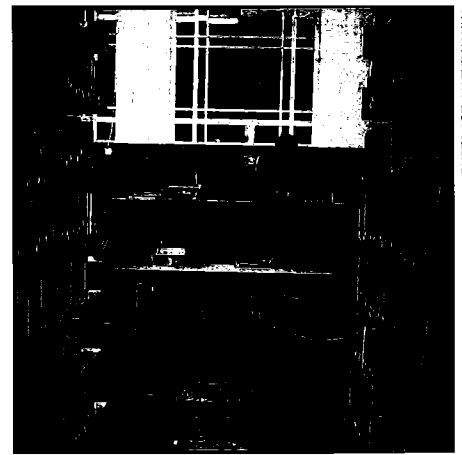
These strange separations result from an intellectual framework that is inhospitable to certain kinds of knowledges, in this case those related to gender. Some feminist library and information science scholars have suggested interventions that correct these dislocations by producing local schemes that explicitly grapple with the politics of knowledge organization, making classification projects political projects. Hope Olson and Susan Gold Smith (2006, 39) suggest that this kind of work mobilizes classifications as sites of resistance and transformation, "taki[ng] charge of classification as a defining tool and transgress its boundaries for our own liberation". Instead of shoehorning mate-



Intervention #2.



Intervention #3.



Intervention #4.

PHOTO ART: MAEVE HANNA

rials into preexisting categories in the LCs, Olson and Smith suggest developing schemes specific to particular collections, with categories emerging organically from the materials in the collection.

These ideas are perhaps most materially rendered in San Francisco's Prelinger Library. The curators of this collection organize materials on shelves according to a set of principles deliberately designed to promote "an integral approach to research and browsing" that is "browsing-based" rather than "query-based". Instead of developing a strict set of subject headings that map materials according to a coherent intellectual structure, the Prelingers shelve materials "around four constant threads: landscape and geography; media and representation; historical consciousness; and political narratives from beyond the mainstream" (www.home.earthlink.net/~alyns/LibraryOrg.html). This structure encourages fluid movement through the collection, and imagines knowledge acquisition in library space as serendipitous and accidental rather than determined by the organizers of the collection. In this case, the classification acknowledges the spatial reality engendered by the intellectual scheme and makes facilitating movement through the space central to the organizational project.

These interventions do important work in troubling knowledge organization as objective, apolitical, and value-free, and in creating library space that facilitates movement through the collection in ways that encourage the generation of new and unlikely knowledge formations. Still, libraries are ultimately bound by the necessity to fix materials in space. We might imagine, for example, a classification that organized a library of materials related to gender for a trans and gender variant population. This classification might be built using the language trans communities use to name themselves, and could organize materials according to conceptions of the gendered self. The scheme might arrange materials by gender category or analytical approach, placing books in an order that would encourage browsers to see the relationships between different

gender categories. Still, the collection would be an intellectual and spatial reflection of a certain ideological framework fixed in time. This is an inescapable restriction of library projects.

Reimagining Library Space

Library space is highly structured and relatively inflexible, bound both by the limits of the language of subject headings and the physicality of linear bookshelves. Gender works in ways virtually antithetical to this space, and yet the library continues to be a space where subjects locate themselves and their identity. What accounts for these unlikely bedfellows?

We are accustomed to thinking of the library as a space containing and ordering books. Users find themselves in the pages located between the covers of a single title. Accompanying every book, however, is the space delineated on either side and around the book on the shelf in an economy that bears a resemblance to Butler's formulation of the excesses constitutive of identity categories. A book on a shelf produces the space taken up by the book, and is also productive of the spaces around it. It is in these interstitial spaces, perhaps, that we can locate the 'home' of gender identity in the library.

These interstitial spaces exist in physical libraries where they do not in virtual information environments. On the Internet, categories and structures are largely opaque to the user. In a physical library, categorical boundaries are clear and the ways linear shelves direct users through the space are physically palpable. If users want to resist the dominant knowledge formations in the library, the spaces of resistance are well-delineated: traverse the shelves between RC and HQ to bring psychological and social constructionist approaches together via physical move-

ment. In virtual environments, the boundaries are less clear and the spatial delineations impenetrable by all but computer programs with access to the largely privatized algorithms that direct users through cyberspace just as surely as libraries structure flow through linear space.

In his discussion of Gustav Flaubert's (1977, 94) *Temptation*, Foucault notes that it is Flaubert's insistence on including 'everything' in his novel that creates the space for "an infinite brood of monsters" that emerge from the text outside of the restrictions of the space of the page or the time of the publication. The library itself is similarly productive. The classification system that orders everything simultaneously produces what stands outside of its categories, allowing the flourishing of excess at the point of control. As Foucault (1977, 91) articulates, "The imaginary is not formed in opposition to reality as its denial or compensation; it grows among signs, from book to book, in the interstices of repetition and commentaries; it is born and takes shape in the interval between books. It is the phenomenon of the library". By reducing work on identity to a handful of highly restricted categories, the library creates the space for a flourishing of identity in the spaces between and among books rather than between individual covers. It is in the interstices where libraries are the queerest of places. ❧

Emily Drabinski is an electronic resources and instruction librarian at Long Island University's Brooklyn campus. Her research interests center on articulations of difference in library contexts ranging from classification theory to classroom practice. She sits on the board of *Radical Teacher*, a journal of feminist, socialist, and anti-racist teaching.

Maeve Hann: Please see page 43 for artist biography.

Further Reading and Resources

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Finding Love, Sex and Gender

Last year of high school.

I'm with a girlfriend in a grungy diner in the West End of Toronto. Through the windows, flurries sprinkle from the sky onto the traffic, signalling the descent of winter. Despite the weather, we've been nursing an ice cream float.

Mel has a definite boyish air — a welcome change from the stuck-up girls at school caked in their layers of make-up and hair products, who constantly obsess about the size of boys' dicks. She doesn't make me feel like a deranged gender anomaly — or at least, the only deranged gender anomaly.

I look over the table at her. She seems bored. I've tried connecting with her; she's in my writing class, and we seem to share a love of writing and music. But she always feels cold and distant towards me. Sometimes I wonder why she even hangs around me. I think she's hiding something.

Suddenly, I decide to come out to her. "I have to tell you something," I say.

"Oh?" she replies.

"Sometimes I feel like a lesbian trapped in a boy's body," I tell her.

"Hmm..." she muses, processing what I said. "Interesting you should say that," she says. "Sometimes I feel like a gay boy trapped in a girl's body."

"Hmm..." I reply.

We pause silently with our dilemmas, and drift back to nursing our float.

First year of university.

The table I'm sitting on gives that feel of a patient's room in a doctor's office: cold, sterile and professionally clean. But instead of medical posters showing cross-sectioned layers of human anatomy, the walls feature the works of various contemporary pop-cultural artists, arranged neatly to calm the viewer—who is about to become a live canvas.

My piercer walks in.

He's a heavyset man who sports a goatee and, unsurprisingly, many pierc-

ings and tattoos. He seems calm, composed, and has a non-judgmental air about him—a very comforting first impression.

"Hi, I'm Joe," he says.

No handshake; he's already wearing his medical gloves. Even though he's detached and professional, he still feels warm and comforting; he knows his boundaries.

"Nice to meet ya," I reply, batting my lashes and smiling.

"So where would you like your piercing done?" he asks, as he gently marks several points on my face. He gives me a mirror.

I look into the mirror and choose the one I want.

"That one," I say.

"Great," he says calmly, already focusing on the technicalities of his next work of art. I hand him the jewellery I chose earlier. He takes a fresh needle out of its sterile package and pulls up my upper lip.

"Here we go..." he says, approaching carefully.

I feel a small poke—it must be just the initial pierce.

"All done!"

"That's it?"

"Yup."

He hands me the mirror. I'm not quite sure what to make of my new piercing yet.

"Hmm..." I say, contemplating. "There wasn't much pain."

"You're a natural," he says. "And it looks cute on you."

"Thank you!" I say, smiling.

Then the blood rushes to my head and I have a quiet cathartic moment: I've found a queer-positive space in a neighbourhood where people's body language usually reeks of condescending heterosexism.

"The girl at the front will give you after-care instructions," he says. "Enjoy!"

"Thank you!" I say again graciously. "Oh," I remember, "Happy Valentines' Day!"

"Happy Valentines' Day to you too,

honey," he says, smiling.

I came here lost, confused, and alone on Valentine's Day. I now leave with a stronger sense of who I am, with the closet shut tightly behind me, marked by my new piercing.

Happy Valentine's Day to me, and to my new gender.

Second year of university.

It's my Stockwell Day crush again.

I don't know his real name. I just call him that because he shares a number of striking features with the former Alliance Party leader: chiselled cheekbones, a sharp haircut and a calm, professional air. He's a stunning example of a Caucasian man.

I've never actually spoken to him. I think he might live somewhere uptown, and I've seen him walking around in the mid-town yuppie village. All he does is whistle at me when he spots me around the city, and each time I giggle like a schoolgirl and run away. I'm a very mature individual, indeed.

What does he see in me? Is he just another tranny-chaser? Does he have an exotic Asian fetish? Or is he just another misguided man looking for love with the wrong person?

Even more perplexing, why am I so attracted to him? Is it because he's a classic male archetype and he stands in contrast to my gender? It might just be because I simply like being desired — the kind of desire that whisks loneliness away. Who knows?

All I know is that casual flirtations like these won't last very long. He just whistled at me again while I was walking through the pedestrian lanes between cafés in the yuppie neighbourhood. I looked into his eyes again, but the game was already over-done — I had gotten bored of him. In my unresponsive gaze, he saw our precious, fleeting relationship crumble.

Bedroom death — and we didn't even get to the bedroom.

Third year of university: fashion trade show at the convention centre.

Girls are everywhere. I'm with my friend Kaley. As we walk down one of the aisles, a girl approaches us dressed in a suit jacket and skirt cut precisely to fit her tall, skinny dimensions. She has matching cut bangs, neatly drawn eyeliner, and just the right amount of foundation. She holds a clipboard sporting her agency's brand logo.

"Hi!" she says, pinning us with her inescapable gaze. "You two look really cute. Have you ever worked for a modeling agency before?"

I shake my head.

"I have, but it was a long time ago," Kaley says.

"Well, if you're interested, you can check us out at our booth," the girl says. She gives us her business card.

"Sketchy!" Kaley says.

"They just want your money."

I look at the business card.

I fall back onto my bed. The morning's interview had been gruelling. The soulless agent had asked me lots of intimidating questions: attacks on my personality, tests of my attitude, and assessments of how I handle my image. She said I could make a lot of money as a model—more money than I'd ever made.

She looked at my photos and said she'd contact me later in the day. I left her office feeling good, not because I felt any warmth from her, but because I was able to match her cold, subtle professionalism.

I close my eyes for a bit and wait for her call.

*I see an old European stone road;
very steep, very tiring.*

The road never ends —

*And neither do the designer stores
that line it.*

I walk inside them,

And never find what I'm looking for.

My eyes shoot wide open as I wake up abruptly, shaken by the dream. I feel

sick to my stomach. I try to sit up, but my body won't lift. I feel the tear I ripped inside me between my body and my soul.

I cry and press my face into my pillow.

*Is this the kind of pretty you want to be?
Is this the kind of girl you want to be? Is
this how you want to empower yourself to
live out your gender? The modeling agency
doesn't care whether you're a boy or a girl
— they just care if you make them money!*



My cell phone interrupts me during my self-image crisis. I don't want to answer — I know it's the agent. But I muster my strength, pull myself together, and reach for the phone.

She says the agency wants me to sign on. She sounds spirited for the first time. I give her a half-assed excuse about conflicting schedules and how I couldn't commit to modeling.

Her tone reverts back to her empty professionalism and she thanks me for my interest.

I let out a huge sigh, and look at the ceiling. Now how am I going to make money?

Still shaken, I slow my breathing to a regular pace. I grab a tissue, clear my sinuses, and wipe my tears. I close my eyes again.

I don't want to be a pretty white girl anymore.

Summer of fourth year of university: Dyke March.

I'm exhausted from walking around downtown Toronto all day. The silicone boobs I borrowed from my trans girlfriend are driving me crazy — they fit oddly and they definitely don't feel natural against my body. But I had fun anyway!

I wait for the streetcar on the corner of Carlton and Church; my car's parked a couple blocks away from the Village in a garage, away from the blaring stages, commercial booths and herds of people. The sun is beginning to set, but nightfall is still some time away.

A middle-aged man crosses the street and walks toward me.

"Hey baby, wanna have a drink with me?" he asks up close, entering my personal space.

"No, thank you," I say, forcing a smile.

I walk a few paces away, closer to some girls nearby. The man disappears.

He suddenly reappears again behind me and wraps his arms around my shoulders. I freeze, paralyzed in fear.

"C'mon, I know you want it," he says in my ear, massaging my chest.

At first, my body doesn't mind his touch, almost submits to it. But everything else — my mind, my spirit, my emotions — screams at once, terrified at what this strange man is doing.

