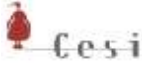


TRANSGRESSING GENDER:

**TWO IS NOT ENOUGH
FOR GENDER (E)QUALITY**

The Conference Collection



Publisher: CESI – Center for Education,
Counselling, and Research
Email: cesi@zamir.net
Web: www.cesi.hr



Co-publisher: Women's Room – Women's
Center for Sexuality and the Prevention,
Research, and Combating of Sexual Violence
Email: zenska.soba@zamir.net
Web: www.zenskasoba.org

Editors: Amir Hodžić and Jelena Poštić

Translation: Kristina Grgić, Sandra Antulov, Agnieszka Weseli

Copyediting: Katie McKay Bryson, Kara Lynch, Anna D. Prow,
Laura Sawyer, Hank Sichley, Jaime Becker, Tim Clansy

Graphic design and layout: Mladen Katanić

Printing: Prius d.o.o.
www.prius.hr

Circulation: 500

CIP - Katalogizacija u publikaciji
Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica - Zagreb

UDK 305(082)

KONFERENCIJA Transgresija roda:
spolna/rodna ravnopravnost znaci vise od
binarnosti (2005 ; Zagreb)
Transgressing gender: two is not enough
for gender (e)quality : the conference
collection / <editors Amir Hodzic and
Jelena Postic ; translation Kristina Grgic
... et al.>. - Zagreb : CESI - Center for
Education, Counseling and Research :
Women's Room - Center for Sexuality and
Prevention, Research and Combating Sexual
Violence, 2006.

"The Transgressing Gender Conference: Two
is not enough for gender (e)quality was
held from 7th - 9th October 2005 in
Zagreb" --> predgovor. - Bibliografija uz
pojedine radove.

ISBN 953-7203-01-8 (CESI)

I. Transrodnost -- Interdisciplinarni
pristup -- Zbornik II. Ravnopravnost
spolova -- Zbornik III. Rodni identitet --
Zbornik IV. Spolni identitet -- Zbornik V.
Ravnopravnost rodova -- Zbornik

460203108

Publishing of this collection was supported by The Office for the Equality of Sexes of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, HIVOS / COC Netherlands, and the Australian Embassy Zagreb.



Publishing of this publication was made possible by the financial support provided by The National Foundation for Civil Society Development in accordance with contract number 421-02/04-PP-6/24-1. Opinions stated in this publication are authors' opinions and do not necessarily represent opinions of The National Foundation for Civil Society Development. Nacionalna zaklada za razvoj civilnoga društva, Zagreb, Kušlanova 27, <http://zaklada.civilnodrustvo.hr>



TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Reader's Guide</u>	7
------------------------------------	---

Experiences and Practices

(Field) Notes on Kinging – Practices of Resistance	10
Birgit Dorle Binder Benda	

'On the Border' – Sadomasochism, Gender-fuck and the Inter-Relationship with No Border Politics	16
Jet Moon and Alex Woodland	

<i>Ministrastvo Unutarnjih Spolova:</i> Negotiating Transition in a Foreign Language	35
Kate Symons	

If a Whore Can't be Raped, Can an Angel?: Using Poetry and Art to Reach the Silent Survivors of Sexual Assault	40
Marta Sanchez	

Strategies against Transphobia	46
Vlatka Frketić and Persson B. Baumgartinger	

Social Contexts

Cutting Both Ways: TransSurgery and the Discursive Currency of the Cosmetic	54
Anne Koch-Rein	

Transgenderism Now: Comparative Female Masculinities	66
Judith Halberstam	

Masculinity in Crisis, Is It Really So?	73
Katarzyna Wojnicka and Maria Adamczyk	

The Gender of Prison: the Prison of Gender	83
Kateřina Nedbálková	

«It Was Simply Human ...»: Gender Subversion in Children's Performance	100
Sean Fredric Edgecomb	

**Biology vs. Biologism –
On the Current Use of Sex in Biology117**
Simon Gunkel

Theoretical Inquiries

Where Men are Empty Overcoats127
Eszter Timar

**Cyborgs as (Post-Modern) Centaurs:
Will and Desire to (become) Other132**
Igor Marković

**Female Homosexuality, Patriarchy,
and Nationalist Communities145**
Irene Dioli

**Gender and the Nemesis of Nature:
On Magnus Hirschfeld's Deconstruction
of the Sexual Binary and the Concept
of «Sexual Human Rights»153**
J. Edgar Bauer

