

From Stryker + Whitake, ed.  
"The Transgender Studies Reader"

---

## (De)Subjugated Knowledges

### An Introduction to Transgender Studies

SUSAN STRYKER

---

IN 1995, I FOUND MYSELF STANDING IN LINE FOR MY TURN at the microphone in the Proshansky Auditorium of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. I was attending a conference called "Lesbian and Gay History," organized by the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS). I had just attended a panel discussion on "Gender and the Homosexual Role," moderated by Randolph Trumbach, whose speakers consisted of Will Roscoe, Martha Vicinus, George Chauncey, Ramon Gutierrez, Elizabeth Kennedy, and Martin Manalansan. I had heard a great many interesting things about fairies and *berdaches* (as two-spirit Native Americans were still being called), Corn Mothers and molly-houses, passionate female friendships, butch-femme dyads, and the Southeast Asian gay diaspora, but I was nevertheless standing in line to register a protest. Each of the panelists was an intellectual star in his or her own right, but they were not, I thought, taken collectively, a very gender-diverse lot. From my perspective, with a recently claimed transsexual identity, they all looked pretty much the same: like nontransgender people. A new wave of transgender scholarship, part of a broader queer intellectual movement was, by that point in time, already a few years old. Why were there no transgender speakers on the panel? Why was the entire discussion of "gender diversity" subsumed within a discussion of sexual desire—as if the only reason to express gender was to signal the mode of one's attractions and availabilities to potential sex partners?

As I stood in line, trying to marshal my thoughts and feelings into what I hoped would come across as an articulate and eloquent critique of gay historiography rather than a petulant complaint that nobody had asked *me* to be on that panel, a middle-aged white man on the other side of the auditorium reached the front of the other queue for the other microphone and began to speak. He had a serious issue he wanted to raise with the panelists, about a disturbing new trend he was beginning to observe. Transsexuals, he said, had started claiming that *they* were part of this new queer politics, which had to be stopped, of course, because everybody knew that transsexuals were profoundly psychopathological individuals who mutilated their bodies and believed in oppressive gender stereotypes and held reactionary political views, and they had been trying for years to infiltrate the gay and lesbian movement to destroy it and this was only the latest sick plot to . . .

It was an all-too-familiar diatribe—a line of thinking about transsexuality that passed at that time for a progressive point of view among many on the cultural left. At some point, in a fog of righteous anger, I leaned into the microphone on my side of the room and, interrupting, said, "I'm not sick." The man across the auditorium stopped talking, and looked at me. I said, "I'm transsexual, and I'm not

sick. And I'm not going to listen to you say that about me, or people like me, any more." We locked eyes with each other for a few seconds, from opposite sides of the auditorium filled with a couple of hundred gay and lesbian scholars and activists (and a handful of trans people), until the man suddenly turned and huffed out of the room. I then proceeded to make what I still hoped was an eloquent and articulate critique of gay historiography. The man I interrupted, it turned out, was Jim Fouratt, a veteran of the 1969 gay rights riots at the Stonewall Inn, a founding member of the Gay Liberation Front, and a fixture on the fading New Left fringe of New York progressive politics. I now look back on that exchange as one of the few iconic moments in my public life—a representative of the transgender *arrivistes* stared down a representative of the old gay liberation vanguard, who abandoned the field of queer scholarship to a new interpretation of gender diversity. Sweet.<sup>1</sup>

Ten years later, in 2005, I found myself once again in the Proshansky Auditorium, for another CLAGS conference. This one was called "Trans Politics, Social Change, and Justice."<sup>2</sup> The room was filled with a couple of hundred transgender activists and academics, and a smattering of nontransgender gay, lesbian, bisexual, and straight people. CLAGS itself was no longer being run by its founder, the eminent gay historian Martin Duberman, but by transgender legal studies scholar Paisley Currah. I was there to show *Screaming Queens*, my recently completed public television documentary on the 1966 Compton's Cafeteria riot, a transgender revolt that took place in San Francisco three years before Stonewall.<sup>3</sup> Rather than struggling merely to speak and be heard during the closing plenary session, transgender voices engaged in a lively, sometimes acrimonious, debate. In the middle of a heated verbal exchange between radicals and centrists, a middle-aged white man patiently worked his way up the speaker's queue to the microphone. It was Jim Fouratt, of course. He complained that a new transgender hegemony was marginalizing and erasing the experiences of people like himself, that a revisionist history of sexual liberation and civil rights movement was rewriting the past in an Orwellian fashion, and—he would no doubt have continued with a further list of similar grievances had not numerous members of the audience shouted for him to sit down and shut up. He paused for a moment, gave up his struggle to be heard, and left the auditorium in a huff. Sad.

Those two moments in the Proshansky auditorium are, for me personally, bookends for a phase in the development of the field of transgender studies—a phase that Stephen Whittle and I have attempted, in a necessarily partial fashion that will unavoidably invite criticism, to document in *The Transgender Studies Reader*. What began with the efforts of emerging and marginally situated scholars and activists such as ourselves to be taken seriously on our own terms, and not pathologized and dismissed, has helped foster a sea-change in the academic study of gender, sex, sexuality, identity, desire, and embodiment. Histories have in fact been rewritten; the relationships with prior gay, lesbian, and feminist scholarship have been addressed; new modes of gendered subjectivity have emerged, and new discourses and lines of critical inquiry have been launched. Academic attention to transgender issues has shifted over the span of those ten years from the field of abnormal psychology, which imagined transgender phenomena as expressions of mental illness, and from the field of literary criticism, which was fascinated with representations of cross-dressing that it fancied to be merely symbolic, into fields that concern themselves with the day-to-day workings of the material world. "Transgender" moved from the clinics to the streets over the course of that decade, and from representation to reality.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the whole transgender thing back in the 1990s was the startling rapidity with which the term itself took root, and was applied to (if not always welcomed by) the sociocultural and critical-intellectual formations that were caught up in, or suddenly crystallized by, its wake.<sup>5</sup> Given the struggles that have attended the advent of "transgender" as a descriptive term for a heterogeneous class of phenomena, merely to use the word is to take up a polemical and politicized position. In the end, we took the easy way out and pragmatically acknowledged that the term

"transgender" fit what we v  
itself as the  
range of phe  
performed, a  
dominant bi

Transgen  
sexuality an  
historical in  
atypicality," t  
policy relate  
disciplinary  
and the hun  
practices, ar  
for analyzin  
of transgen  
nomena hav  
media; a the  
fields as pul

Most bro  
denaturalize  
between the  
tuses that a  
between a g  
mechanism  
of transgen  
and assum  
those assun  
field asks w  
in fundame  
such things  
tion of gen

Transgen  
as disability  
how such d  
"difference"  
actual bodi  
life and dea  
exotic, or st  
between th  
Transgende  
out in the  
background  
the manne  
taneously p  
transgende

“transgender,” for all its limitations and masked agendas, was the term in most common usage that best fit what we were trying to talk about. What began as a buzzword of the early 1990s has established itself as the term of choice, in both popular parlance and a variety of specialist discourses, for a wide range of phenomena that call attention to the fact that “gender,” as it is lived, embodied, experienced, performed, and encountered, is more complex and varied than can be accounted for by the currently dominant binary sex/gender ideology of Eurocentric modernity.