"Oh yeah, that's what I want," he says, and grabs my crotch.

That's it.

I yank his wrist away from my body.

"No, I'm not interested!" I say loudly.

"Okay," he says. He walks away and

disappears into the crowd. I let out a huge sigh of relief.

The streetcar approaches. I look at the girls standing a few feet away from me—they don't even acknowledge my presence.

I show my pass, ride the streetcar, and make my way to the parking garage. I open the passenger seat of my car and sit in the back. The garage is empty, except for rows of quiet cars.

I take off my boobs and put them back in their box.

I lie in the back seat, curl into the foetal position, and weep.

This is not a day to be proud.

High above, standing on a snowy mountain with my snowboard, I've left behind the leering eyes, the cutting eyes, the evasive eyes. I'm far away from the laughs behind my back, the whispers of *faggot* under passing people's breaths, and the frustration I direct at myself for letting them get to me.

My Pacific Island roots are with the palm trees, chinelas, and mangos, but I sprang up and flourished here, on soils thousands of miles away, in a place of cedars, flannel, and pine cones. I remember a language without gender binaries, but I cannot speak it.

I feel the sun on my brown tropical skin. It energizes my body as it shines down on the seemingly endless range of mountains. I stand in awe of what the Earth has to offer, and am reminded of how infinitesimally small I am in this huge swirling universe.

I plop my board onto the snow and strap my feet in. I smooth my hair and coat and feel the sun's warmth flow through my body. I look down the mountain to where I have to go, and prepare my spirit for everything that the world lays before me. ☾

Mykelle Pacquing: named Michael at birth, Mykelle (pronounced mahy-kel) was born and raised in a suburb of Toronto in Lakeshore-Etobicoke. S/he holds closely to her family, works tirelessly to connect with her indigenous roots, and is still working towards an undergraduate degree at the University of Toronto.

Pornography

Digging for depth to no avail these gorgeous bodies starve you empty in their fullness.

With sound muted in the VCR, you learned in adolescence to read the sound of pleasure

escaping from their parted lips until shamelessness and silence became one and the same.

Content now with licking the flickering light on the TV screen where dust has gathered

like meaning at a threshold, you are once again licking your face clean on a dark mirror.

You who in pleasure swallowed your own scream, fear you will never find the way to your mouth again.

Allan Popa is the author of six books of poetry published in the Philippines, two of which won the Manila Critics Circle National Book Award for Poetry, *Morpo* [Collective Axis] in 2001 and *Samsara* [AVHR] in 2002. He also received the 1998-1999 Philippines Free Press Literary Award.

WE Research

Safety and Urban Environments

Transgendered Experiences of the City

Petra Doan

The transgendered population is one of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in the city. When trans people seek shelter within queer urban spaces, they are tolerated but not always welcomed warmly. In this article, I explore differences in the ways that transgendered individuals perceive urban spaces, and I contrast some of the ways that trans men and trans women perceive urban spaces.

The paradox of urban fear is that while men are more likely to experience actual violence in urban areas, women's fear of urban violence is likely to be far greater. Feminist scholars have suggested that this fear is related to the gendered nature of urban public spaces that reflect the dominant patriarchal social structure. Capitalist patriarchal systems have created a pervasive conceptualization of gender and space as separate spheres to constrain women's behavior. The same system stigmatizes anyone who transgresses gender norms in public.

I use the experiences of transgendered men and women as a lens to illuminate the nature and consequences of the fear of violence. Sexual minorities are a frequent target of hate-related violence, and those whose gender presentation is non-conforming may experience the highest rates of violent crimes. The perceptions of transgendered people provide a unique window on gender and the urban spaces in which transgendered people live, work, or play. Because trans men and trans women were each born in one gender, but at some point make temporary or permanent changes in their embodied gender, they provide an excellent opportunity to gain insight into the ways in which their perceptions of urban safety vary based on self-identified gender.

Transgender Basics

I use the term transgender as an umbrella term to incorporate a complex array of people whose sense of their own gender may not conform to social expectations. Many transgendered people have persistent feelings that their gender is in some way at odds with their anatomical sex at birth. For some, these feelings may occur early in life and for others the realization may happen somewhat later. Although there are many sub-populations within this broad grouping (including: self-identified drag queens, drag kings, gender-queers, bois, tranny-boyz, boychiks), I focus on two of the most commonly used sub-groups: crossdressers and transsexuals. The term crossdresser often refers to individuals who live most of their lives in their birth sex, but wear gender-appropriate clothes on an occasional basis. The term transsexual is a more contested term that I will use to include those individuals who have had or plan to have sexual reassignment surgery, as well as those who live or plan to live full-time in their self-identified gender role, but may choose not to have surgery. In addition, there are some terms which serve as directional indicators for individuals in this process. M2F (Male to Female) refers to a person who was born male, but identifies in some way as a female (i.e., a trans woman). F2M (Female to Male) refers to a person who was born female, but identifies in some way as a male (i.e., a trans man).

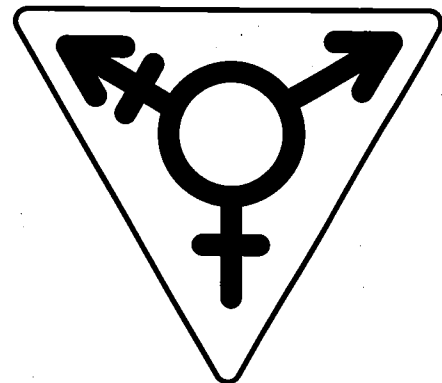
The visibility of many transgendered people makes them vulnerable to violent crimes including sexual abuse, rape, armed robbery, and especially hate-driven violence. The National Transgender Advocacy Coalition estimates the mortality rate of



Safe Zone Photo from Northampton MA.



Sign from a store in Boys' Town in Chicago.



Transgender Symbol.

PETRA DOAN

PETRA DOAN

[HTTP://WWW.GENDERTALK.COM/INFO/TGSWBOL.SHTML](http://www.gendertalk.com/info/tgswbol.shtml)

transgendered people at one death per month throughout the 1990s and closer to two deaths per month in the year 2000 (www.ntac.org; www.gender.org/remember).

Locating the Trans Population

I use survey data collected using a snowball sample of 149 transgendered men and women from twenty-nine American states who attended two major gender conferences in 2000 (the *Southern Comfort Convention* in Atlanta and the *Fourth International Congress on Crossdressing, Sex, and Gender* in Philadelphia) as well as others who participated in several on-line support groups. Because this was an anonymous and large scale survey, I provided a list of hypothetical urban situations and asked respondent to rate how safe they "might" feel in such a setting. Because of the social stigma attached to transgendered populations, they are extremely difficult to identify and enumerate. My sampling procedure resulted in substantially more M2F than F2M individuals. While the best available statistical evidence suggests that there are more M2F than F2M individuals in the larger population, exactly how many is difficult to ascertain. The American Psychological Association (1994) suggests that for every 30,000 people there would be one male to female transsexual and for every 100,000 people there would be one female to male transsexual. These numbers are problematic since they only represent those individuals who are known to therapists, possibly missing large numbers of gender queer people who do not feel they need therapy. However, studies from Singapore (Tsoi, 1988) and the Netherlands (Bakker, et al. 1993) where anti-trans discrimination is lower suggest a higher incidence of both F2M and M2F trans people, but generally confirm the ratio of 3 to 1. More recent surveys in the North American context are not available.

Differences Between Trans Men and Trans Women

Within the sample there were 26 Female to Male individuals (F2M) and 123 Male to Female persons (M2F). While

	M2FCD	M2FMS	F2MTS	TOTAL
Don't go out	6 (13%)	2 (3%)	0	8
Only to queer bars	13 (28%)	5 (7%)	0	18
Always nervous	9 (20%)	4 (5%)	3 (12%)	16
Pretty comfortable	13 (28%)	32 (42%)	12 (46%)	57
Perfectly comfortable	4 (9%)	34 (44%)	11 (42%)	49
Missing	1			1

the number of F2M participants was disappointing, it does reflect lower attendance levels by F2M individuals at mixed conferences. Some of the M2F people express their transgendered identity through occasional crossdressing (43), but the others (80) either live full-time or are moving towards transition. The M2F (TS and CD combined) population has forty-nine percent who have not yet transitioned whereas twenty-seven percent of the F2M respondents have not transitioned. All of the F2Ms identified themselves as transgender or transsexual with none identifying as a cross-dresser since that remains a term highly identified with heterosexual males who dress in women's clothing.

There are large differences in the perceptions of safety in public places among the different identity groups. It appears that the extent to which gender identity is fully embodied makes a large difference. Table 1 indicates that M2F CDs are much less likely to go out, and when they do are much more fearful of being detected. Sixty-one percent of the cross-dressers either restricted their forays into public space or were at least highly nervous whenever they did. However, since for this subset of the sample, cross-dressing is intermittent, it is not clear that there are significant restrictions on the respondents' ability to move through the urban environment. Among the M2F trans women there were a few respondents who either didn't go out or only went to queer bars (10%) suggesting that a portion of this subset is extremely uncomfortable in most settings in the urban environment. In contrast, none of the trans men reported this kind of restriction. Overall, 88% of the trans men and 86% of the trans women were mostly comfortable in public settings.

Perceptions of Safety Within Specific Urban Environments

Table 2 goes one step further and illustrates how gender identity influences perceptions of different locations and contexts within the urban environment. The survey asked respondents to rate the safety of a variety of hypothetical situations in daylight and at night. The locations selected represent a range of more or less public places in which transgendered people might find themselves. The two daytime contexts include walking outside in the central business district and within a large shopping mall. The nighttime contexts include walking in the respondent's own neighborhood, leaving an LGBT-friendly bar at midnight, walking past a "redneck" bar at night, and walking through a run-down neighborhood at night.

Being out during the day time in a downtown location felt safe for: forty-eight percent of the crossdressers, eighty-seven percent of the M2F TS respondents, and ninety-five percent of the F2Ms. Shopping malls were also perceived as relatively safe locations by most respondents (with 43%, 85%, and 86% respectively).

All locations in the evening were perceived as less safe; the cross-dressers felt the least safe in all locations, and the trans men felt the most safe. Walking outside at night clearly poses both opportunities and risks for those who transgress gender norms. Darkness might provide some cover for those who are less certain of their ability to pass, but it increases the risks (or perceived risks) of exposure to criminal and or trans-phobic activity. Among the cross-dressers, only twenty-four percent felt safe walking after dark in their own neighborhoods. In this case fear of being seen and recognized by neighbors

may be a factor in the perceived risks. The responses of the other two groups are different from the cross-dressers and similar to each other in this situation. Sixty percent of the M2F TS respondents felt safe in their own neighborhoods and an additional thirty-two percent felt at least neutral. Ninety-six percent of the F2M respondents felt either safe (73%) or neutral (23%) in their own neighborhoods.

In the next location (leaving a gay bar after midnight) there is a phase shift. Roughly the same percent of crossdressers (22%) felt safe leaving a gay bar after midnight as they did walking in their own neighborhoods and fifty-two percent felt neutral. In parallel fashion the percentage of M2F TS people who felt safe dropped dramatically to 24%, and 60% felt that such a location was at best neutral. In contrast the percent of the F2Ms who felt safe remained at 50% and those who felt it was neutral included another 36%. Clearly there is a gendered difference in this situation, irrespective of a person's ability to pass. People who are perceived as women must be much more wary.

The next situation (walking past a "redneck" bar at night) illustrates a similar gendered pattern. The cross-dressers are the most fearful (72%) with an additional nineteen percent rating such a situation as at best neutral. The M2F TS women show a high level of fear (42%) and a large number who also indicate that such places are neutral (38%). Once again in contrast just twenty-seven percent of the trans men reported fear at such a circumstance, though 45% indicated such locations would be neutral. Clearly the context of a redneck bar draws on stereotyped perceptions of the supposed responses of "good old boys" to those who transgress gender. But it is interesting that trans men are wary, but for the most part are unafraid (or unwilling to admit any fear) in the face of a location with a potentially hostile response.