**Always Between the Two:
The Playful Dialectics Between / With
the Masculine and the Feminine172**
Jozef Miskolci

**Reflections on Contemporary
Philosophical Challenges to Human Rights186**
Nora Hangel

Language Discourse

**General Rules for Acquiring
a Gender Category in Early Childhood195**
Krasimira Ilievska

Gender in Finnish Language Code and Use208
Liisa Tainio

**On the Language Transgression
of the Sex / Gender Binary and Linguistics:
A Very Brief Overview226**
Mislava Bertoša

**Gender Perspective in Public
and Official Communication:
Sociolinguistic, Legal, and Political Aspects239**
Zrinjka Glovacki Bernardi

Media Presentations

**Beautiful Perverts and
the Brave World of Nan Goldin243**
Agnieszka Klos

**Intersexuality – In the 'I' of the Norm?:
Queer Field Notes from Eugenides' Middlesex251**
Anne Koch-Rein

**Haute Tension: Lesbian Audience
and the Slasher Film262**
Iva Radat

GenderFuck – a film / video program281
Kara Lynch

**«*Ja nisam prava žena*»: Gender and Sexuality
in Two Memoirs from Beograd290**
Kevin Moss

**Performance, Performativity, and Gender Identity
Subversion in Hedwig and the Angry Inch309**
Papagena Robbins

**Intersexuality in American
Feminist Science Fiction325**
Tea Hvala

Gender (B)ender Program331
Carla Ferreri and Sanda Brumen

Reader's Guide

The Transgressing Gender Conference: Two is not enough for gender (e)quality was held from 7th – 9th October 2005 in Zagreb. Through organizing this conference, we wanted to open academic and activist discussions about the interconnectedness of the key issues of feminism, gender theories and transgenderism; highlight the interrelatedness of the social dimensions of patriarchy, gender oppression, heterosexism, violence and transphobia, and develop efficient mechanisms for opposing discrimination based on gender stereotypes. We wanted to start a public debate around re-questioning and clarifying existing gender definitions, as well as the analysis of human rights discourse of gender expression, gender ambiguity and gender fluidity.

As the first of its type in Central and South-Eastern Europe, the main goal of the conference was to enable and support strategic alliances and cooperation between different social groups actively engaged in the issues of gender freedom, gender equality and promotion and protection of gender rights by way of overlapping feminist, gender and transgender theoretical and political orientations. Moreover, with this conference we wanted to create a space for education about social concepts and meanings of gender and gender equality.

The conference was organized as a successful combination of international and regional exchange of political and practical experiences, critical questioning, theoretical challenges and research on subject areas such as: body, sex, gender, intersexuality, patriarchy, identities and practices, activism, social communities, media, heterosexism, transphobia and violence. One hundred eighty four participants from 22 countries (Europe, USA and Asia) took part in the conference.

This Collection contains most of the papers and workshops presented at the conference, as well as an outline of the Gender (B)ender art and culture program. The chapter entitled Experiences and Practices contains articulations addressing non-normative practices and experiences from the first person ("I") point of view. One text presents kinking as a practice of resistance. Another text explores the connection between sexual practices of sado-masochism and wider political issues, particularly the dominant system of state borders and the policing of borders of gender identities. A third describes the experience of learning and coping with the 'relentlessly' gendered Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian language during transition. We also have included two workshop descriptions in this chapter: one reflects on the stereotypes connected with sexual violence and uses art and poetry to end the victims' silence; and the other develops empowering, feminist strategies against transphobic violence.



Chapter Social Contexts is a collection of texts exploring the issues of sex, gender and transgenderism within and in relation to different socio-cultural areas. More precisely, individual texts deal with issues such as the depathologization of transSurgery and other forms of bodily modifications; understanding gender variance in different social and cultural contexts, as exemplified, for example, by female masculinities. Other themes include the construction of metrosexuality and machismo and presentations of masculinity in Poland; expressions of gendered social structure and gender roles in the prison subculture in the Czech Republic; subversive gender and racial practices in children's theatre performances in the US in the early 20th century; and the existing definitions and uses of the term 'sex' in biology.