Transgender studies, as we understand it, is the academic field that claims as its purview transsexuality and cross-dressing, some aspects of intersexuality and homosexuality, cross-cultural and historical investigations of human gender diversity, myriad specific subcultural expressions of “gender atypicality,” theories of sexed embodiment and subjective gender identity development, law and public policy related to the regulation of gender expression, and many other similar issues. It is an interdisciplinary field that draws upon the social sciences and psychology, the physical and life sciences, and the humanities and arts. It is as concerned with material conditions as it is with representational practices, and often pays particularly close attention to the interface between the two. The frameworks for analyzing and interpreting gender, desire, embodiment, and identity now taking shape in the field of transgender studies have radical implications for a wide range of subject areas. Transgender phenomena have become a topical focus in fields ranging from musicology to religious studies to digital media; a theme in the visual, plastic, and performing arts; and a matter of practical concern in such fields as public health, plastic surgery, criminal justice, family law, and immigration.

Most broadly conceived, the field of transgender studies is concerned with anything that disrupts, denaturalizes, rearticulates, and makes visible the normative linkages we generally assume to exist between the biological specificity of the sexually differentiated human body, the social roles and statuses that a particular form of body is expected to occupy, the subjectively experienced relationship between a gendered sense of self and social expectations of gender-role performance, and the cultural mechanisms that work to sustain or thwart specific configurations of gendered personhood. The field of transgender studies seeks not only to understand the contents and mechanisms of those linkages and assumptions about sex and gender, biology and culture; it also asks who “we” are—we who make those assumptions and forge those links—and who “they” are, who seem to “us” to break them. The field asks why it should matter, ethically and morally, that people experience and express their gender in fundamentally different ways. It concerns itself with what we—we who have a passionate stake in such things—are going to do, politically, about the injustices and violence that often attend the perception of gender nonnormativity and atypicality, whether in ourselves or in others.

Transgender studies, at its best, is like other socially engaged interdisciplinary academic fields such as disability studies or critical race theory that investigate questions of embodied difference, and analyze how such differences are transformed into social hierarchies—without ever losing sight of the fact that “difference” and “hierarchy” are never mere abstractions; they are systems of power that operate on actual bodies, capable of producing pain and pleasure, health and sickness, punishment and reward, life and death. Transgender studies has a deep stake in showing how the seemingly anomalous, minor, exotic, or strange qualities of transgender phenomena are in fact effects of the relationship constructed between those phenomena and sets of norms that are themselves culturally produced and enforced. Transgender studies enables a critique of the conditions that cause transgender phenomena to stand out in the first place, and that allow gender normativity to disappear into the unanalyzed, ambient background. Ultimately, it is not just transgender phenomena per se that are of interest, but rather the manner in which these phenomena reveal the operations of systems and institutions that simultaneously produce various possibilities of viable personhood, and eliminate others. Thus the field of transgender studies, far from being an inconsequentially narrow specialization dealing *only* with a

rarified population of transgender individuals, or with an eclectic collection of esoteric transgender practices, represents a significant and ongoing critical engagement with some of the most trenchant issues in contemporary humanities, social science, and biomedical research.

### A LITTLE BACKGROUND

The word "transgender" itself, which seems to have been coined in the 1980s, took on its current meaning in 1992 after appearing in the title of a small but influential pamphlet by Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time has Come*.<sup>6</sup> First usage of the term "transgender" is generally attributed to Virginia Prince, a Southern California advocate for freedom of gender expression.<sup>7</sup> Prince used the term to refer to individuals like herself whose personal identities she considered to fall somewhere on a spectrum between "transvestite" (a term coined in 1910 by Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld) and "transsexual" (a term popularized in the 1950s by Dr. Harry Benjamin).<sup>8</sup> If a *transvestite* was somebody who episodically changed into the clothes of the so-called "other sex," and a *transsexual* was somebody who permanently changed genitals in order to claim membership in a gender other than the one assigned at birth, then a *transgender* was somebody who permanently changed social gender through the public presentation of self, without recourse to genital transformation.

In Feinberg's usage, transgender came to mean something else entirely—an adjective rather than a noun. Feinberg called for a political alliance between all individuals who were marginalized or oppressed due to their difference from social norms of gendered embodiment, and who should therefore band together in a struggle for social, political, and economic justice. Transgender, in this sense, was a "pangender" umbrella term for an imagined community encompassing transsexuals, drag queens, butches, hermaphrodites, cross-dressers, masculine women, effeminate men, sissies, tomboys, and anybody else willing to be interpolated by the term, who felt compelled to answer the call to mobilization. In the wake of Feinberg's pamphlet, a movement did indeed take shape under that rubric; it has gradually won new civil and human rights for transgender people, and has influenced the tenor of public debate on transgender issues for more than a decade.

Feinberg's call to arms for a transgender liberation movement followed close on the heels of another watershed publication that laid an important cornerstone for transgender studies, Sandy Stone's 1991 "posttranssexual manifesto."<sup>9</sup> Stone wrote against a line of thought in second-wave feminism, common since the early 1970s and articulated most vehemently by feminist ethicist Janice Raymond, which considered transsexuality to be a form of false consciousness.<sup>10</sup> Transsexuals, in this view, failed to properly analyze the social sources of gender oppression. Rather than working to create equality by overthrowing the gender system itself, they internalized outmoded masculine or feminine stereotypes and did harm to their bodies in order to appear as the men and women they considered themselves to be, but that others did not. In this view, transsexuals were the visible symptoms of a disturbed gender system. By altering the surface appearance of their bodies, such feminists contended, transsexuals alienated themselves from their own lived history, and placed themselves in an inauthentic position that misrepresented their "true selves" to others. Stone called upon transsexuals to critically refigure the notion of authenticity by abandoning the practice of passing as nontranssexual (and therefore "real") men and women, much as gays and lesbians a generation earlier had been called to come out of their self-protective but ultimately suffocating closets. Stone sought to combat the anti-transsexual moralism embedded in certain strands of feminist thought by soliciting a new corpus of intellectual and creative work capable of analyzing and communicating to others the concrete realities of "changing sex." To a significant degree, Feinberg's "transgender" came to name the ensemble of critical practices called for by Stone's "posttranssexual" manifesto.

The confluence and discourses a Women's Music expelled a postop man.<sup>11</sup> This inc and their allies, r assault on public long history of n Kate Bornstein w confessional wor of the more acad book by Judith B Vol. 1.<sup>14</sup> A Routlex *The Cultural Polit* map of the terrain

By 1992, the te overlapped with p formation in 1992 of a specifically tr: scholarly work as Psychiatric Assoc. *Rites of Passage*, a duction with acad organized the firs the solid foundati and activist whose Jamison Green tr: newsletter becam organizations, so: began forming in for Gay, Lesbian a

A similar ferm little formal trans early 1990s. In 19: feat of an applicat recognition of his the United States, and emerging cor strategic activists activists all had e: national Beaumo: Club, founded in the needs of heter whose membersh and various other

The confluence of a few other major events in 1991 conspired to create and circulate new debates and discourses about transgender issues—and to revive some old ones. That year, the Michigan Women's Music Festival, a women-only event with deep roots in the lesbian feminist community, expelled a postoperative transsexual woman, Nancy Jean Burkholder, claiming she was "actually" a man.<sup>11</sup> This incident became a flashpoint in the United States and Canada for transgender people and their allies, many of whom had been radicalized by opposition to the Gulf War, the right-wing assault on public arts funding in the United States, and by the Reagan-Bush administrations' decade-long history of neglect of the AIDS crisis.<sup>12</sup> A provocative and intelligent performance artist named Kate Bornstein was tweaking the consciousness of audiences on both coasts of North America with confessional works that explored her tortured personal history with the word "transsexual."<sup>13</sup> Some of the more academically-minded members of these grassroots communities were reading a recent book by Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, and an older book by Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*.<sup>14</sup> A Routledge anthology published that year, Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub's *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, which included Sandy Stone's pivotal essay, offered an early map of the terrain transgender studies would soon claim as its own.<sup>15</sup>