The final location (walking through a run-down area at night) was rated the most unsafe by all the groups: cross-dressers (75%), M2F TS (63%)s and F2M (46%). This hypothetical context also draws on deeply held stereotypes about links

LOCATION	SAFETY	M2F CD	M2F TS	F2M	TOTAL
Daytime CBD	Feels safe	18 (47.7%)	63 (87.5%)	21 (95.5%)	100 (76.9%)
	Feels neutral	12 (33.3%)	5 (6.9%)	1 (4.5%)	18 (13.8%)
	Feels risky/unsafe	8 (22.2%)	4 (5.6%)	0 (0%)	12 (9.2%)
Pearson Chi-Square		30.358	sig = 0.000		
Shopping mall	Feels safe	15 (42.9%)	61 (84.7%)	19 (86.4%)	95 (73.6%)
	Feels neutral	12 (34.3%)	8 (11.1%)	3 (13.6%)	23 (17.8%)
	Feels risky/unsafe	8 (22.9%)	3 (4.2%)	0 (0%)	11 (8.5%)
Pearson Chi-Square		25.454	sig = 0.000		
Dark walking in neighborhood	Feels safe	9 (23.7%)	47 (60.3%)	19 (73.1%)	75 (52.8%)
	Feels neutral	13 (34.2%)	25 (32.1%)	6 (23.1%)	44 (31%)
	Feels risky/unsafe	16 (42.1%)	6 (7.7%)	1 (3.8%)	23 (16.2%)
Pearson Chi-Square		31.305	sig = 0.000		
Midnight leaving a bar	Feels safe	8 (22.2%)	17 (23.6%)	11 (50%)	36 (27.7%)
	Feels neutral	19 (52.8%)	43 (59.7%)	8 (36.4%)	70 (53.8%)
	Feels risky/unsafe	9 (25%)	12 (16.7%)	3 (13.6%)	24 (18.5%)
Pearson Chi-Square		7.73	sig = 0.102		
Dark walking outside redneck bar	Feels safe	3 (8.3%)	14 (19.7%)	6 (27.3%)	23 (17.8%)
	Feels neutral	7 (19.4%)	27 (38.0%)	10 (45.5%)	44 (34.1%)
	Feels risky/unsafe	26 (72.3%)	30 (42.3%)	6 (27.3%)	62 (48.1%)
Pearson Chi-Square		13.332	sig = 0.010		
Dark walking in rundown area	Feels safe	2 (5.6%)	2 (2.6%)	6 (27.3%)	10 (7.7%)
	Feels neutral	7 (19.4%)	25 (34.7%)	6 (27.3%)	38 (29.2%)
	Feels risky/unsafe	27 (75%)	45 (62.5%)	10 (45.5%)	82 (63.1%)
Pearson Chi-Square		17.289	sig = 0.002		

between poverty and potential crime which have clearly influenced all groups. It is interesting that over half of the trans men appeared to reject the stereotyped link between fear and walking in a rundown neighborhood at night. It appears that being perceived as a man has a strong effect on an individual's own perceptions of safety.

Overall, these data indicate that there are significant differences in perceptions of safety in various urban environments between trans men and trans women. Trans men are much less concerned about moving through the urban environment than trans women. In part this may be due to the more immediate effects of testosterone in masculinizing (beard and voice) trans men who are transitioning. Environments in which men might be expected to feel comfortable (outside a bar for instance) were only risky to 27% of the trans men. In these kinds of environments trans men may be able to blend into background and may be relatively indistinguishable from other men.

In contrast, many trans women are often born into bodies with larger frames and have difficulty passing in many situa-

tions. Accordingly, trans women may feel more vulnerable, either because they may be perceived as women in public spaces or they may be perceived as gender transgressors and thus expose themselves to an even higher level of homo-phobic and especially trans-phobic violence.

Making Places Transgender Friendly

Transgendered populations remain some of the most vulnerable inhabitants of urban areas. There is a two-fold element to their vulnerability. First, is the fear of exposure or "outing" to the wider community in which they live and work. The other part of this fear is due to potential trans-phobic violence and abuse. For both components of fear, the nature of gender embodiment matters and can be significantly different for trans men and trans women. In a urban areas those people who transgress gender norms risk public ridicule and approbation. Individuals who are able to pass easily as their preferred gender may have less direct confrontations, but they may still be aware that that they may be subject to harsh disapproval if they are discovered

to be transgendered. Once discovered, any transgendered person could be the victim of discrimination or overt violence.

As an "out" transgendered woman who attracts a good deal of attention in public spaces, I have had more than my share of staring, rude comments, and unwanted sexual harassment in a variety of public places. In response to these experiences I have learned to be vigilant about the potential hazards of each new environment that I enter. At the same time because I live my life as an openly transgendered woman, I do not have to fear being exposed. This openness allows me to get on with my life without letting myself get tied in knots about the potential for future abuse. Not all transgendered people are able to live as openly and may be doubly constrained by their fear as a result.

Planning agencies and non-governmental organizations that wish to address the vulnerability of the transgendered might consider several issues. Public sector interventions intended to make cities safer for all women to move freely through public space are also likely to have positive benefits for transgendered women and men. However, the discrimination experienced by transgendered people is not limited to the public spaces that physical design standards can ameliorate. Discrimination is very real for this population in a variety of settings. In an era of electronic background checks it is much harder to completely erase earlier traces of one's life in the gender assigned at birth. In most cities if someone does not wish to rent to a trans person, they can refuse to do so. If an employer wishes to fire a transgendered employee, they may do so with impunity. Because of their need to save for surgery, trans people often share apartments with others like themselves; but there can also be limits to the number of unrelated adults who can live in a single unit.

In addition, those transgendered people who are rejected by their families may have fewer opportunities for education and may be forced to work in low-wage, low-skill occupations. In some cases, transgendered people may have few alternative employment opportunities other than as sex trade workers. For some trans-

gendered people the street and bars can become important sites of labor and identity construction, where clients may be met and where money may be earned for costly sex reassignment surgery. Planning policies to redevelop, to regulate or to eradicate zones where sex work occurs may have a significant and strongly negative economic impact on one of the most marginal communities within the city.

Finally, issues of health care discrimination may also be significant. Some trans people fearing real or imagined discrimination may avoid health care providers, until their conditions are difficult to treat. Furthermore, because gender identity is not covered by many health insurance plans, trans people may be less likely to seek out mental health counseling. This is a particular concern since the social stigma of gender variance is a likely contributing factor to the high rate of suicide and attempted suicides among transgendered individuals. Statistics on the incidence of suicide within this population are not definitive because of the tendency to

not report transgender status as a cause or to report transgendered individuals in the same category as gay or lesbian, but some estimates suggest that as many as 30% of this population may have struggled with the idea of suicide (Kenagy 2005).

One simple and direct way to illustrate an organization or a city's intention to provide safe space to transgender people is to be explicit about that intent. The use of signs (Figures 1 and 2) that specifically include the words transgender can be a powerful indicator that trans people are truly welcome and not just another initial in the alphabet soup of political inclusion that is either remembered or forgotten on a long list of initials that politically correct people need to remember. ❧

Petra L. Doan is a post-operative transsexual woman who transitioned at the age of 42. As an Associate Professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at Florida State University she maintains an active research agenda on issues related to planning in less developed areas as well as planning for queer populations in more developed areas.

Further Reading and Resources:

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**Women &
Environments**
international

Elephant Man

He's shouting at me, You freak!
You weirdo! you're a - a - a -

He's running away from me!
Is he afraid of my height?

Colour of my skin?
My gender? An invisible

Second head?
He's running away from me

Across the bridge,
Screaming at people

Keep away from it!
It's a - it's a - it's a

It's like he's seen
A deranged elephant

On the footpath-
Warpath of Hungerford Bridge:

And he flees from it,
Herding his neighbours

To safety, beyond my reach.
I watch him stumble

Past the bust of Mandela,
The bronze deep

As obsidian against
The rising night.

Turning to the Thames
I'm taken to Africa,

The dark water moving
Like heavy savannah,

The stink of dung
High in my nostrils

The sky empty
But for stars, and

The breeze carrying
The sweet smell of grass.

The man's still ranting
At the edge of my hearing

Don't go near it!
It's a - he's a - she's a -

Yeah yeah. Go with
The elephants, man...

Rebecca Root co-founded the writers' workshop "The King's Poets" in 2002, after studying under the late Michael Donaghy at City University. Her poems have appeared in *The Wolf*, and the anthology *Kites* (Highgate Poets, London). She is also an actor and teacher of voice and speech specializing in vocal adaptation for transgendered clients, and her base is London UK.

Transpositions (Three Forms)

Eva Hayward

To transpose is an act of changing something into another form, or to transfer to a different place or context. Transpositions are poetic joins in which there is some transposing taking place. Playing with the notion of “osmotic cityselves,” I transpose incidents of transsexual “transitioning” with zones and scenes from the urban landscape of San Francisco’s Tenderloin neighborhood. These transpositions might appear as drifts of recollection - as in “my story” - but they are meant to suggest a more generalized transaction between body, environment, and imagination. The identity of places are eminently variable and assume diverse forms, just as “transitioning” remains mobile and fluid through the vicissitudes of self. The cityself does not pre-exist, it is relational and constituted through the criss-crossings of longing and architecture.

The urban spaces I have chosen are ordinary, rather than monumental. The flux and froth of these marginal and adjacent spaces are close approximations to the transsexual desire to become a member of the sex that she was not assigned at birth. Cities are changing; change is intrinsic to the transsexual. If indeed the transsexual makes new her body (her habitus, her home) then certainly, following Bachelard’s quotation, she is made partly, by her neighborhood, her “common ground.”

I have created a series of “incidents” (dendritic pieces of discourse), which are meant to offer nuanced descriptions about the body (indeed my body) in space. Consequently, critical shadows (a theoretical chiaroscuro) will gather in the nooks of my incidents, inviting peripheral visions that exceed the focused light of my analysis. These “incidents” are nodes that sometimes say too much and always too little about the transsexual and her neighborhood. They flow from a fundamental recognition of what Bernd Jager

The house we were born in has engraved within us the hierarchy of the various functions of inhabiting. We are the diagram of the functions of inhabiting that particular house, and all the other houses are but variations on a fundamental theme. The word habit is too worn a word to express this passionate liaison of our bodies, which do not forget, with an unforgettable house.

Gaston Bachelard

(1989) teaches us, “The house, body, and city do not so much occupy space and time as generate them. It is only as inhabiting, embodied beings that we find access to a world.”

Among these incidents are “Trans Forms,” drawings of my transitioning self. They are not spectacular or even very good, but they mark for me the fear and pleasure of my public and private trans-becoming. Some images are contained (having found rest and coherence) while others are flayed (having been mis/read by walkers of the street) or scattered (having a sense of intra- and interaction with all kinds). They are not just representations, but are also nodes in which bodies and-meanings cohere.

1. Figure 1: Trans Form No. 1

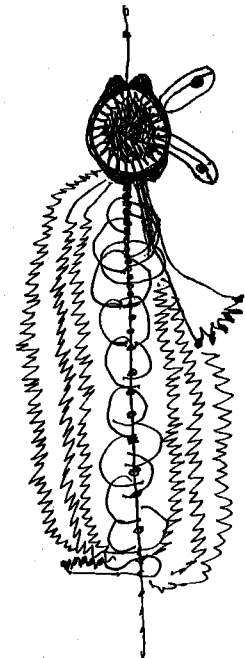
Threshold

- 1 a point of entry or beginning.
- 2 the magnitude or intensity that must be exceeded for a certain reaction, phenomenon, result, or condition to occur or be manifested.
- 3 border, limit.

In architectural forms: the sill of doorways, stoops, gates, portals, facades, and kinds of embellishments. But also, interesting nuance: in verb form, thresholding. Indeed, the Tenderloin invokes a kind of thresholding; constant reframing and

redrawing of boundaries: a neighborhood noted for the convergence of immigrant and artistic communities, poverty, homelessness, prostitution, and crime. Tenderloin: rhetorical allusions to the loin, meat, and soft underbelly.

My home: a studio on Post Street. A claw-footed bathtub. A view of the neighboring, brick building. I am here to till my loins, to trans-sex. I’m not sure why here, but it seems like a return, a need, perhaps an un-weaned act. I live directly across from Diva’s a famed transwomen bar. Standing outside the bar at all hours, these



Trans Form No. 1

women are dazzling. Transwomen's legacies and histories flesh-out the Tenderloin: the legendary female impersonator Rae Bourbon, a performer during the Pansy Craze, was arrested in 1933 while his show "Boys Will Be Girls" at Tait's Cafe at 44 Ellis Street was being broadcast on the radio; in 1966, predating Stonewall, trans-women rioted at Crompton's Cafeteria at Turk and Taylor in protest of police harassment.

Here in my studio, in the Tenderloin, I am aware that my body is a threshold, what Luce Irigaray (1991, 53) called "the porch of my universe." Is not transitioning-to bring from one state to another-a kind of crossing of a threshold? It is not as simple as to say that I am crossing from "man" to "woman" - I am crossing the bio-materiality of my body with scalpels and hormones on a bridge of desire. Indeed, as my body becomes legibly "woman" I continue to become aware of my failure to satisfy my own proprioceptive gendered/sexed norms. No matter how much I transpose, hoping for wholeness, whole "woman-ness," my matter remains hybrid: a sphinx, an achech, a monster. As Susan Stryker writes:

The affect of rage as I seek to define it is located at the margin of subjectivity and the limit of signification. It originates in recognition of the fact that the 'outsiderness' of a materiality that perpetually violates the foreclosure of subjective space within a symbolic order is also necessarily 'inside' the subject as the grounds for the materialization of its body and the formation of its bodily ego.¹

Like Stryker, I remain at the threshold, while actively crossing that very threshold; I am caught, and willingly staying, in a state of disarticulation as I make myself intelligible enough to public and private worlds.