The chapter Theoretical Inquiries contains conference articulations discussing particular topics mostly through critical reflection on the relevant theories, but also in relation to contemporary discourse around sex and gender equality. The texts deal with issues such as the discourse of citizenship and rights and the multiple connections between the concepts of legitimacy, public (in)visibility and the techniques of resistance; similarities between cyborgs and centaurs on the level of social construction and theoretical models; the subversive potential of female homosexuality as a threat to hierarchical structures of patriarchal and nationalistic communities; the deconstruction of the sexual binary and Magnus Hirschfeld's concept of «sexual human rights»; exposing the psychic roots of human inclination to oppress the Other by using the psycholinguistic theory of Julia Kristeva; and contemporary philosophical challenges to human rights, at individual, group and supra-state levels.

The chapter Language Discourse contains most of the articulations presented at the conference round table Language Transgression of the Binary: Articulating one's own voice and resisting dominant discourse. Individual texts deal with the following issues: general rules for acquiring a gender category in early childhood in Slavic languages; gender in Finnish language code and use; transgressing the sex / gender binarism and linguistics; and gender perspective in public and official communication in the Republic of Croatia.

The Media Presentations chapter is focused on the research of the politics of sex / gender identities and sexuality in popular culture (i.e. film, literature and photography). This chapter contains presentations of Nan Goldin's photographs, the novel Middlesex, the films Haute Tension and Hedwig and the Angry Itch, and the film / video program GenderFuck, which was specially prepared for the conference. Other presentations in this chapter include the one about the memoirs Terezin sin and Staklenac, as well as discussion about the concept of

intersexuality in American feminist science fiction.

The Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian version of the Collection uses gender transgressive forms of nouns, pronouns and adjectives and gendered verb forms (apart from several texts that originally were written in Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian and some Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian translations authorized by the authors). We introduced these language forms in order to emphasize the need to remove rigid sex and gender divisions built into our everyday language use. In Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian language the sign / is used in 'two - gender' writing forms to divide suffixes that refer to a particular sex / gender. By removing the sign / as a marker of sex and gender difference we work to raise awareness about the sex and gender system as a spectrum and contribute to the understanding of human rights that allow for freedom of expression and self-definition of every individual within the context of sex and gender.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank once again all conference participants and volunteers for their support and help, as well as our partner organizations on the project, Organization Q from Sarajevo and the Cultural centre DEVE from Belgrade. Furthermore, we would like to thank our donors for their financial support: HIVOS / COC Netherlands, Mama Cash, Kvinna Till Kvinna, Heinrich Böll Foundation, The Office for the Equality of the Sexes of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, Australian Embassy Zagreb, National Foundation for Civil Society Development, and Italian Cultural Centre. We also would like to thank the Student Center Zagreb, Zagreb Tourist Board, ZET – Zagreb City Transport and the net.culture club MaMa for successful cooperation.

Enjoy reading!

Jelena Poštić and Amir Hodžić

Zagreb, January 2006



Experiences and Practices

(Field) Notes on Kinging – Practices of Resistance

Birgit Dorle Binder|Benda

Enter Benda|B.D. Binder, glam-mustached Caucasian in suit and tie, stopping near lectern on stage. Benda:

«To bend is not 'to break'».

Benda|B.D. Binder stepping into speaker position in front of lectern. B.D.Binder:

My name is B.D. Binder, born in Romania, based in Germany, working at the University of Cologne and this nice fellow (*pointing to the spot where Benda stood*) is Benda, who promised to interrupt me during the next minutes. Props to Zagreb and its citizens' hospitality, the conference organizers and participants, to Finzschette and Hanjo, *mon professoresses*, to the students who attended my first seminar, Queer Theory within American Cultural History and to TKK – The Kinkiest King of Cologne.

I am here to present my PhD thesis project to you, in a version questioned, modified and transformed by so called 'active, participating field-work' in Cologne's Kinging scene as well as by a seminar on Queer Theory that I taught last semester. Since I did not find modes of entry to certain of the theoretical problems that this kind of ethnological anthropology poses in one's home country, this speech is largely dedicated to discrepancies in the form of open questions, pointing to a qualitative level of disparateness between discursive practices and actualized power that continues to haunt, effect and affect transgenering lives.