By 1992, the tenuous beginnings of the field were taking shape where the margins of the academy overlapped with politicized communities of identity. The activist group Transgender Nation—whose formation in 1992 as a focus group of the San Francisco chapter of Queer Nation marks the emergence of a specifically transgender politics within the broader queer movement of the early 1990s—generated scholarly work as part of its protest against the inclusion of "gender identity disorder" in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*.<sup>16</sup> New 'zines like *Gender Trash*, *TransSisters*, *Rites of Passage*, and *TNT: The Transsexual News Telegraph* combined community-based cultural production with academically-informed critical gender theory. In Houston, legal activist Phyllis R. Frye organized the first professional conference on transgender law and employment policies. Building on the solid foundation built by female-to-male transsexual Lou Sullivan, a community-based historian and activist whose untimely death from AIDS-related illnesses tragically cut short an important career, Jamison Green transformed a local San Francisco FTM support group into FTM International, whose newsletter became a vital outlet for discussing myriad forms of female masculinity. Members of such organizations, some of whom were also graduate students and young academic faculty members, began forming informal personal and professional networks during the 1993 March on Washington for Gay, Lesbian and Bi Rights—which explicitly voted *not* to include "transgender" in its title.

A similar ferment was brewing in the United Kingdom. As in the United States, Europe had seen little formal transgender activism between the heyday of the sexual liberation movements and the early 1990s. In 1992, the political activist group Press for Change was founded in response to the defeat of an application at the European Court of Human Rights by Mark Rees, a transsexual man, for recognition of his rights to privacy and to marry. Unlike the political and theoretical developments in the United States, however, which represented something of a generational break between established and emerging communities of gender-diverse people, the Press For Change campaign included as strategic activists trans people who had been working on trans issues since the mid-1970s. These activists all had experience participating in local support groups affiliated in some fashion with the national Beaumont Society, which itself ultimately derived from Virginia Prince's Hose and Heels Club, founded in Los Angeles in the early 1960s. Although these support groups typically catered to the needs of heterosexual male transvestites, there was a significant history in the UK of mixed groups whose membership included not only part-time cross-dressers, but also postoperative transsexuals, and various others who occupied diverse niches within the gender system.

In 1975, a network of local support group leaders loosely affiliated themselves with the U.S. activist group TAO (Transsexual Action Organization). TAO-UK was a short-lived group devoted to anti-sexism, anti-racism, and peace campaigns that also specifically sought the right of self-determined medical treatment for transsexual people. These early activists became the core of Press for Change in 1992, whose signal victory has been passage of the national Gender Recognition Act in 2004—an accomplishment without parallel in the United States. Partly as a result of Press for Change's efficacy in leveraging the mechanism of institutional power, and partly as a result of profoundly different healthcare delivery systems, transgender academic work in the UK tended from the outset to be more policy-oriented, and more focused on medical and legal issues, than work originating in the United States, which has tended to be more concerned with queer and feminist identity politics. The differences between two such closely related bodies of scholarship highlights the need for careful attention to national contexts, not only when attempting to understand transgender phenomena themselves, but also when trying to understand how transgender phenomena have been interpreted and represented.<sup>17</sup>

The 1994 Queer Studies Conference at the University of Iowa fostered the first truly international network of emerging transgender scholars, and resulted in the formation of the still extant trans-academic listserv. The First International Conference on Cross-Dressing, Sex, and Gender, held in 1995 at California State University at Northridge, represented another benchmark in the development of the transgender studies field. For the first time at a professional meeting, an older generation of (primarily nontransgender) academic specialists who studied transgender phenomena was confronted by a significant number of academically trained specialists who also happened to be transgender people themselves. Transgender attendees angrily protested conference policies that marginalized and stigmatized transgender participants, such as asking transgender people to use separate toilet facilities from the other attendees, or scheduling presentations by transgender scholars exclusively in the "community track" rather than the "professional track."

The situation improved dramatically within a few short years. The astonishingly rapid rise of the term "transgender" seems to have increased exponentially around 1995 (fueled in part by the simultaneous, and even more astonishing, expansion of the World Wide Web). By the late 1990s a number of transgender studies special issues of peer-reviewed academic journals had appeared, as well as transgender-themed anthologies from academic publishers. Even the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association, the old-guard professional organization for medical and psychotherapeutic service-providers to gender-questioning people, capitulated to the new nomenclature by naming its in-house publication the *International Journal of Transgenderism*. Increasingly, courses in transgender studies were taught at universities across North America and Europe, and transgender scholarship and cultural production were integrated into sexuality and gender studies curricula, as well as within general courses in such disciplines as sociology, psychology, anthropology, and law. Graduate students began writing theses and dissertations on transgender topics—more than 300 to date. The new interdisciplinary field gained coverage in the U.S. *Chronicle of Higher Education* and, in the UK, the *Guardian's* Higher Education supplement.<sup>18</sup> By the end of the last century, transgender studies could make a fair claim to being an established discipline, though one with relatively scant institutional support.

This is the body of intellectual work that *The Transgender Studies Reader* seeks to sample and contextualize. It is intended to provide a convenient introduction to the field as it has developed over the past decade, an overview of some of the earlier work that informed this scholarship, and a jumping-off point for more sophisticated analyses in the next generation of inquiry.

## BROAD

The eme:  
has enjoy  
appearar  
profound  
the hom:  
that simu  
while als  
similarly  
hemophi  
to "heter  
that wer  
Europe a  
that they  
studies i

Neith  
academy  
at the clc  
tion, "Ai  
the term  
womanh  
mobilize  
some fer  
is not si  
women  
and won  
transgen  
some of  
of femin  
call for r  
on gend

Like  
to a sig  
der phe  
sexuality  
particul  
tive, sor  
heterose  
transger  
model o  
"homon  
and an a  
gender s  
of desir  
such as

## BROADER CONTEXTS

The emergence of transgender studies has closely paralleled the rise of queer studies, with which it has enjoyed a close and sometimes vexed relationship. One influential interpretation of queer studies' appearance in the United States in the late 1980s and early 1990s is that the AIDS crisis necessitated a profound rethinking of the relationship between sexuality, identity, and the public sphere. Countering the homophobic characterization of AIDS as a "gay disease" required a postidentity sexual politics that simultaneously acknowledged the specificity of various bodies and sexualities (such as gay men), while also fostering strategic political alliances between other, sometimes overlapping, constituencies similarly affected by the epidemic (initially African refugees in Europe, Haitians in the United States, hemophiliacs, and injection drug users). This new "queer" politics, based on an array of oppositions to "heteronormative" social oppression rather than a set of protections for specific kinds of minorities that were vulnerable to discrimination, radically transformed the homosexual rights movement in Europe and America.<sup>19</sup> The queer movement allowed transgender people to make compelling claims that they, too, had political grievances against an oppressive heteronormative regime. Transgender studies initially took shape in that political and intellectual ferment.