2. Figure 2: Trans Form No. 2

Passage

- 1 of going or moving onward, across, or past; movement from one place or point to another, or over or through a space or medium; transit.
- 2 a transition from one state or condition to another.
- 3 a route by which a person or thing may pass.
- 4 an occurrence, incident, or event; an episode in a person's life.

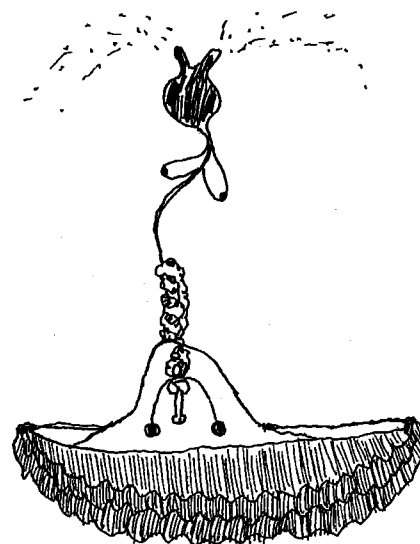
Asja Lacis and Walter Benjamin write:

At the base of the cliff itself, where it touches the shore, caves have been hewn . . . As porous as this stone is the architecture. Building and action interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades, and stairways. In everything they preserve the scope to become a theater of new, unforeseen, constellations. The stamp of the definitive is avoided. No situation appears intended forever, no figure asserts its 'thus and not otherwise.' This is how architecture, the most binding part of the communal rhythm, comes into being here.²

Lacis and Benjamin describe an almost erotic interchange between place and flesh — distinctions between body and architecture dissolve, melt, flow.

Such structures as bridges, crosswalks, alleys, bus routes, streets are pleats in the city through which the body pulses. I am pushed through concrete veins and steal arteries, along funiculars and elevators. I move and am moved by and through passageways, what Bernard Cache (1995) calls spaces of "transistance," inflected so much so that inside and outside become devoid of meaning. I only apprehend the rudiments of spatial order as they are transformed-the city and I fold and unfold one another through our shared porosity.

Moving under the city, the train vec-



Trans Form No. 2

tors its way toward my endocrinologist and esthetician so that I may undergo a second puberty.

My body is refigured, altered, and transformed by a daily dose of 8.5 mg of Premarin, 300 mg of Spironolactone, and regular treatments of laser hair removal. Under the play of dermic forces, for two or three years my face, breasts, genitals, arms, legs, stomach, and shoulders will remain a topography of grumblings, feelings, heavings, ruptures, pleasures, leakings, lesions, and desires. I try scrubbing out the brunt hair follicles on my face and elsewhere before they grow inflamed. I seek out and smear on me whatever tincture, salve, or astringent that might hold some relief. Fat deposits uproot and travel to new sights of colonization: my hips widen, my breasts grow (and secrete fluid), my face changes from oval to heart shaped, and my musculature softens and dissolves. The sole witness, I spend hours before the irreverent reflection of my morphing body, tending the tatters, sensations, newnesses, and curves that I am becoming of.

I am made of my "new" body; I give my life over to it. I carefully and deliberately become my transsexual self. My transitioning body and I find, gingerly, a new kind of accommodation, circling each other with wished-for projections of a fulfilled future. We gently hemorrhage into unified in-between-ness, a state of

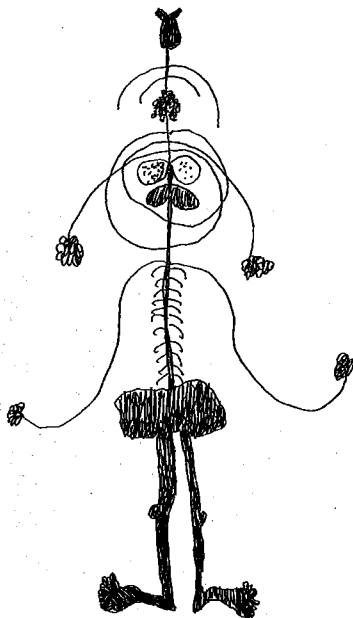
process, mutation, invention, and reconstruction. I know that my transsexual attempt to “come home” to the body is tinged with loss and longing, but an attempt that has to be made. Quite simply I have to be. I know that an aspiration to “realness” (real woman-ness) is unattainable (perhaps for anyone, trans or not), but my own embodiment is necessary and vital even if my “bodily ego” remains nowhere gathered together.

After my ordeal with the laser, I stop by Olive (743 Larkin Street) for a dirty martini. In the windowless lounge, I feel like Alice descending into the rabbit hole, passing from the brightness of “not-passing” (so many staring eyes) to the dim shadows of possibility, of inexpressible hope.

3. Figure 3: Trans Form No. 3

Of

- 1 expressing the relationship between a part and a whole.
- 2 expressing the relationship between a scale or measure and a value.
- 3 indicating an association between two entities, typically one of belonging.
- 4 indicating the relationship between a verb and an indirect object.



Trans Form No. 3

Multiplicity, oscillation, mediation, material heterogeneity, performativity, interference . . . there is no resting place in a multiple and partially connected world.

— John Law and Annemarie Mol³

I am at the Exit Theater (156 Eddy Street), watching Veronica Klaus perform her one-woman show *Family Jewels*.

People ask me if I feel like a woman. . . Do I feel like a woman? The truth is, I have no idea whether I feel like any other woman. I have no idea whether I ever felt like any other man. All I know is that I feel like me, Veronica. This person whose existence is partly innate, partly instinct, partly art, the art of creating . . . But I do find as I go through life I become more comfortable asking myself questions like “Who am I?”

To me, Veronica’s lines — an articulation of transpoësis⁴ — suggest that transitioning forms are ongoing enactments of materialization — to be transitioning is to be in a constant state of verb: imagining, hormone-ing, cutting, dressing, speaking. Transitioning subtends the sticks-and-stones of “I am” and other important noun work. I am suggesting that to be verbing — literally *of process* — means that we are active constituent elements of *our environments and ourselves* — we are of the world, just as we are of our bodies. Verbing foregrounds the iterative and continuous mode of becoming — we are not just in relationships; we are of those relationships.

Similarly the city, the neighborhood, turns a body inside out and upside down. Depending on where I am, I become a sexed hybridity, a gender mutation. The city foregrounds, while it transforms, the limits of my skin and flesh; transposes the intractability of my body and its transformation. My trans-city-self is re-imagined as a matrix of possibilities. The cinematic envelope of the city space causes the points of the body to be distinguished from, and spread out from, each other on the body’s familiar surface, but also communicate with each other according to

alternative and shifting body-images.

Veronica reminds me that transsexual embodiment is an ongoing process to carve out different and extravagant body-images and body-volumes, topologies molded in mid-metamorphosis, transition, and intervention. Veronica and I (if she were to agree to share in this position) inhabit bodies and environments that are necessarily de-centered, literal and corporeal assemblages of gender and sex. And as we inhabit bodies, the act of inhabiting also connects us, however temporarily, with a place on the planet that belongs to us, and to which we belong. We are the consequences of a subject — and object-shaping dance of encounters.

Outside the theater it begins to drizzle while I wait for a cab. There is a cold and desolate tinge to the wet light. It seems, as droplets of rain gather mass, that even the luminescence has become part of the matter of the streets. No longer transcendental or enlightened, the light is substance; the rainwater constantly scatters and incorporates light into prismatic cascades, silver linings, and uncertain edges. This light gathers the street and its occupants into its waving, its misty film; we are of its mise-en-scene. ❧

Eva Hayward is Assistant Professor of Cinematic Arts at the University of New Mexico and Visiting Researcher at The Center for Gender Research at the University of Uppsala, Sweden. She has published and presented extensively in the areas of animal studies, embodiment, experimental film, and queer theory.

1 Stryker, S. (2006) My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage. In S. Stryker and S. Whittle (eds) **The Transgender Studies Reader**. New York: Routledge Press, 252-253.

2 Benjamin, W. and A. Laci (1978) Naples. **Reflections**. New York: Harcourt, 165-166.

3 J. Law and A. Mol (2002) Complexities: an introduction. In J. Law and A. Mol (eds) **Complexities: Social Studies of Knowledge Practices**. Durham: Duke University, 20.

4 My neologism for the particular ways that trans-embodiment is apprehended or obtained only as it is transforming; that is to say, trans-embodiment is a transition toward a form that is always already further expanding.



Self-Portrait as Mulatto, 2004

Syrus Marcus Ware is a researcher, visual artist and educator working to help build strong communities founded on social justice, self-determination and love.

As an identical twin, Syrus explores concepts of duality and repetition in all of his creative pursuits. As a visual artist, Syrus works within the mediums of painting, installation and performance art to challenge systemic oppression and to suggest a different view of the world in which he lives.

His work is in the collections of bell hooks and Rinaldo Walcott, amongst others, and has shown as part of several group exhibitions and festivals, including the Art for Real Change Festival (ARCFest) and the LGBT Youth Line's Line Art Auction. His art has been reproduced in **FUSE** magazine, **Action Speaks Louder**, and the **Globe and Mail**. Syrus has worked for the past 4 years as the Program Coordinator of Youth Programs at the Art Gallery of Ontario, working with a generation of emerging artists.

Syrus has worked several years working on community-based research, popular education and advocacy. His work specifically focuses on HIV/AIDS prevention, prisoners' justice-related community education, Trans community development, and disability advocacy. He is the author of the groundbreaking study "Assessing the HIV/AIDS Service Needs of Trans Communities in Toronto", published by the AIDS Committee of Toronto in 2004. He is an MA candidate in Sociology and Equity Studies at OISE, University of Toronto.

Syrus is also a founding member of the Prisoners' Justice Action Committee of Toronto, and helps to organize the annual Prisoners' Justice Film Festival and Prisoners' Justice Week. Syrus is a past board member of **FUSE** magazine. He has helped to initiate the Trans-Fathers 2B course at The 519 Community Centre, and is a member of the Gay/Bi Trans Men's HIV Prevention Working Group for the Ontario AIDS Bureau. Syrus sat on the curatorial committee for the Cultural Activities Programme for the XVI International AIDS Conference held in Toronto in 2006. He works as a member of Blackness Yes! to put on Blockorama; part of Toronto's PRIDE celebrations, and is a member of the programming committee for Mayworks Festival of Working People and the Arts.

For the past 10 years, Syrus has hosted the weekly radio segment, "Resistance on the Sound Dial"; heard each Saturday at 11 am on CIUT 89.5FM. For more information, please email syrusmarcusware@gmail.com.

ON HIS ART...

As a visual artist, my work is shaped by my understanding of the world, my beliefs in social justice and activism, as well as my belief in the power of art as resistance and as provocation for revolutionary thought. In 2004 I began a series of portraits of Trans men: images that explored sexuality, identity, and self-representation. I wanted to challenge representations of Trans men created by non-trans people. I interviewed Trans men and created portraits based on this research. The paintings Connor, and Nik are part of this collection.

My work explores the spaces between and around identities, acting as provocations to our understandings of gender, sexuality and race. For example, *Self-Portrait as Mulatto* is a mixed media painting that uses autobiographical photographs, the definition of "mulatto" from the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, and crushed up leaves of Earl Grey tea. These elements act as a conversation, helping me to understand the complex and complicated experience of being mixed race in Canada, and helping me to question disturbing terminology, the possibilities for its reclamation, and its use as self-descriptor.

In 2006, I was invited to participate in, *I Represent*, an exhibition held at A Space Gallery in Toronto, curated by Natalie Wood. I created *Self-Portrait with Cotton Balls* for this exhibition. I viewed this work as a large study in self-reflection — a surreal representation of intersecting identities: twinship, Transsexuality, mixed-race identity, of past and present and, importantly, of location and memory. This image was featured on the cover of FUSE magazine in fall 2007, and has been reproduced widely.

Building on this work, I have been exploring how to examine and visualize the many ways in which Trans people interact with public space and urban environments. Most of my guiding questions have been shaped by advocating for prisoners' justice, AIDS activism, and work that helps to build strong communities founded on social justice and love. I have a passionate belief that prisons do not make our communities safer or more secure, and my work to challenge the prison industrial complex in Canada is reflected in all of my creative pursuits.

I recently began a series of images of activists/revolutionaries, including Trans superstar Marsha P Johnson, entitled, *Pay it No Mind/Resister Sister: A Portrait of Marsha P Johnson*. Marsha P started S.T.A.R (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries; still running today but now Transvestite has been changes to Transsexual) with Sylvia Rivera. They set up a housing/hospice for trans women who were street involved, and did lots of work around anti-poverty issues. Marsha was also at the forefront of the stonewall riots... she's awesome, and is a true revolutionary hero!

I strongly believe that art is a tool for dreaming; with practical applications. Art is an important medium for expressing the possibilities of revolution and for imagining community resistance and response.

**Art is revolution!
Revolution is art!**



Self-Portrait with Cotton Balls, 2006



Connor, 2004



Nick, 2004

In the Field

A Conversation With barbara findlay

Kimberly Nixon v. Vancouver Rape Relief Society

Sybila Valdivieso

Kimberly Nixon filed a human rights complaint against Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter more than a decade ago. The BC Human Rights Tribunal decided Nixon was discriminated against due to her trans identity and Rape Relief was told to pay Nixon \$7500 in compensation. Rape Relief appealed to the BC Supreme Court where the decision was overturned. Nixon then appealed the overturned decision to the BC Court of Appeal and in 2005, that Court upheld the BC Supreme Court's decision. Nixon sought leave to appeal at the Supreme Court of Canada but in February of 2007 the Supreme Court of Canada said it would not hear her case.

I recently spoke with barbara findlay, Nixon's lawyer. barbara said that while Nixon lost the battle, she won the war because her case is a landmark for transgender issues in Canada. I asked barbara about the significance of this case and about the implications of it for trans rights within feminist organizations. The following excerpt is barbara's preliminary response, potentially an ongoing conversation with WEI readers.

barbara findlay:

It has been decades since Kimberly was tossed out of the commercial flight industry because a prospective employer found that her glowing letters of reference, written before her transition, referred to her as 'he' and dumped her. It did not matter that she had medi-vac experience flying injured people out of the bush in northern Manitoba or that there was a shortage of skilled pilots. It has been thirteen years since Rape Relief expelled Kimberly Nixon from their volunteer training course because the facilitator believed that she had once 'lived as a

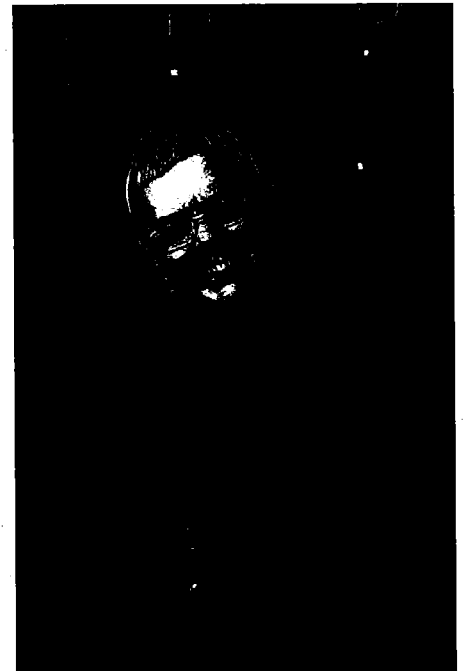
man'. Times have changed. It has been years since Kimberly lost her last job, something that used to happen to her every time her name was in the newspaper as her human rights complaint against Rape Relief crawled through the legal system. Thanks to her case, Rape Relief is now the only women's organization in B.C. to exclude trans women.

The Bad Old Days

Kimberly encountered feminism and the women's movement when a friendly feminist heard her telling a friend in a coffee shop how her boyfriend was mistreating her. The feminist gave her the contact information for Battered Women's Support Services. Kimberly followed up and with their help and support understood the dynamics of abuse and regained her sense of self and dignity. Wanting to give back, in 1995, Kimberly responded to a Rape Relief ad for volunteers. She was screened and assigned to the next training session. The first evening was about the pillars of Rape Relief's bases of unity, including its anti-racism, pro-abortion and pro-lesbian policies. Kimberly was relieved — clearly this was an organization which understood oppression. However, her relief was shortlived. At the break, a facilitator demanded to know if she had ever lived as a man. When Kimberly said she was a transsexual, the facilitator told her she had to leave as this was a space 'for women only'. Kimberly filed a human rights complaint against Rape Relief saying that they had discriminated against her on the basis of her sex.

The Arguments Posed by Rape Relief

The first response of Rape Relief was to argue that trans people have no human



barbara findlay

rights so that a human rights tribunal has no jurisdiction to hear a complaint from Nixon. While there were several successful human rights cases for transwomen in BC, they argued that 'sex' as a protected ground extended to men and women only. Therefore, Rape Relief argued that Kimberly was excluded from protection as she was not a 'real woman'. Their position was that it was Rape Relief who could decide who was woman enough to be a volunteer in their organization. The fact that Kimberly's birth certificate stated she was female was irrelevant. Rape Relief also asserted numerous times that there was a new burden on human rights complainants. Where in the past a complainant had only to show that they had been discriminated against on a prohibited ground of the Human Rights Code, Rape Relief now argued that complainants also

had to show that there was an 'injury to their dignity'. The fact that Kimberly's dignity had been publicly offended by being kicked out of the volunteer training session because she was a trans woman was not considered.

Rape Relief also argued that because it is an equality-seeking organization serving women it should not have to suffer the indignity of responding to a human rights complaint. All of the arguments posed by Rape Relief would make it harder for every equality-seeking group to succeed with a human rights complaint in the future. Rape Relief lost resoundingly before the human rights tribunal. As a result, Rape Relief took judicial review, a form of appeal, of the human rights tribunal decision and successfully persuaded the BC Supreme Court that as a women's group they should not have to respond to human rights complaints and that they had the right to decide who was, and who was not, a real woman. Kimberly appealed this decision to the B.C. Court of Appeal where the findings of the judicial review judge were upheld and the Supreme Court of Canada refused to hear an appeal from that decision.

Rape Relief succeeded in making very bad law because as a result of this ruling, no organization that assists a group protected by human rights legislation can


have a human rights complaint brought against them. This means that disability organizations can discriminate against people with HIV, women's groups can discriminate against transwomen or poor women or women of colour or sex trade workers or any individual woman or group of women they don't like.

Lose the Battle but Win the War

While Kimberly lost her challenge to Rape Relief's discriminatory actions, by the time her case concluded almost the entire Canadian women's movement and other progressive groups had adopted trans-inclusive policies. Her case forced searing debates at Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF), at the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL) where in the exact reverse of Kimberly's case the organization had kicked out a transman who was raised as a girl. Debates also occurred at the Court Challenges Program — a program that funded litigation to challenge discriminatory laws and where the initial view was that trans litigation created competing rights between women and transwomen. However, while transwomen continue to suffer extreme marginalization and discrimination, due to Kimberly's case transwomen now have access to resources because women's shelters and services

have uniformly adopted trans-inclusive policies. ❧

barbara findlay is a Vancouver lawyer who represented Nixon in her fight against Vancouver Rape Relief. She is also a political advocate around issues of sexism, racism, homophobia and disability who believes that "unless we work as hard on the ways we are privileged whether by white skin, by heterosexuality, by able bodiedness, or by economic advantage as we do on the ways we are oppressed, equality will never come". She is a founding member of the December 9 Coalition and of the provincial and national queer lawyers' groups in the Canadian Bar Association, a member of the equality committees of the Law Society, the B.C. Branch and the National Canadian Bar Association and of LEAF and the National Legal Committee. She has written extensively on a variety of legal issues and currently co-hosts legal information workshops on issues affecting the LGBT communities in Vancouver. Most recently she was honoured by the new Sexual Diversity Studies Dept. at the University of Toronto with an award in recognition of her advocacy on behalf of queer communities in Canada.



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Trans Programming at the 519 Church Street Community Centre

For more information: visit www.the519.org

The 519 is a meeting place and focal point for its diverse downtown communities. Within a supportive environment, it responds to the needs of the local neighbourhood and the broader Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) communities by supplying resources and opportunities to foster self-determination, civic engagement and community participation.

The Trans Programme is a multi-service programme that is primarily for marginalized, lower income and/or street active people who are transsexual and transgender (TS/TG).

The services offered to the TS/TG community include:

- a food drop-in every Monday night
- a social drop-in for youth every Wednesday night
- an outreach programme that distributes free condoms and lube to TS/TG sex trade workers
- advocacy for members of the TS/TG community
- a legal clinic in partnership with Downtown Legal Services
- a housing clinic in partnership with Fred Victor Centre
- develop and provide workshops and policy assistance to homeless shelters/hostels/and detox centres, with the aim of making services more accessible to TS/TG people
- a comprehensive resource collection of TS/TG material for clients to access
- referrals, peer support and many other things for TS/TG people who are coming from lower incomes, sex work experience, and/or a street-active lifestyle.
- involvement in TS/TG research projects in areas related to health, HIV/AIDS and homelessness

Our Trans Programmes represent many things to the transsexual and transgender people who walk through our doors. We are entirely peer-run, meaning our staff are TS/TG, have 'been there' and celebrate our similarities as well as differences in our respective life experiences. People accessing our services are looking for help and support from others like themselves. They seek validation from people who will understand their feelings, experiences, and the discrimination they often face in their day-to-day lives. Experience has shown that this level of acceptance is rarely found outside of trans-specific services.

We also recognize that sex work is a legitimate form of employment and we validate those who proactively choose to do sex work. We believe that prostitution should be decriminalized, and we offer all trans sex workers a safe space with safer-sex resources they may need to live with pride and dignity. To this end we offer advocacy, a legal clinic, an outreach programme, and referrals to sex worker positive services in Toronto.

Early in January 2001, we launched the Trans Youth Toronto drop-in. This drop-in provides a supportive environment where Trans and questioning youth can get together in a laid-back setting, share ideas and experiences, access referrals to trans-youth friendly services, and learn about resources.

We also provide information, support, and resources for TS/TG adults facing many other issues. Some of our clients have to deal with homelessness, substance use, spousal and parental abuse, prejudice, violence, isolation and depression.

We believe strongly in TS/TG PRIDE and strive to promote a sense of respect,

love for ourselves and our bodies, sexualities and lives. This is the foundation for all we do.

The Trans Access Project

The Trans Access Project is run by a team of trans women and trans men. It is funded to develop and provide workshops and policy assistance to homeless shelters/hostels and detox centers, with the aim of making services more accessible to transsexual/transgendered people.

This project is run through the Trans Programming at The 519 Church Street Community Centre.

Funding for this project is provided by the Government of Canada's Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative. Funds provided by the Government of Canada are matched by contributions from partners including the Province of Ontario, the City of Toronto and by private and voluntary organizations.

A Little History (the background of the Trans Community Shelter Access Project)

On Victoria Day 1996, a man violently targeted the TS/TG sex worker area of Toronto. In his wake he murdered a transsexual woman, a transgender person, and a non-trans woman in his efforts to rid the city of what he called "degenerate scum". While this kind of violence was not new to TS/TG sex workers in Toronto, it was a wake-up call to service providers who had been denying this community access to safe shelters for far too long. It was a reminder that their efforts to reach these women by denouncing the sex-trade was a big part of the problem, and indeed, added to the anti-prostitute sentiments that fed the kind of hatred exhibited on that day.

In March 1998, The 519 Church Street Community Centre founded the Meal Trans Programme. Initially a weekly drop-in for lower income and street active TS/TG people, this program was like nothing Toronto had ever seen. For the first time there was a community based programme that was directed by and for transsexuals and transgender people. The programme was managed and directed by the very community of TS/TG sex workers that had wanted this kind of service. Its success was certain.

With a TS/TG community-based effort now acting within the social service sector, staff with the Meal Trans Programme were able to advocate for the many pressing needs brought forward by participants. The most urgent issues were: HIV/AIDS, violence against sex workers, substance use, and homelessness. With the programme being limited in the scope it could provide, the then co-ordinator began the exhausting effort of developing resources for the participants based on the urgent needs they faced. A TS/TG sex worker outreach program was created. An HIV/AIDS information and promotional campaign was developed. Partnerships were made with harm reduction services across the city. However, with the exception of a few women's hostels, the biggest task at hand was trying to enter the city's hostel service system and create a non-volatile and accessible space for trans people who could not access men's or women's emergency housing.

With these new partnerships in place, the staff of the Meal Trans Programme were now being approached by members of the trans community as well as service providers in the hostel system, to respond to the steady stream of incidents occurring. After consultation with community partners and consideration of the feasibility of a stand-alone trans hostel, The 519 applied for, and was granted, SCPI funding for a two year project that was called "Making Hostel Services Accessible to Trans People".

The SCPI funded initiative saw the Meal Trans Programme recruit a team of TS/TG women and men from diverse backgrounds to train together and devel-

op a workshop specific to frontline hostel workers with the aim of assisting staff in better understanding the unique challenges posed by working with, and housing, TS/TG people. The workshop covered a range of topics such as: definitions of common terms, youth issues, sex worker issues, homelessness, HIV/AIDS, self-harm, and self-esteem, but was also designed to be very interactive, giving staff the opportunity to ask questions and learn the information most relevant to them. The project was a success and saw the accessibility of Toronto's hostels almost quadruple for TS/TG women over the winter of 2001/2002. The project also saw members of the trans community gaining the valuable skills and experience needed to continue on in community based initiatives. And so, with new com-

We also recognize that sex work is a legitimate form of employment and we validate those who proactively choose to do sex work. We believe that prostitution should be decriminalized, and we offer all trans sex workers a safe space with safer-sex resources they may need to live with pride and dignity.

munity partnerships blossoming, The 519 was dedicated to making sure their new partners had the support of the Meal Trans Programme and set out to take the SCPI project one step further.