Neither feminism nor queer studies, at whose intersection transgender studies first emerged in the academy, were quite up to the task of making sense of the lived complexity of contemporary gender at the close of the last century. First-wave African-American feminist Sojourner Truth's famous question, "Ain't I a Woman?," should serve as a powerful reminder that fighting for representation within the term "woman" has been as much a part of the feminist tradition as has asserting the value of womanhood and fighting for social equality between women and men.<sup>20</sup> "Woman" typically has been mobilized in ways that advance the specific class, racial, national, religious, and ideological agendas of some feminists at the expense of other women; the fight over transgender inclusion within feminism is not significantly different, in many respects, from other fights involving working-class women, women of color, lesbian women, disabled women, women who produce or consume pornography, and women who practice consensual sadomasochism. Just as in these other struggles, grappling with transgender issues requires that some feminists re-examine, or perhaps examine for the first time, some of the exclusionary assumptions they embed within the fundamental conceptual underpinnings of feminism. Transgender phenomena challenge the unifying potential of the category "woman," and call for new analyses, new strategies and practices, for combating discrimination and injustice based on gender inequality.<sup>21</sup>

Like recent feminism and feminist scholarship, queer politics and queer studies also remain invested, to a significant extent, in an underlying conceptual framework that is problematized by transgender phenomena. "Sexual object choice," the very concept used to distinguish "hetero" from "homo" sexuality, loses coherence to the precise extent that the "sex" of the "object" is called into question, particularly in relation to the object's "gender." Queer studies, though putatively antiheteronormative, sometimes fails to acknowledge that same-sex object choice is not the only way to differ from heterosexist cultural norms, that transgender phenomena can also be antiheteronormative, or that transgender phenomena constitute an axis of difference that cannot be subsumed to an object-choice model of antiheteronormativity. As a result, queer studies sometimes perpetuates what might be called "homonormativity," that is, a privileging of homosexual ways of differing from heterosocial norms, and an antipathy (or at least an unthinking blindness) toward other modes of queer difference. Transgender studies is in many ways more attuned to questions of embodiment and identity than to those of desire and sexuality, and is akin to other efforts to insist upon the salience of cross-cutting issues such as race, class, age, disability, and nationality within identity-based movements and communities.

Transgender phenomena invite queer studies, and gay and lesbian communities, to take another look at the many ways bodies, identities, and desires can be interwoven.

Transgender studies emerged in the early 1990s not just in conjunction with certain intellectual trends within feminism and queer theory, but also in response to broader historical circumstances. The disintegration of the Soviet Union, the end of the cold war, the rise of the United States as a unipolar superpower, the development of the European Union as the first multi-national state, and the elaboration of new global forms of capital during these years precipitated a pervasive, deeply motivated, critical reexamination of various conceptual binaries. Sex/gender systems, like other cultural constructs, deformed and reformed in tandem with new material circumstances.<sup>22</sup> The popular film and stage production *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*—the story of a male East German who undergoes a (botched) genital conversion surgery in order to become the wife of an American soldier, and later regrets the decision—explores precisely this shift in post-cold war possibilities for gendered embodiment.<sup>23</sup>

If a frame as totalizing as “East/West” at least momentarily lost its explanatory purchase in a chaotic pre-9/11 world that seemed increasingly structured by diasporic movements and transnational flows, how likely was it at that time that the equally hegemonic construction “woman/man” would remain uninterrogated? Transgender studies stepped into the breach of that ruptured binary to reconceptualize gender for the New World Order. The new field approached gender not as a system for correlating two supposedly natural, stable, and incommensurable biological sexes (male and female) with two normative, fixed, and equally incommensurable social categories (man and woman). Rather, it called into question that entire epistemological framework, and conceived of gender as yet another global system within which a great many diverse and specific forms of human being were produced, enmeshed, and modified along multiple axes of signification. In a world seemingly bent on becoming one, transgender studies grappled with the imperative of counting past two, when enumerating the significant forms of gendered personhood.

Furthermore, throughout the 1990s, the impending calendrical event of the year 2000 helped link critical attention to the collapse of familiar binaries with a sense of epochal change and the perceived advent of a new historical era. During the most recent *fin-de-siècle*, transgender phenomena were widely considered the bellwethers (for better or worse) of an emergent “postmodern” condition. Rita Felski suggests that the up-tick in attention to transgender issues at the close of the last century was an expression of “premillennial tension;” she contends that ends of centuries serve as privileged cultural moments in which to articulate myths of death and rebirth, decline and renewal, and she argues that in our own historical epoch these concerns have been writ large across proliferating representations of transgender bodies.<sup>24</sup> “Transgender” became an overdetermined construct, like “cyborg,” through which contemporary culture imagined a future filled with new possibilities for being human, or becoming posthuman.<sup>25</sup> “Transgender studies” emerged at this historic juncture as one practice for collectively thinking our way into the brave new world of the twenty-first century, with all its threats and promises of unimaginable transformation through new forms of biomedical and communicational technologies.

## POSTMODERNITY

Transgender phenomena may be “postmodern” to the extent that they are imagined to point beyond contemporary modernity, but transgender critical theory is technically postmodern, in one narrow use of that term, to the extent that it takes aim at the modernist epistemology that treats gender merely as a social, linguistic, or subjective representation of an objectively knowable material sex. Epistemological concerns lie at the heart of transgender critique, and motivate a great deal of the transgender struggle for social justice. Transgender phenomena, in short, point the way to a different understanding of how

bodies mean, how representational issues have material

In the modern base-  
tial anchor that support  
instance of what cultur  
representation consists  
it.<sup>26</sup> The epistemological  
is “modern,” in a long hi  
materialism in societies  
is what ultimately matte  
is the fundamental sou  
practices of human cog

In this seemingly cor  
by a gender role, and s  
(subjectively) identifies  
herself to be one. The r  
are imagined to be strict  
what we call bodily sex  
needed.<sup>27</sup> Transgender p  
and the relationship of  
“gender.” As the ambigu  
sense imaginable, “sex,”  
sex of the body, which w  
individual whole body, i  
reproductive sex, morph  
that number far more th  
revealed to be socially co

Likewise, the contrar  
and the gender inversion  
determinism, and mirror  
out, is not the foundation  
fruit in the mirror; “sex”  
most, and how they regi  
a foundation, and occup

Mirror-style represen  
Deliberate misrepresent  
fraught with consequen  
innumerable cross-dressi  
tragic results. Transgend  
sex with a particular soci  
material truth, through t  
as a lie rather than as an

For the supposed epis  
pecting others, the atyp  
an Academy Award in 1  
told in the true-crime dr



bodies mean, how representation works, and what counts as legitimate knowledge. These philosophical issues have material consequences for the quality of transgender lives.

In the modern base-and-superstructure epistemic paradigm, sex is considered the stable referential anchor that supports, and is made known by, the signs of gender that reflect it. This is a specific instance of what cultural critic Frederic Jameson called a “mirror theory of knowledge,” in which representation consists of the reproduction for subjectivity of an objectivity assumed to lay outside it.<sup>26</sup> The epistemological assertion that the material world is reflected in the mirror of representation is “modern,” in a long historical sense, to the extent that it gained force along with the rise of scientific materialism in societies of Western European origin since the end of the fifteenth century. “Matter” is what ultimately matters in this modern European worldview; it lies at the root of knowledge, and is the fundamental source of the meaning (re)invested in it through the derivative and secondary practices of human cognition and perception.