Shortly after the completion of the "Making Hostel Services Accessible to Trans People" project, the SCPI funded "Trans Community Shelter Access Project" began developing and offering workshops for the residents of hostels, staff workshops specific to trans sex worker issues, and workshops specific to trans youth issues, all in addition to the basic hostel staff workshop initially offered. With these workshops, in combination with the policy development services it provides, the Trans Community Shelter Access Project has been responsible for the growing accessibility for TS/TG people in Toronto's hostels. This work is far from finished, in fact it has just begun, but

The 519 Meal Trans Programme together with the help of SCPI funding and our valuable community partners, has laid the foundation for hostels to begin to extend vital services to one of Toronto's more marginalized communities.

What does "access" mean?

Access means access with dignity. Getting in the door is the first step but access includes more, such as the quality of services, as well as the spirit in which the service is provided. Access is a commitment.

Access work can be done proactively. Often it takes a crisis before assistance is sought, but it can help to anticipate problems arising before, during, and after opening up your services to transsexual/transgendered people.

Access is not about special treatment

it is about equality and removing barriers that have been erected.

Access work is imperfect. Every organization will make mistakes. This is part of the process. Listen to criticism. Ask for feedback.

Access is a partnership. This is accomplished by trans people and shelters/hostels working in partnership, and listening to each other's concerns. The Trans Programme at The 519 values its community partnerships with hostels/shelters.

Access is for everyone. Although our programme focuses on access for transsexual/transgendered people, we recognize the need for access for many other groups, including people with disabilities, immigrants/refugees, youth, seniors, people living with HIV/AIDS, the deaf community, people using English as their second language, and people with mental health concerns. We acknowledge that our work is

connected to larger struggles for equality.

Issues Affecting Trans Sex Workers

We live in a society with overwhelmingly negative and fearful attitudes toward bodies, and sexuality. For those who make their living in the sex trade, there can be many hazards and barriers. Despite these barriers, many TS/TG women continue to find community, empowerment, independent income, and pride in the sex working community. The Meal Trans Programme was founded by transsexual sex workers and continues to take its direction from that community, supporting both those who work in the trade and those who do not. The following is a list of barriers that trans sex workers face when accessing the shelter system:

- Trans Sex workers often face the double stigma of both those identities while attempting to get their needs met by agencies
- Agencies who expect or require sex workers to leave the sex trade, often

force them to lie about their work, making them less safe

- Negative attitudes toward sex work mask the reality that it is a part of the rich history and culture of transsexual women.
- HIV outreach material rarely targets trans women, keeping them at a higher risk
- Negative attitudes toward sex work mean that harassment and violence often goes unnoticed and unaddressed by the police, social services, and the greater GLBT community
- The criminalization of sex work forces sex workers to work without the job protections others have
- Gender identity clinics have often refused to assist sex workers with their transition (including access to much needed hormones and surgeries).
- Police harassment, neighbourhood coalitions, and restrictive bail release conditions often force trans sex workers to move out of the areas they are

known in, and work in more isolated and less safe situations

How can shelters/hostels offer support?

What would make sex work safer is decriminalization but in the meantime, validating it as a profession and making services accessible to those who might be doing sex work is really helpful. Some ways to do that might be: being flexible with curfews and considering it night work/shift work, having condoms and lube handy, having affirming posters/information on sex work support agencies such as Maggies and Meal Trans, carrying "bad date" sheets, and providing legal information and support. ✂

Further Reading:

Transitioning Our Shelters <http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/TransHomeless.pdf>

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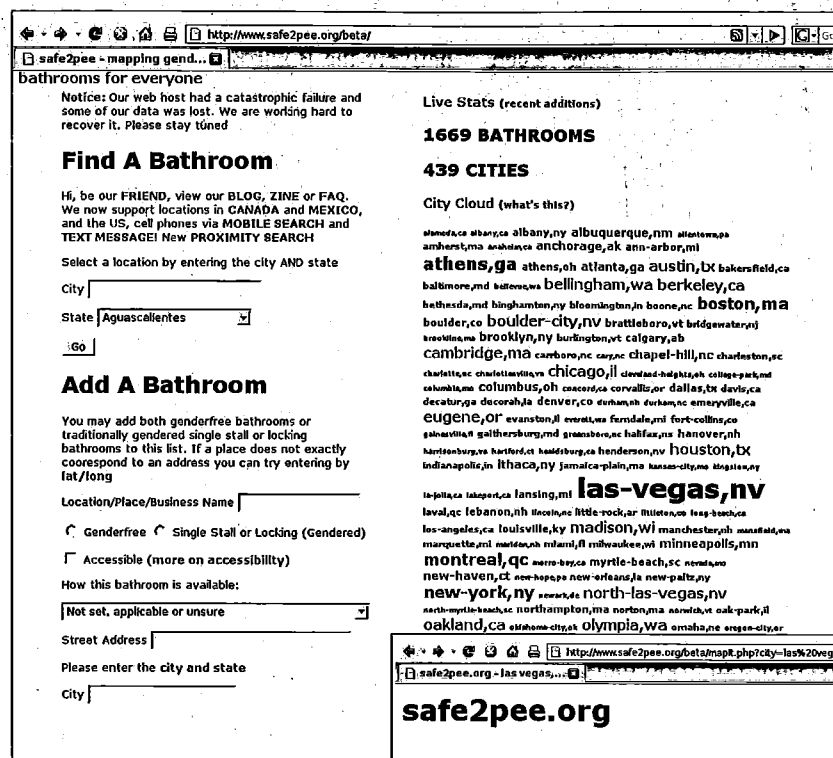
An Irreverent Interview with Bailey Stevens of Safe2Pee.org

Andrea Zanin

In recent years the issue of transgender-friendly bathrooms has been a hot topic on university campuses and in major urban centres across North America. Bathrooms remain one of the most acceptable gender-segregated spaces in cities which can present problems to those who do not conform to gender norms — problems ranging from stares and laughter to assault and battery. In a novel response to these problems, the website www.Safe2Pee.org, created by the San Francisco-based but geographically far-flung group the Genderqueer Hackers Collective, provides maps that indicate the locations of transgender-friendly bathrooms in 436 cities in North America and elsewhere. Widely hailed for its simple yet brilliant approach to helping trans and gender-variant people find a safe place to go to the bathroom wherever they may be, the site functions based entirely on user-generated content.

Safe2Pee.org was featured in New York City's Museum of Modern Art from February 24 to May 12 of this year in an exhibit titled "Design and the Elastic Mind," which focused on "designers' ability to grasp momentous changes in technology, science, and social mores, changes that will demand or reflect major adjustments in human behavior, and convert them into objects and systems that people understand and use" (<http://www.moma.org/exhibitions/exhibitions.php?id=5632>).

Bailey Stevens is a San Francisco native and a member of the Genderqueer Hackers Collective. When he's not tweaking Safe2Pee, he does various types of technology work for progressive non-profits and businesses, including feminist sex toy companies. He describes himself as "kind of a random engineer." With freelance work, he says, "Life is more fun, more interesting. You get to shake things



SafetoPee 2 web site.

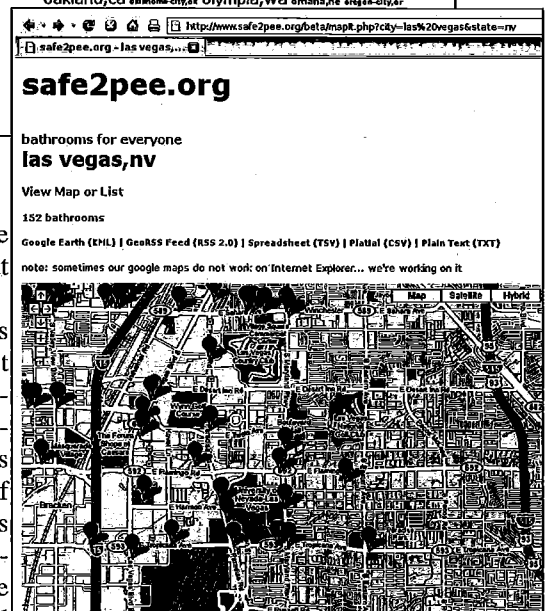
up and half the time you feel like you're about to fall off a cliff, but it's okay."

That irreverent attitude seems typical for Stevens, who in fact began our interview by interviewing me. He inquired as to the particulars of the publication I was writing for and what kind of approach I would be taking to this article, explaining that some interviewers weren't so friendly to the cause of helping trans people find safe places to attend to their basic needs. After I assured him that I support full urination rights for people of all genders, our conversation went like this...

Andrea Zanin: What kind of unfriendly interviews have you had?

Bailey Stevens: On the rare occasion an interviewer speaks to us really nicely but they have a note of caution in their voices

and they turn out to be writing for a right-wing publication. The Idaho Values Alliance once wrote about us. That group always come out with declarations against things. They're pretty creepy people. On the site RenewAmerica.us they wrote that gender-neutral bathrooms are a central part of the homosexual agenda.¹ We quoted them on our website. It was really



exciting! I can now die happy. They don't realize how by saying such intense things they feed our work even more.

Andrea Zanin: I bet you never thought you'd garner such high praise from the Religious Right. Congratulations! I noticed that, in typically deadpan fashion, you've actually featured the quote "a central part of the homosexual agenda" in your "Awards/Praise" section. But let's go back to the genesis of it all, so to speak. How did Safe2Pee begin?

Bailey Stevens: It started, I think, in the fall of 2006. A couple of things were going on. Before Safe2Pee there were other efforts to catalogue gender-neutral bathrooms. The Relief Map of Boston, for example, and one in San Francisco called PISSR². They basically did similar things we did, compiling gender-neutral bathrooms for people. Unfortunately time goes on, people get busy and they get tired of things. The way these projects were maintained was that one or two people put them together, and when they started doing other things, the sites fell apart. So come fall 2006 there were no resources anymore.

Some of us in San Francisco were chatting, me and some acquaintances, and we started asking ourselves, whatever happened to PISSR? We figured that was a void, and a lot of us were involved in technology, so we started to try and address the problem using more current user-generated technology. We realized we could put a directory in the hands of the community instead of in our own, so if we got lazy or bored or fell off the face of the Earth, there would still be momentum behind it. And that way we could create a framework that other people could add to. They could use their local information and expertise to add to the directory, to pass it around and build community. We also saw that these previous organizations had disappeared and it was really hard to find the resources. We wanted to make our database really accessible, and we wanted it to be mirrored in other places, and for people to take the info and use it for other purposes. So if all of us disappear, if something terrible happens and San Francisco gets nuked, if a giant fissure opens in the ground and swallows

us up, the site can continue.

Andrea Zanin: Well, if God is looking for a place to nuke, surely he'll target the hotbed of homosexuality. I'm glad you have a contingency plan. What can you tell me about the Genderqueer Hackers Collective?

Well, we call ourselves that, or alternatively the Bathroom Liberation Front. We have a good sense of humour about things, we try not to take ourselves too seriously. The group varies. There's no official membership — just e-mail us and we kinda give you the keys. It's not really very formal. At our peak we had eight or nine people active in it. A couple of us are in San Francisco but others have been in totally random places, like Portland and Boston. I've not even met any of the people who don't live in the Bay Area. So it's



Bathroom sticker

collaboration in the dark. It's cool, it's really awesome.

Andrea Zanin: Can you explain how Safe2Pee functions?

Bailey Stevens: It's a mashup. At the time people were calling it Web 2.0 technologies. A mashup is taking different sources of data and putting them together to create something new. In our case we're taking a community directory of bathrooms and mashing it up with Google maps so people can get a visual sense of where the bathrooms are located. It makes the data more useful because there's more context. It's kind of fun. It's something to do.

Essentially people can submit information — they can take all the info they know about a bathroom including the address, whether or not it's accessible, whether it doesn't have a gender marker or it does but it's single-stall. They input that into a form, and our system looks up

the latitude and longitude and inputs it into the map. We play it up a little bit; there's a big tag cloud [a section of a website where a collection of words appears, each word increasing in size depending on the number of times it is electronically flagged within the site] on the front page based on the number of entries per city in the directory. San Francisco is really big in the tag cloud; Little Rock, Arkansas is pretty small. We tried to use these technologies but also to be a bit over the top about it. If we can be more inclusive and be more fun and add a little humour, we think people will be more excited about our work, even outside the trans and gender-variant community. We tried to make the site very simple and approachable; we tried to take the hassle out of it. It's very straightforward, with no graphics on the website. We intentionally designed it so it would be minimal-impact.

Andrea Zanin: The design is definitely simple, but even so, the site has surely evolved over time.

Bailey Stevens: Yup. Throughout the course of this project, people have sent us lots of e-mails asking us to add other information options to the submission form. For example, people noted that a lot of single-stall bathrooms are also accessible bathrooms, so could we add accessibility as a criteria? We felt that could be really useful, so we did. People from different social services told us that a big concern for their clients is that with a lot of bathrooms, you can't go into them without buying something. So if I'm a trans person living on the street, how can I go pee? So we added the criteria of how available the bathroom is, whether or not the people who use it have to buy something. So people have been really helpful, including a lot of people even outside the queer community. Parents with children are really excited, people who want more privacy are really excited. That was surprising to all of us. That was a trip, actually—it's been really wonderful to get that feedback.

We also added a feature called "Bathrooms Near Me." You can type in your address and find the closest bathrooms to you on a map. We also added a version that lets you look things up by

text message. So you can text your location to this code and it'll text you back with a bathroom address.

Andrea Zanin: How often are new bathrooms added?

Bailey Stevens: Usually there's a trickle, with a few every week, maybe one a day or so. Whenever we're mentioned in the media there's a huge spike and we'll get 40 or 50 new ones in a day. When we get mentioned in an article it's very quick. That said, Safe2Pee has been around for a while and it reached a height of media attention and community contributions. Now there's an election coming up, the economy is in the toilet, and I guess since queer and trans and gender-variant people usually have a hard time getting jobs, peo-

Safe2Pee would become so popular?

Bailey Stevens: It grew a lot larger than anyone working on it ever would have thought. It's been a really fun experience.

One of the really surprising things that we found was that Safe2Pee got a lot of attention in the mainstream media. It was in *Wired* magazine³ and several major newspapers. It got into the MoMA in New York—it was part of an exhibit there, that was exciting. Seeing the words "Genderqueer Hackers Collective" on the wall of an internationally renowned museum was really amazing, we were all laughing hysterically about it. It was amazing, incredible and really surreal that Safe2Pee got there. They had a section on different mashups and so since we used Google maps we were

number of different community activist spaces have added themselves to the directory. So even though things are coming together for such a practical purpose, you can find other uses for that same information. You can find community and whatnot.

Andrea Zanin: And so the principle of a mashup, as in using existing data sources for new purposes, is also reflected in the way people use the site. How appropriate. Last question: what's your favourite thing about Safe2Pee?

Bailey Stevens: I think the simplicity is kind of fun. It's almost like toilet paper. Simple and functional. ☘

Andrea Zanin has a background in women's studies and sexuality studies. She is an organizer within the queer, polyamory and BDSM communities, and an active trans ally. She frequently lectures about alternative sexuality in Canada and the States, writes for the *Montreal Mirror* and the *Toronto Xtra!*, and blogs at <http://sexgeek.wordpress.com>.

1 "The Campus Crusade for Gender-Neutral Bathrooms, Part II" by Bryan Fischer, Executive Director of the Idaho Values Alliance, at <http://www.renewamerica.us/columns/fischer/070430>. Fischer goes on to write that a more appropriate response to the harassment that trans people experience in public bathrooms would be "helping these troubled individuals, through love, care, and therapeutic counseling, reach a place where they are able to reconcile themselves to their God-given sexual identity, and can freely and without embarrassment use the facility appropriate to the sex they were assigned at birth."

2 The Relief Map of Boston and PISSR, or People In Search of Safe Restrooms, are no longer active sites, but archived versions can be found at <http://web.archive.org/web/20040716083258/www.butchdykeboy.com/reliefmap/> and <http://web.archive.org/web/20051017054421/http://www.pissr.org/> respectively.

3 Safe2Pee.org is listed as one of *Wired*'s "Best Google Maps Mashups," issue 15.04, March 2007. <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/15.04/start.html?pg=4>

Further Reading:

Further resources on the topic of gender-safe bathrooms can be found on the Safe2Pee blog at <http://safe2pee.wordpress.com/bathroom-resources/>.

... the website www.Safe2Pee.org, created by the San Francisco-based but geographically far-flung group the Genderqueer Hackers Collective, provides maps that indicate the locations of transgender-friendly bathrooms in 436 cities in North America and elsewhere.

ple are less focused on it — I think that's a lot of it, people are trying to get their own shit together. There was a lot of enthusiasm and now it's a lot quieter, but the site is out there doing what it does and I think that's the important thing.

Andrea Zanin: While trans people are dealing with an economy that's in the toilet, so to speak, who maintains the site? And how do you cover your costs?

Bailey Stevens: The beauty of the website is that it basically runs itself. Occasionally we have to clear out spam comments or duplicates, but that's a process that only has to happen every month or two. The community has kind of generated itself. And the expense is covered by whoever. Our hosting costs us a total of \$4 or \$6 a month, so it's kind of trivial. Hosting is not expensive anymore.

Andrea Zanin: Did you expect that

included in that as an example.

I think it's exciting in a couple of ways. It raises the visibility of the issues that gender-variant people face in the world. That people who might not be familiar with these issues can go there, can learn something, can find it funny, can maybe pee. It's a very practical thing; it was designed to help people find a place to piss. Also, I know a lot of gender-variant people who travel a lot and it can be really daunting to find a place to pee when you're on the road. So with gender-variant people moving around, I guess I would even go so far as to say that it helps gender-variant people feel less panic, less stress, and gives more freedom of movement, which is exciting.

Another great thing that we noticed is that a lot of businesses and non-profits have put themselves on the site. And a

Film & Video

Synopses of Films on the Festival Circuit

A selection of film descriptions from the Inside Out Film Festival, the Seattle Transgender Film Festival, the London Transgender Film Festival, and the Netherlands Gay and Lesbian Film Festival.

THE AMAZING TRUTH ABOUT QUEEN RAQUELA (2008 Iceland)

This semi-documentary follows Raquela, a MtF sex worker in Thailand, who dreams of going to Paris. Her journey takes her first to Iceland, where she finds a small community of support as she saves money to get to Paris.

BE LIKE OTHERS (2008 Canada, Iran, UK, USA)

In Iran, sex-change operations are not only legal, they are embraced by a society that accepts transsexuality, but not homosexuality. As a result, Iran's gender reassignment industry is in a veritable boom. This documentary looks at a young generation of men and women who adopt the only identity legally allowed them: transsexual.

BOY I AM (2007 USA)

This a documentary focused on three FtM trans men in NYC and their stories.

EVISIONING JUSTICE (2007 USA)

A documentary about the life and work of Pauline Park, an orphan born in Korea in a year of revolution, adopted and raised in the US Midwest. Park came out as an openly transgendered woman after moving to New York City in 1997. In June 1998, Park co-founded the New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy (NYAGRA), the first statewide transgender advocacy organization in New York.

EVOLUTION 4.2 (2007 USA)

This is an experimental video that challenges the viewer to emotionally participate in one of the most delicate and fearful issues a transsexual may face: dating.

KADEN (2007 USA)

This short film follows Kaden as he prepares for reconstructive surgery and reflects on what is left behind and what the future holds.

I'M NOT A BOY (2005 USA)

Julie Joyce is not a boy. She is more than an intense, fast talking, New York city 16 year old. She's a transgender youth who wants what everybody else wants: to be heard

and to have a positive space to live and grow.

RED WITHOUT BLUE (2007 USA)

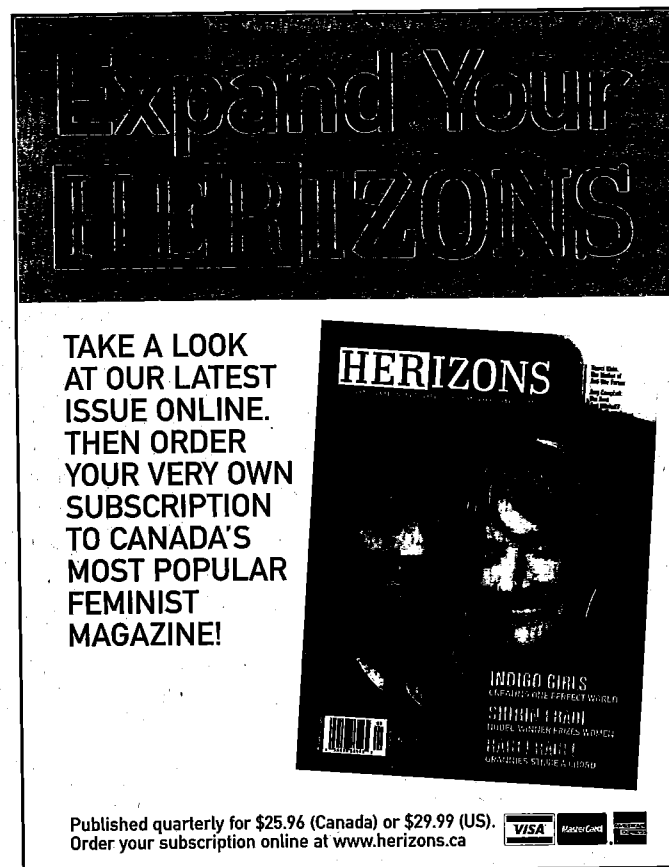
This film focuses on twins Mark and Alex Foley as Alex transitions to become Clair. It follows the pair as they move away from each other: Clair to New York City and Mark to San Francisco. Coming full circle, the film concludes with their reconnection in San Francisco.

SHE'S A BOY I KNEW (2007 Canada)

Director Gwen Haworth's personal account of her transition from male to female, and the effect it had on her, her family, friends and ex-wife.

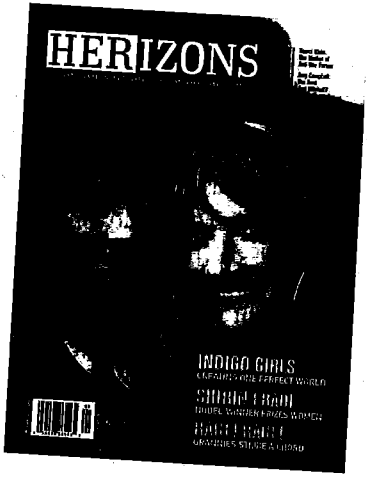
SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN (USA 2005)

This documentary traces the formation of an Asian girl's androgynous identity through documenting real life images with first person voice-over narration. While the images show public places, including churches, playgrounds, washrooms, and clothing stores, the audio records the protagonists' experiences of gender-bending, and deep concern about the social construction of binary gender roles.



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www.womensbookstore.com/new.html

SOMETHING FOR SCHOOL

Hyun Young Lee, Kane/Miller

It's the first day of kindergarten and Yoon is very excited, until the teacher divides the class into 'girls' and 'boys' and Yoon is caught in the middle. Everyone thinks she is a boy because of her short hair. Although she explains she is a girl, she feels that she needs "something" to make sure the confusion and fuss stops. She finds a solution but will it work? Although it is great to see the complexity of gender addressed in children's books, make sure you read this with the little ones in your life and encourage them to take the discussion/story further.

THE SLOW FIX

Ivan Coyote, Arsenal Pulp Press

With **The Slow Fix**, acclaimed Canadian author Ivan Coyote returns to her short story roots in a collection that is disarming, warm, and funny while at the same time subverting our pre-conceived notions of gender roles. In "By Any Other Name" Ivan gets into some serious male bonding with her Uncle Rob; in "The Curse?" a cousin's step-daughter helps her to overcome her lifelong dread of buying tampons; and in the title story, she does her best to fix what's wrong in the world by telling the homophobe in the barber's seat next to hers to shut up.

SO MANY WAYS TO SLEEP BADLY

Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore, City Lights Books

In **So Many Ways To Sleep Badly**, Sycamore, editor of **Nobody Passes**, writes about struggling to find hope in the ruins of everyday San Francisco — battling roaches, Bikram Yoga, chronically bad sex, internet cruising, tweakers, the cops, chronic pain, the gay vote, vegan restaurants, sleeping pills and incest. The novel unveils a gender-bending queer world where nothing flows smoothly, except for those sudden moments when everything becomes lighter or brighter or easier to imagine. Check out Mattilda's hilarious and political blog at <http://nobodypasses.blogspot.com/>

THE TRANSGENDER CHILD: A HANDBOOK FOR FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS

Stephanie Brill and Rachel Pepper, Cleis Press

The Transgender Child is a comprehensive, first-of-its-kind guidebook for the unique challenges that thousands of families face raising children who step outside of the pink or blue box. Providing extensive research and interviews as well as years of experience working in the field, the authors explore what is currently known and understood about gender. The handbook describes the process that many families go through after learning that a child is transgender or gender variant, lays out strategies for parents to move from crisis to acceptance, and covers the developmental stages of the transgender child from birth to college, including transition decisions, appropriate disclosure, and the educational, medical, and legal issues that parents and therapists need to know.

GIRL MEETS BOY: THE MYTH OF IPHIS

Ali Smith, Cannongate Books

Girl meets boy. It's a story as old as time, but in Whitbread winner Ali Smith's lyrical, funny, mash-up of Ovid's most joyful gender-bending metamorphosis story, girl meets boy in so many more ways than one. Imogen and Anthea, sisters that are opposites, work together at Pure, a creative agency attempting to "bottle imagination, politics, and nature" in the form of a new Scottish bottled-water business with global aspirations. Anthea, somewhat flighty and bored with the office environment, becomes enamoured of an "interventionist protest artist" nicknamed Iphisol, whose billboard-sized corporate slurs around town are the bane of Pure's existence. **Girl Meets Boy** is a witty, lyrical story of reversals and revelations, girls and boys, girls and girls, love and transformation, and the absurdity of consumerism.