In this seemingly commonsensical view, the materiality of anatomical sex is represented socially by a gender role, and subjectively as a gender identity: a (biological) male is a (social) man who (subjectively) identifies himself as such; a woman is similarly, and circularly, a female who considers herself to be one. The relationship between bodily sex, gender role, and subjective gender identity are imagined to be strictly, mechanically, mimetic—a real thing and its reflections. Gender is simply what we call bodily sex when we see it in the mirror of representation—no questions asked, none needed.<sup>27</sup> Transgender phenomena call into question both the stability of the material referent “sex” and the relationship of that unstable category to the linguistic, social, and psychical categories of “gender.” As the ambiguous bodies of the physically intersexed demonstrate in the most palpable sense imaginable, “sex,” *any sex*, is a category “which is not one.” Rather, what we typically call the sex of the body, which we imagine to be a uniform quality that uniquely characterizes each and every individual whole body, is shown to consist of numerous parts—chromosomal sex, anatomical sex, reproductive sex, morphological sex—that can, and do, form a variety of viable bodily aggregations that number far more than two. The “wholeness” of the body and “sameness” of its sex are themselves revealed to be socially constructed.<sup>28</sup>

Likewise, the contrary subjective identities of transsexuals, the sartorial practices of transvestites, and the gender inversion of butches and queens all work to confound simplistic notions of material determinism, and mirror-style representational practices, in relation to questions of gender. Sex, it turns out, is not the foundation of gender in the same way that an apple is the foundation of a reflection of red fruit in the mirror; “sex” is a mash-up, a story we mix about *how* the body means, which parts matter most, and how they register in our consciousness or field of vision. “Sex” is purpose-built to serve *as* a foundation, and occupies a space excavated for it by an epistemological construction project.<sup>29</sup>

Mirror-style representation encodes a moral drama. It can be true or false, accurate or error-filled. Deliberate misrepresentation of the relationship between representation/gender and referent/sex is fraught with consequence—sometimes with ostensibly comic consequences, as is the case with the innumerable cross-dressing farces that litter the landscape of pop culture, and sometimes with far more tragic results. Transgender people who problematize the assumed correlation of a particular biological sex with a particular social gender are often considered to make false representations of an underlying material truth, through the willful distortion of surface appearance. Their gender presentation is seen as a lie rather than as an expression of a deep, essential truth; they are “bad” by definition.<sup>30</sup>

For the supposed epistemological sin of perpetrating falsehoods that ensnare innocent and unsuspecting others, the typically gendered must sometimes to pay with their lives. Hillary Swank won an Academy Award in 1999 for portraying Brandon, a murdered transgender youth whose story, told in the true-crime drama *Boys Don't Cry*, has become emblematic of the chronic undercurrent in

our society of deadly anti-transgender violence.<sup>31</sup> Those who commit violence against transgender people routinely seek to excuse their own behavior by claiming they have been unjustly deceived by a mismatch between the other's gender and genitals.<sup>32</sup> State and society do similar violence to transgender people by using genital status, rather than public gender or subjective gender identity, as the fundamental criterion for determining how they will place individuals in prisons, residential substance abuse treatment program, rape crisis centers, or homeless shelters. One important task of transgender studies is to articulate and disseminate new epistemological frameworks, and new representational practices, within which variations in the sex/gender relationship can be understood as morally neutral and representationally true, and through which anti-transgender violence can be linked to other systemic forms of violence such as poverty and racism. This intellectual work is intimately connected to, and deeply motivated by, sociopolitical efforts to stem the tide of anti-transgender violence, and to save transgender lives.

### PERFORMATIVITY

The model of linguistic "performativity," whose general applicability to the field of gender has been popularized most notably by the work of Judith Butler, has been tremendously influential within transgender studies precisely because it offers a non- or postreferential epistemological framework that can be useful for promoting transgender social justice agendas.<sup>33</sup> The notion of performativity, which is derived from speech act theory and owes an intellectual debt to the philosophical/linguistic work of J. L. Austin in *How to Do Things With Words*, is sometimes confused with the notion of performance, but this is something else entirely.<sup>34</sup> Butler in particular, especially in her early work in *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies That Matter*, has been criticized in some transgender scholarship and community discourse for suggesting that gender is a "mere" performance, on the model of drag, and therefore somehow not "real."<sup>35</sup> She is criticized, somewhat misguidedly, for supposedly believing that gender can be changed or rescripted at will, put on or taken off like a costume, according to one's pleasure or whim. At stake in these critical engagements is the self-understanding of many transgender people, who consider their sense of gendered self *not* to be subject to their instrumental will, not divestible, not a form of play. Rather, they see their gendered sense of self as ontologically inescapable and inalienable—and to suggest otherwise to them is to risk a profound misrecognition of their personhood, of their specific mode of being.

Speech act theory holds that language is not *just*, as the structuralists would have it, an abstract system of negative differences; rather, language is always accomplished by and through particular *speech acts*, the intent of which is communicative. Speech is social. It necessarily involves specific speakers and audiences, and can never be entirely divorced from extralinguistic contexts. A performative is one type of speech act. In contrast to a constative speech act—which involves the transmission of information about a condition or state of affairs, with which its correspondence is demonstrably true or false (e.g., "The apple is red.")—a performative "constates" nothing. It is a form of utterance that does not describe or report, and thus cannot be true or false. It is, or is part of, the doing of the action itself. Examples of performative speech acts would include vowing ("I do."), marrying ("I now pronounce you man and wife."), or being bar mitzvahed ("Today I am a man."). To say that gender is a performative act is to say that it does not need a material referent to be meaningful, is directed at others in an attempt to communicate, is not subject to falsification or verification, and is accomplished by "doing" something rather than "being" something. A woman, performatively speaking, is one who says she is—and who then does what woman means. The biologically sexed body guarantees nothing; it is necessarily there, a ground for the act of speaking, but it has no deterministic relationship to performative gender.

To conceptualize struggles. For Jear all acts of commur Jousting may be pl another, as well as are the smallest ag with its own partic from a game of ch act, is useful for u studies in the 1990

Each language referent—each ass act, "The apple is information; an ac to the utterance. I not, in this game, different set of rul is immediately ple the speaker is autl of performative ut person addresses i social and politica

The emergence political activism, in concert to creat expected language Previously, people games of other ser asylum keeper, the of feminist and ga state. The psychotl proval. Only rarely autobiographies, o people did not cari community-based to acknowledge th took part in these

Then somethin was. Causality is a pandemic virus ch existing word was a cultural landscap the moment to pr our way into speak into discourse. Tra

To conceptualize gender as a performative act raises a larger question about social and political struggles. For Jean-Francois Lyotard, writing in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, all acts of communication are inscribed within the field of *agonistics* (from the Greek *agon*, "to joust"). Jousting may be play, or it may be combat, but it necessarily involves taking up positions relative to another, as well as some form of exchange, and some rules of engagement. Speech acts, in this model, are the smallest agonistic units, and they take place within different types of "language games," each with its own particular rules of enunciation, each as different from one another as a game of poker is from a game of chess.<sup>36</sup> The model of the "language game," like the model of the performative speech act, is useful for understanding in a formal way what was at stake in the emergence of transgender studies in the 1990s.

Each language game has specific players, or "posts"—for example, a sender, an addressee, and a referent—each assigned a part according to the type of speech act taking place. The constative speech act, "The apple is red," for example, is uttered by a sender who assumes a position of knowing the information; an addressee receives the utterance and is in a position to give or withhold agreement to the utterance. The referent—that about which the utterance pertains (in this case, the apple)—is not, in this game, in a position to make statements about itself. A performative utterance plays by a different set of rules. It is "not subject to discussion or verification on the part of the addressee, who is immediately placed within the new context created by the utterance."<sup>37</sup> Provided, of course, that the speaker is authorized, through a variety of extralinguistic circumstances, to occupy the position of performative utterer. The "I do" of the marriage vow has no performative force unless the right person addresses it to the proper other. Who gets to say "I do" to whom is completely determined by social and political forces (and as such it is subject to change over time).

The emergence of transgender studies in the 1990s was one such moment of change, when socio-political activism, coupled with broad and seemingly unrelated shifts in material conditions, worked in concert to create the possibility of new performative utterances, unprecedented things to say, unexpected language games, and a heteroglossic outpouring of gender positions from which to speak. Previously, people who occupied transgender positions were compelled to be referents in the language games of other senders and addressees—they were the object of medical knowledge delivered to the asylum keeper, the subject of police reports presented to the judge; they were the dirty little outcasts of feminist and gay liberation discourses whose speakers clamored for the affections of the liberal state. The psychotherapist whispered of them into the surgeon's ear, while the lawyer nodded in approval. Only rarely did we speak to others on our own behalf—in the pages of infrequently published autobiographies, or from the shadows of the freak show tents. This is not to suggest that transgender people did not carry on lively exchanges among themselves; indeed, there is a vast body of transgender community-based critical and cultural work that is scarcely visible to the broader society. It is rather to acknowledge that few other than transgender people themselves, and their self-appointed minders, took part in these marginalized conversations.

Then something happened in the early 1990s, though it's hard to say exactly what that something was. Causality is always a fraught concept. A calendar started rolling over; a world order collapsed; a pandemic virus changed the way we thought about sexuality and identity and the public sphere; an existing word was invested with new meaning to mobilize a movement, and it all crashed together on a cultural landscape fractured by an epistemic rift. Amidst the wreckage, transgender people seized the moment to produce knowledge of transgender phenomena in a postmodern fashion. We fought our way into speaking positions, claimed our voice with a vengeance, said who we were, and erupted into discourse. Transgender studies is one record of the conversation that ensued.

### (DE)SUBJUGATED KNOWLEDGES

A useful terminological distinction can be made between “the study of transgender phenomena” and “transgender studies” that neatly captures the rupture between modern and postmodern epistemic contexts for understanding transgender phenomena, the different types of language games that pertain to each context, and the different critical practices that characterize each project.<sup>38</sup> The “study of transgender phenomena,” as noted below, is a long-standing, on-going project in cultures of European origin. Transgender studies, on the other hand, is the relatively new critical project that has taken shape in the past decade or so. It is intimately related to emergent “postmodern conditions” for the production of knowledge, and is as innovative methodologically as it is epistemologically.

Transgender studies considers the embodied experience of the speaking subject, who claims constative knowledge of the referent topic, to be a proper—indeed essential—component of the analysis of transgender phenomena; experiential knowledge is as legitimate as other, supposedly more “objective” forms of knowledge, and is in fact necessary for understanding the political dynamics of the situation being analyzed. This is not the same as claiming that subjective knowledge of “being transgender” is somehow more valuable than knowledge of transgender phenomena gained from a position of exteriority, but is rather an assertion that no voice in the dialog should have the privilege of masking the particularities and specificities of its own speaking position, through which it may claim a false universality or authority.

This critical attention to questions of embodiment and positionality aligns transgender studies with a growing body of interdisciplinary academic research in the humanities and social sciences. Transgender studies helps demonstrate the extent to which *soma*, the body as a culturally intelligible construct, and *techne*, the techniques in and through which bodies are transformed and positioned, are in fact inextricably interpenetrated. It helps correct an all-too-common critical failure to recognize “the body” not as one (already constituted) object of knowledge among others, but rather as the contingent ground of all our knowledge, and of all our knowing. By addressing how researchers often fail to appreciate the ways in which their own contingent knowledges and practices impact on the formation and transformation of the bodies of others, transgender studies makes a valuable contribution towards analyzing and interpreting the unique situation of embodied human consciousness.<sup>39</sup>

Methodologically, transgender studies exemplifies what Michel Foucault once called “the insurrection of subjugated knowledges.” By “subjugated knowledges,” Foucault meant two different types of knowledge. First, he meant “historical contents that have been masked or buried in functional coherences or formal systemizations.” He elaborated:

To put this in concrete terms, it was certainly not a semiology of life in the asylum or a sociology of delinquency that made an effective critique of the asylum or the prison possible; it was really the appearance of historical contents. Quite simply because historical contents alone allow us to see the dividing lines and confrontations and struggles that functional arrangements or systematic organizations are designed to mask. Subjugated knowledges are then blocks of historical knowledge that were present in the functional and systematic ensembles, but which were masked, and the critique was able to reveal their existence by using the tools of scholarship.

Transgender studies draws upon just this sort historical content—descriptive materials buried in ethnographies of non-European gender systems, the transcripts of legal proceedings hidden in some obscure publication of case law, or the files of psychiatric patients—which must be excavated from the archives with the traditional tools of scholarship, and recontextualized within current academic debates. Recovering this kind of knowledge, and knowing where to look in the first place, requires,

in Foucault’s words, tioners to make use “transgender studies: the field’s relationship.

Foucault’s other involvement, is also ce whole series of know elaborated knowled below the required l gender people, whet their relationships to may be articulated f ethical fashion. In ei local knowledges,” lil lie fallow, or even ke

While it might at disparate forms of k have been disqualifi cal coupling that, fo and delegitimated “k structurations of pov “the raw memory of forms of knowledge a critical intervention.

### RENARRATION

Foucault’s vast philo what we would now c Greek and Roman ar and other forms of “ of normalization” wh robust.<sup>41</sup> Transgende: “transgender effects,” and reverse, and the gender normativity ir many of us thought v

Since at least the i have taunted the soc endocrinology, and o bibliography specifica and continues to grov the great Victorian ta Westphal, who wrote formation,” Magnus I we get to Freud, his c

in Foucault's words, "meticulous, precise, technical expertise." It is the technical ability of its practitioners to make use of these scholarly tools, and to be conversant in academic discourse, that makes "transgender studies" a part of academe, and not just part of a "transgender community"—though the field's relationship to that community is crucial for its intellectual vitality.

Foucault's other kind of "subjugated knowledge," which speaks to the politics of community involvement, is also central to the methodology of transgender studies. What Foucault describes as "a whole series of knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges, naïve knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity," is precisely the kind of knowledge that transgender people, whether academically trained or not, have of their own embodied experience, and of their relationships to the discourses and institutions that act upon and through them. Such knowledge may be articulated from direct experience, or it may be witnessed and represented by others in an ethical fashion. In either case, Foucault contends, the reappearance "from below" of "these singular local knowledges," like the knowledge of the psychiatrized or the delinquent, which have been "left to lie fallow, or even kept at the margins," is absolutely essential to contemporary critical inquiry.

While it might at first seem paradoxical to yoke together in a single term two such seemingly disparate forms of knowledge—"the specialized domain of scholarship" and "the knowledges that have been disqualified by the hierarchies of erudition and science"—it is precisely this genealogical coupling that, for Foucault, gives discursive critique its essential vigor. Both erudite scholarship and delegitimated "knowing" recapture, for use in the present, a historical knowledge of particular structurings of power. One offers "a meticulous rediscovery of struggles," while the other preserves "the raw memory of fights."<sup>40</sup> Transgender studies, through desubjugating previously marginalized forms of knowledge about gendered subjectivity and sexed embodiment, promises just such a radical critical intervention.

### RENARRATION

Foucault's vast philosophical-historical research project helps support the claim that attending to what we would now call transgender phenomena has been a preoccupation of Western culture since Greek and Roman antiquity. The regulation of homosexuality, hermaphroditism, gender inversion, and other forms of "social monstrosity" have figured prominently in the development of "regimes of normalization" whose latter-day descendents in the modern period remain decidedly active and robust.<sup>41</sup> Transgender studies renarrates this considerable intellectual heritage. It calls attention to "transgender effects," those deconstructive moments when foreground and background seem to flip and reverse, and the spectacle of an unexpected gender phenomena illuminates the production of gender normativity in a startling new way. In doing so, the field begins to tell new stories about things many of us thought we already knew.