TRANSGENDER HISTORY

Susan Stryker, Seal Press

Transgender History takes a chronological approach, with each chapter covering major movements, writings, and events from the mid-twentieth century to today including transradicalism and activism in the context of the social movements of the 1960s and 70s, identity politics and the sex wars of the 80s, feminism and the queer culture of the 90s, as well as the issues the transgender community has faced in the early 21st century. Sidebars highlight quotes from major texts and speeches in transgender history and feature brief biographies of key players, plus excerpts of first-person narratives from transgender memoirs and discussions about treatments of transgenderism in popular culture.

THE MARROW'S TELLING

Eli Clare, Homofactus Press

Through poetry and prose spanning 15 years, Eli Clare explores how bodies carry history and identity over time. Embracing contradiction and repetition, this collection maps itself around embodied experiences of disability, race, gender transgression and transition, violence, and sexuality. Part memoir, part exhortation, join Clare in chasing echoes down to the marrow, tracing their sources back to a lover's hand, a bully's taunt, a wild blue sky.

QUEER YOUTH CULTURES

Susan Driver, State University of New York Press

Engaging a wide range of cultural practices, including zine-making, drag performance, online chatting, music, gay porn, and organizing resistance, the essays in Susan Driver's **Queer Youth Cultures** explore the creative, political, energetic, and artistic worlds of contemporary queer youth. Rather than seeing queer youth as victims, the contributors celebrate the creative ways that sexual and gender minority youth forge subcultures and challenge exclusionary and heteronormative ways of understanding young people.

SHELTER

Lucky S. Michaels, Trolley

This book of photography highlights the lives of some of the youth who have been embraced by Sylvia's Place, a homeless shelter for LGBT youth. Of the roughly 15,000 to 20,000 homeless youths in New York, up to 40 percent of them are LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender). 'Sylvia's Place' originated as the vision of Sylvia Rivera, a transgendered woman, who was an advocate for LGBT rights during her life and worked tirelessly, even while stricken with cancer, for the food pantry at the Metropolitan Community Church of New York. On her deathbed, she made the Reverend Pat Bumgardner promise to find a way to start a shelter in the space. One year after her death Rev Pat saw to it that this vision was seen through to fruition.

WORKING SEX: NEW VOICES FROM A CHANGING INDUSTRY

Annie Oakley, Seal Press

From the founder of the Sex Workers Art Show, this collection showcases people who dare to take their jobs out of the shadows and into the public consciousness. With contributions from out and proud sex workers such as Juba Kalamka, Michelle Tea, and Mattilda, a.k.a. Matt Bernstein Sycamore, **Working Sex** offers critical insights into class, race, gender, labour, and sexuality.

TRANSPARENT: LOVE, FAMILY, AND LIVING THE T WITH TRANSGENDER TEENAGERS

Cris Beam, Harcourt

Christina, Dominique, Foxxjazzell, and Ariel's world is a dizzying mix of teenage cliques, crushes, and far less familiar challenges — such as how to morph your body on a few dollars a day. These transgender girls bravely struggle to reconcile the way they feel inside with the way the world sees them. Funny, defiant, and sometimes heartbreaking, Cris Beam's exceptional story of how these girls survive, and maybe even thrive despite a world that wants to ignore them, is a wonder of storytelling and passionate engagement.

grl2grl

Julie Anne Peters, Little, Brown and Company

In this honest, emotionally captivating short story collection, renowned author and National Book Award finalist Julie Anne Peters offers a stunning portrayal of teens as they navigate the hurdles of relationships and sexual identity. From the young lesbian taking her first steps toward coming out, to the two strangers who lock eyes across a crowded train, to the transgender teen longing for a sense of self, or the girl whose abusive father has turned her to stone, Peters is the master of creating characters whose vulnerabilities resonate and stay with you long after the last page is turned. Grl2grl shows the rawness of teenage emotions as young adults begin to discover the intricacies of love and dating.

WHIPPING GIRL: A TRANSSEXUAL WOMAN ON SEXISM & THE SCAPEGOATING OF FEMININITY

Julia Serano, Seal Press

This groundbreaking work provides a fresh and exciting new take on why gender and sexuality-based oppression exists. Serano is giving us a new language and new tools to understand and challenge homophobia, transphobia, and conversely, heterosexism and cissexism. It is genius.

BUTCH IS A NOUN

S. Bear Bergman, Suspect Thoughts Press

Honest, endearing and heartfelt, this collection of short essays by award-winning playwright and storyteller S. Bear Bergman explores meanings of butchness and gender outlaws in a truly accessible, pleasurable and candid manner. Not to be missed!

VOICES RISING: CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF BLACK LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, & TRANSGENDER WRITING

Edited by G. Winston James and Other Countries, RedBone Press

This is an exciting and powerful collection of sixty-five emerging and more established black gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender voices from the U.S. It celebrates the twentieth anniversary of Other Countries, an organized writing workshop that originated 15 years ago with the "mission to nurture, disseminate and preserve black gay expression" in the tradition of such writers as James Baldwin, Joseph Beam, Angelina Weld Grimke, June Jordan, Audre Lorde, and many others. The poems, short stories, essays, interviews and dramatic excerpts gathered here exemplify the personal, political and cultural complexities of identity, desire, family and community.

NOBODY PASSES: REJECTING THE RULES OF GENDER & CONFORMITY

Edited by Mattilda/Matt Bernstein Sycamore, Seal Press

In this fabulously funny and thought provoking collection of essays, editor Mattilda a.k.a. Matt Bernstein Sycamore, seeks to explode notions of conformity on any level. Interweaving discussions on gender, sexuality and community identities, Mattilda "gleefully demolishes the smug propriety that lurks within most contemporary debates" (Susan Stryker, transgender activist, historian and filmmaker).

Continued from page 18

Maeve Hanna is a graduate of York University's BFA Honours program. She specialized in Visual Arts and English literature. While at York, Maeve took part in an exchange program with the University of Leeds where she was able to explore her photographic practice and push the boundaries of the photographic medium. Upon returning from Leeds, Maeve won the Site Specific Art Contest at York, which gave her the opportunity to put the work accomplished in Leeds into a large scale mural on display at the Scott Library of York University. Maeve currently works as a Bilingual Educator at Oakville Galleries and is completing a curatorial internship with the Art Gallery of Hamilton. She recently returned from a year abroad in Corsica, France where she taught English in elementary schools.

Here is what the Artist has said about her series (After Claude Cahun) Intervention:

The piece is called (after Claude Cahun) Intervention and comes from a three part self portrait series (also called (after Claude Cahun)) that I worked on while studying abroad at the University of Leeds, UK. The photographs were taken on medium format black and white film at the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds. In the series I explored different spaces in my new surroundings. My initial inspiration for the series was a photograph by French artist Claude Cahun, taken in 1933, where Cahun is portrayed as asleep in a wardrobe. In exploring these spaces (a wardrobe, a window and the library) I wanted to infuse a female figure into a space she had not previously been found in and question the role of the female figure and portraits of women. There are several key elements to be considered in these photographs. The time period is hard to pinpoint, given the antique quality of the Brotherton Library and the attire of the figure. When placed side by side the diagonals of the bookshelves accent the distinct horizontal and vertical lines, which was what drew me to the space. The figure's movements are also unpredictable, which is intriguing in a place where movement is restricted. The images appear as film stills in which the figure moves from one place to another, negotiating a prescribed space, in an unprecedented manner. The images work by emphasizing a new way to negotiate and inscribe a body into a space which is ordinarily used in a much more conventional manner.



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WE Resources

Selected Print Resources

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Doan, P. (2007) *Queers in the American city: transgendered perceptions of urban space*. *Gender, Place and Culture* 14(1): 57-74.

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Need to get Image 3

Hayward

Klaus, V. Website: <http://www.veronicaklaus.com/>.

Screaming Queens: The Riot at Crompton's Cafeteria (Susan Stryker, 2005)

Web Resources

<http://www.2spirits.com>

2-Spirited people of the First Nations is a non-profit social services organization whose membership consists of Aboriginal gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in Toronto. Its vision is to "create a space where Aboriginal 2-Spirited people can come together as a community, fostering a positive image, honouring our past and building a future."

<http://www.ai.eecs.umich.edu/people/conway/TSsuccesses/Alejandra/Alejandra.html> and <http://www.cha.org.ar>
Alejandra Portatadino is a transsexual woman who fought for the right for Argentinians diagnosed with gender dysphoria to have sexual reassignment surgery. She works in the law division of the Argentine Homosexual Community (CHA). For her activism she was honoured by the Argentinian government on International Women's Day, 2008.

<http://directory.google.com/Top/Society/Transgendered/>
Google directory to transgender websites, mailing lists, and other internet resources.

<http://www.forge-forward.org/tan/index.php>
Resources for elders, advocates, service providers, and researchers interested in transgender aging issues.

<http://www.gendertalk.com>
The transgender symbol is freely available on this website along with news, information, resources, and references about gender issues and activism with a particular focus on all things transgender.

<http://iamtransgendered.com>
Provides contact information for conferences and events that deal with the transgender community.

<http://www.metrac.org>
Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) conducted an on-line survey of LGBTTIQ2S women and trans communities in Toronto, Canada to identify critical issues of violence, discrimination and harassment affecting their safety in public spaces. The final report will be available on-line in December, 2008.

<http://sex.ncu.edu.tw/>
"Founded in October of 1995, the Center for the Study of Sexualities at the National Central University in Taiwan is a research- and information-based collective focusing on the theme of sexuality in its relation to gender and other social differences." The coordinator of the centre, Dr. Josephine Chuen-Juei Ho has written extensively on gender/sexuality issues in Taiwan.

<http://www.survivorproject.org>
Resources for and about trans and intersex survivors of violence and abuse.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tpocx>
A listserv exclusively for people of colour who are transgender, transsexual, or gender-variant.

<http://www.t-vox.org>
A wiki-based website that provides information on transexuality, intersexuality, gender theory, as well as legal and medical issues.

<http://www.transproud.com/>
A website for transgender youth and their families.

Upcoming Conferences and Workshops

Creating Change: The National Conference on LGBT Equality
http://www.thetaskforce.org/events/creating_change
21st Annual Conference organized by the National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce.
January 28-February 1, 2009 Denver

Fantasia Fair
<http://fantasiafair.org>
Transgender educational week held annually in Provincetown, MA for MTFs, FTMs, and crossdressers.

International Foundation for Gender Education Annual Conference
<http://www.ifge.org/conference/>
The 23rd Annual Conference, February 2-8, 2009, Alexandria, VA

Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgender All College Conference
<http://www.indiana.edu/%7Emblgta09/#>
February 13-15, 2009 at Indiana University, Bloomington, IN

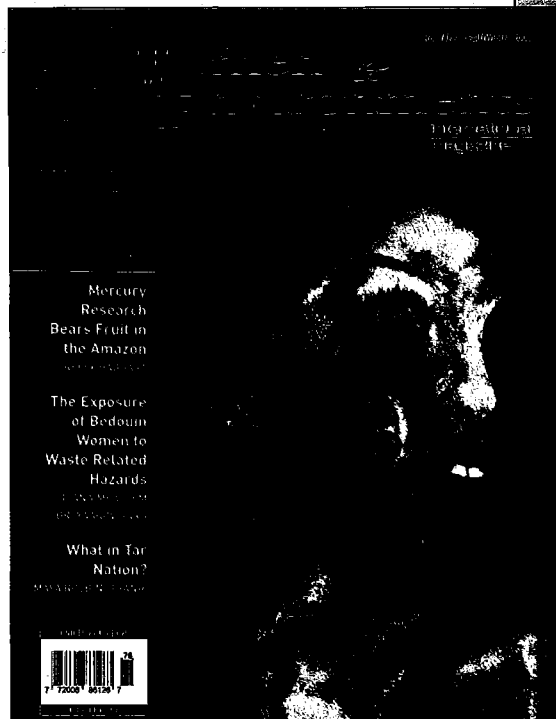
Southern Comfort Conference
<http://www.sccatl.org>
"Whatever your connection to the transgender community — whether you are transsexual, a cross dresser or in between; a spouse, a partner or a family member; straight, gay, bi or omni-sexual; post-op, pre-op or non-op; young or old; married or single; FtM or MtF — if transgender is an issue in your life, you are welcome!"
Atlanta, GA, September 22-27, 2009

Sparkle
<http://www.sparkle.org.uk/>
"Billed as the world's largest transgender gathering, and with attendance topping 5,000 people, it very probably is the largest. Sponsored by the UK Angels organization, the event features workshops and seminars in locations scattered around the "Village" area of Manchester, art galleries, live music, and of course, the competition for the coveted 'Miss Sparkle' crown."
June 2009, Manchester, UK

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