Since at least the nineteenth century in Europe and the United States, transgender phenomena have taunted the social order in ways that have spurred the development of sexology, psychiatry, endocrinology, and other medical-scientific fields involved in social regulatory practices. The clinical bibliography specifically related to transgender phenomena runs to many thousands of publications, and continues to grow even now, but it can be traced back to figures like Richard von Krafft-Ebbing, the great Victorian taxonomist of social deviance. Early entries in this bibliography include Karl von Westphal, who wrote of "contrary sexual feelings" as well as Max Marcuse's "drive for sexual transformation," Magnus Hirschfeld's "sexual intermediaries," and Havelock Ellis's "eonists." By the time we get to Freud, his disciples, and his detractors in the early twentieth century, we are on familiar

ground with contemporary concepts in psychology and psychiatry.<sup>42</sup> By the middle of the last century, a specialized medical literature on “gender dysphoria” coalesced around the work of Harry Benjamin and his colleagues Robert Stoller, Richard Green, and John Money, which culminated in 1980 in the legitimation of a newly-defined clinical entity, “gender identity disorder,” as an official psychopathology recognized by the American Psychiatric Association.<sup>43</sup> Transgender studies is now in a position to treat this immense body of clinical work as its archive.

Parallel to the clinical archive is an immense, centuries-old ethnography, equally ripe for empirical research, that documents European perspectives on cultures encountered around the world through exploration, trade, conquest, and colonization. This literature, along with its explication within the social science disciplines, demonstrates a perpetual European fascination—and more than a little Eurocentric unease—with the many ways that relationships between bodily sex, subjective gender identity, social gender roles, sexual behaviors, and kinship status have been configured in different times and places.<sup>44</sup> The mysterious *mujerados* and *morphodites* who populate the earliest accounts of European exploitation of the America continents are not *simply* (or perhaps even actually) vanished or suppressed members of “third genders” eradicated by genocidal European practices; they are, just as importantly, categories of deviant personhood constructed by a European imaginary and invested with the magical power to condense and contain, and thereby delimit, a more systemic European failure to grasp a radical cultural otherness in its totality.<sup>45</sup> For half a millennium now, Eurocentric culture has been treated to a parade of gender exotics, culled from native cultures around the world: India *hijra*, Polynesian *mahu*, Thai *kathoey*, Brazilian *travesti*, Arabian *xanith*, Native American *berdache*—and on and on. “Transgenders,” at home and abroad, are the latest specimens added to the menagerie.

The conflation of many types of gender variance into the single shorthand term “transgender,” particularly when this collapse into a single genre of personhood crosses the boundaries that divide the West from the rest of the world, holds both peril and promise. It is far too easy to assimilate non-Western configurations of personhood into Western constructs of sexuality and gender, in a manner that recapitulates the power structures of colonialism. “Transgender” is, without a doubt, a category of First World origin that is currently being exported for Third World consumption. Recently, however, engagements between a “transgender theory” that circulates globally with Eurocentric privilege, and various non-European, colonized, and diasporic communities whose members configure gender in ways that are marginalized within Eurocentric contexts, have begun to produce entirely new genres of analysis. Such encounters mark the geo-spatial, discursive, and cultural boundaries of transgender studies, as that field has been developed within Anglophone America and Europe, but also point toward the field’s untapped potential.<sup>46</sup>

In developing our criteria for inclusion in this reader, Stephen Whittle and I decided to highlight some important earlier works in scientific sexology and feminism, and then to focus on works in English that explicitly engage with the term “transgender” (whether positively or negatively). We offer key texts drawn from the “queer gender” debates, work that highlights the recent attention to female-bodied masculinity, work that explores the formation of a sense of self as well as the “border wars” of gender identity politics, and work that explores ethics, morality, and embodiment. We resisted attempting an “around the world in eighty genders” global survey of gender-diverse practices and identities. This was done in part because we felt we could not do justice to the global scope of transgender phenomena, and in part because a number of such anthologies attempting precisely this already exist.<sup>47</sup> One unfortunate consequence of our decision was the exclusion of many important bodies of work done with a regional focus, such as Don Kulick’s and Annick Prieur’s studies of male-bodied gender diversity in Mexico City and Brazil, Mauro Cabral’s intensely poetic interdisciplinary work in Argentina, and a great deal of work on Southeast Asian genders.<sup>48</sup> We concentrated instead on work that explores

how “transgend  
dissemination c

Even given o  
sity of work inc  
whiteness of pr  
many forms of d  
environment of  
across different  
that the analytic  
studies—valuab  
color, and is th  
ethnicity, and ti  
productively an

In conclusio  
culture. They ar  
of visibility and  
that create norm  
A transgender s  
within gender, v  
powerful critica

## NOTES

1. Lesbian and  
York, Octob
2. Trans Politic  
University o
3. *Screaming Q*
4. On the gene  
sexualism,” S  
clinics to the  
S. Vance, ed.
5. David Valen  
Conceptions
6. Leslie Feinb
7. Andrew Mat  
Culture, http
8. Magnus Hir  
1910; trans.  
1966).
9. Sandy Stone  
Ambiguity, e
10. Janice Raym
11. Nancy Jean I  
Dec 1993): 4
12. On the quee  
*National Les*
13. Kate Bornst
14. Judith Butle  
*History of Se*  
1978).
15. Julia Epstei  
1991).
16. Susan Stryke  
*GLQ: A Jour*

how “transgender” has circulated globally, and on how race, class, and location have complicated the dissemination of that term.

Even given our editorial choices, which admittedly limited the range of cultural and ethnic diversity of work included in this reader, we were struck by the overwhelming (and generally unmarked) whiteness of practitioners in the academic field of transgender studies. This is due, no doubt, to the many forms of discrimination that keep many people of color from working in the relatively privileged environment of academe, but also to the uneven distribution and reception of the term “transgender” across different racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic communities. We both feel, however, that the analytical framework for understanding gender diversity that has emerged from transgender studies—valuable though it is—is impoverished by the relative lack of contributions from people of color, and is therefore ultimately inadequate for representing the complex interplay between race, ethnicity, and transgender phenomena. That discussion is one that we hope to see developed more productively and more extensively in the years ahead.

In conclusion, we simply note that transgender phenomena haunt the entire project of European culture. They are simultaneously everywhere and elsewhere. Their multiple and contradictory statuses of visibility and erasure, of presence and absence, are intimately related to the operations of social power that create norms, impart consequence to difference, and construct the space of a dominant culture. A transgender studies more attuned to differences of race, location and class, as well as to differences within gender, would provide a better view into the making of this world we all inhabit, and enable a powerful critical rereading of contemporary (post)modernity in all its complexity.

#### NOTES

1. Lesbian and Gay History Conference, Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, Graduate School, City University of New York, October 6–7, 1995; videotape documentation in author's possession.
2. Trans Politics, Social Change, and Justice Conference, Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, Graduate School, City University of New York, May 6–7, 2005.
3. *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria*, Dir. Victor Silverman and Susan Stryker, USA, 2005.
4. On the general shift in attention to transgender sociocultural formations, see Myra J. Hird, “For a Sociology of Transsexualism,” *Sociology* 36(3): 577–595. For a framework for understanding the movement of transgender people from the clinics to the street, see Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality,” in Carole S. Vance, ed., *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, 267–319 (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984).
5. David Valentine. “‘I know what I am’: The Category ‘Transgender’ in the Construction of Contemporary U. S. American Conceptions of Gender and Sexuality.” Ph.D. Dissertation, Anthropology Department, New York University, 2000.
6. Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come* (New York: World View Forum, 1992).
7. Andrew Matzner “Prince, Virginia Charles,” *GLBTQ: An Encyclopedia of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Culture*, [http://www.glbtq.com/social-sciences/prince\\_vc.html](http://www.glbtq.com/social-sciences/prince_vc.html)
8. Magnus Hirschfeld, *Transvestites: The Erotic Drive to Cross-Dress* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1991; orig. pub. Berlin, 1910; trans. Michael A. Lombardi-Nash); Harry Benjamin, *The Transsexual Phenomenon* (New York: Julian Press, 1966).
9. Sandy Stone, “The ‘Empire’ Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto,” in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub, 280–304 (New York: Routledge, 1991).
10. Janice Raymond, *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male* (Boston: Beacon, 1979).
11. Nancy Jean Burkholder, “Michigan Women's Music Festival,” *Transisters: The Journal of Transsexual Feminism* 2 (Nov/Dec 1993): 4.
12. On the queer political milieu in which transgender activism emerged, see the Queer Nation special issue of *OUT/LOOK: National Lesbian and Gay Quarterly* 11 (Winter 1991).
13. Kate Bornstein, *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us*. (New York: Routledge, 1994).
14. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990; Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1, An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Reprint, 1990; orig. English trans. pub. Random House, 1978).
15. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub, *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
16. Susan Stryker, “My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1:3 (1994): 237–254.

17. Thanks to Stephen Whittle for substantive contributions to my understanding of the activist roots of UK-based transgender studies; see Stephen Whittle, "Trans-Links of Friendships, the Bedroom and Politics: 1970's Trans-Atlantic Influences on Current Transgender Politics in the UK," Future of the Queer Past Conference, University of Chicago, 2000.
18. Susan Stryker, "The 'Transgender Issue: An Introduction,'" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 4:2 (1998): 145-158; Robin Wilson, "Transgender Scholars Defy Convention, Seeking to Be Seen and Heard in Academe," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 6, 1998: A10-A12.
19. David Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Toward a Gay Hagiography* (New York: Oxford, 1996).
20. No definitive text of Truth's 1851 speech is extant; see Carleton Mabee, *Sojourner Truth: Slave, Prophet, Legend* (New York: New York University Press, 1993).
21. See Cressida J. Heyes, "Feminist Solidarity after Queer Theory: The Case of Transgender," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28 (2003), 1093-1120; and "Reading Transgender, Rethinking Women's Studies" *NWSA Journal* 12:2 (Summer 2000): 170-180.
22. On third terms and the disruption of binaries, see Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1992.)
23. See, for example, Jordy Jones "Gender Without Genitals: Hedwig's Six Inches" *Other: the magazine for people who defy categories* 1:1 (2003) 44-46; George Mott, "The Vanishing Point Of The Sexual Subject: *The Closet, Hedwig And The Angry Inch, L.I.E., The Sixth Sense, The Others, Y Tu Mamá También, The Psychoanalytic Review*, 91:4 (August 2004): 607-614.
24. Felski, Rita. "Fin de siècle, Fin de sexe: Transsexuality, Postmodernism, and the Death of History," *New Literary History* 27:2 (Spring 1996), 337-349.
25. Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Judith Halberstam and Ira Livingston, eds. *Posthuman Bodies*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).
26. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 1992).
27. On the "commonsensical" relationship between gender and body, see the discussion of "the natural attitude" in Harold Garfinkel, "Passing and the Managed Achievement of Sex Status in an 'Intersexed' Person," in *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall, 1967), 116-185.
28. On intersex issues, see Alice Domurat Dreger, *Hermaphrodites and the Medical Invention of Sex* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); and Suzanne J. Kessler, *Lessons From the Intersexed* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998).
29. For a range of feminist poststructuralist, antifoundationalist critiques of the sex/gender relationship, with particular reference to the question of postmodernity, see Judith Butler and Joan Scott, eds., *Feminists Theorize the Political* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
30. Raymond, *Transsexual Empire*, offers the classic account of "bad transsexuals," but see also Dwight Billings and Thomas Urban, "The Socio-Medical Construction of Transsexualism: An Interpretation and Critique," *Social Problems* 29 (1981): 266-282.
31. *Boys Don't Cry*, directed by Kimberley Pierce, USA 1999.
32. Tarryn Witten and A. Evan Eyley, "Hate Crimes and Violence Against the Transgendered," *Peace Review*, 11:3 (1999): 461-468.
33. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble; Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* (New York: Routledge, 1993), and "Doing Justice to Someone: Sex Reassignment and Allegories of Transsexuality," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 7:4 (2001): 621-636.
34. J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, ed. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa (Cambridge, MA Harvard University Press, 1962).
35. See, for example, Jay Prosser's extended discussion of Butler *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), or Henry Rubin's "Phenomenology as Method in Trans Studies." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 4:2 (1998): 263-281.
36. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 89 n25, n34.
37. Lyotard, *Postmodern*, p. 9.
38. A similar distinction is proposed between positivist approaches to "studying transsexuality" and "transgender studies" in Katrina Roen, "Constructing Transsexuality: Discursive Manoeuvres through Psycho-Medical, Transgender, and Queer Texts," Ph.D. thesis, University of Canterbury, New Zealand, 1998, p. 42.
39. The concept was "Somatechnics" was formulated in conversation with Nikki Sullivan, Joseph Pugliese, and other members of the Department of Critical and Cultural Studies, Macquarie University; see <http://www.ccs.mq.edu.au/somatechnics>.
40. Foucault, Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France, 1975-76* (New York: Picador, 2003), 7-8.
41. Michel Foucault, *Abnormal* (New York: Picador, 2003), 1-29.
42. For a useful summary, see Jay Prosser, "Transsexuals and the Transsexologists: Inversion and the Emergence of Transsexual Subjectivity," in *Sexology in Culture: Labeling Bodies and Desires*, ed. Lucy Bland and Laura Doan (Oxford: Polity Press, 1998), 116-132; see also Richard Green and John Money, eds., *Transsexualism and Sex Reassignment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969).



43. *Diagnostic And Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association III* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Publishers, 1980).
44. On Eurocentric unease with global queerness, see the various articles in Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé and Martin Manalansan, IV, eds., *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism* (New York: New York University, 2002).
45. Will Roscoe, "Was We'wha a Homosexual?: Native American Survivance and the Two-Spirit Tradition." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 2:3 (1995): 193-235;
46. Lynn Marie Morgan and Evan B. Towle "Romancing the Transgender Native: Rethinking the Use of the 'Third Gender' Concept" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8:4 (2002): 469-497; Helen Hok-Sze Leung, "Unsung Heroes: Reading Transgender Subjectivities in Hong Kong Action Cinema," in *Masculinities and Hong Kong Cinema*, eds. Laikwan Pang and Day Wong (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), 81-98; Susan Stryker, "Transgender Studies: Queer Theory's Evil Twin," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 10:2 (Spring, 2004), 212-215.
47. Evelyn Blackwood, and Saskia Wieringa, eds., *Female Desires: Same-sex Relations and Transgender Practices Across Dimorphism in Culture and History* (New York: Zone Books, 1994); Gilbert Herdt, ed., *Third Sex, Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Cultures: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 1996).
48. Don Kulick, *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Mark Johnson, *Beauty and Power: Transgendering and Cultural Transformation in the Southern Philippines* (Oxford: Berg, 1997); Annick Prieur, *Mama's House, Mexico City: On Transvestites, Queens, and Machos* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).