Getting to know forms of existence (*Existenzweisen*) that challenge prevalent stereotypes of identity-supplying gender-categories, has been – and still is – a fundamental challenge to academic research on gender-transgressive modes of being and interacting. On the condition that such 'soft' permeable zones of space and time are created and incorporated in our work, Pandora's Hopes could be set free¹. No less is at stake as long as gender-transgressive persons and acts are constantly silenced and disciplined by physical and psychic harassment, e.g. threat of life, murder, hate speech, restricted job opportunities and insufficient administration of justice².

¹ See Latour, Bruno: *Pandora's Hope: An essay on the Reality of Science Studies*, Harvard University Press, 1999.

² See Human Rights Watch, 2001. Here esp. attendance to double- or triple harassment by virtue of bodily features such as deviance to white skin or normative physical abilities, migration or social capital.

Basal questions of the thesis are as follows: What kinds of transformation would social interactions have to undergo, if the category of gender were to increase its dispersion and differentiation? How should varied formations of gender be dealt with on different social power-levels? Do gender stereotyped behavioral norms lead to gendered trauma, i.e. being wounded, triggered and constantly alarmed by their daily recurring routines? Could such constant traumatic experience lead to the necessity of unthinking gender, and thus to the establishment of social spaces inhabited by alternative corporal power?³

Benda|B.D. Binder, stepping near lectern on stage. Benda, shouting, fist up:

«For a material history of transgender corporeality!»

Benda|B.D. Binder stepping back into speaker position in front of lectern. B.D. Binder, irritated, staring at the space where Benda shouted, staring at the audience. B.D. Binder:

The main part is divided in historical and theoretical parts. The former, entitled Kinging as resistance-phenomenon, is an account of the development of 'kinging communities' and its playful interweaving of 'older' variant forms of acting out gender, such as femme-butch, camp or Rrrriot-grrl culture.

Investigating kinging as 'practices of resistance' means to study practices of constructing and deconstructing maleness by (a) citing, transforming, and transgressing such practices; (b) appropriating space and developing bodily counter-techniques; and (c) disrupting homo- and heteronormative discourse by self-defined or perceived kings, whether on or off stage.

The historical part of the thesis has to account for the impact of increased community-building via the Internet (Yahoo-Groups, Web-Blogs, Chat-Rooms, etc.). How are questions of gender negotiated in discourse? Are there recurrent topics of debate and discussion? How does self-identification articulate there, especially the usage of proper names or creating proper names anew? Can patterns be recognized? By what kind of suppositions regarding gender are they informed? How are other identity-axes such as color or class handled?

Kinging, predominantly but not exclusively practiced by persons who have been classified 'female' at birth, is not a theatrical practice *per se*, but can be understood as a temporal phase or persistent practice of a subject visibly transgressing society's binary gender-options. Despite the fact that individuals

³ Referring to Foucault's use of the term 'power', keeping in mind Gilles Deleuze notion that resistance is primary (Gilles Deleuze: *Foucault*, 1992, p.125).



are categorized by virtue of their sexual identity and orientation, a labeling of kinging subjects as 'lesbian' or 'transsexual' does not fit their diversity as such⁴.

In order to account for the various ways in which kinging exposes and transgresses binary notions of sexual orientation or gender-identity concepts, one sub-chapter will analyze corporeal techniques of contemporary kinging subjects.

Benda|B.D. Binder, stepping near lectern on stage. Benda, impatiently, suspicious:

**«On what theoretical grounds
are you operating right now?»**

Benda|B.D. Binder stepping back into speaker-position in front of lectern. B.D. Binder, continues:

Corporeal techniques, such as wearing artificial or non-artificial facial hair, 'packing', i.e. wearing an industrialized dildo or a self-made dildo, say: LOGOS, or switching gendered registers of speech are triggered by Donna Haraway's Cyborg Manifesto from the mid-eighties⁵. Thus, they are a contra-discipline as lined out in Beatriz Preciado's Dildo-tectonics, the Contrasexual Manifest (2003)⁶.

Benda|B.D. Binder, stepping near lectern on stage. Benda, staring at the lectern where B.D. Binder stood, curious:

**«How can there ever be a desirable outcome,
working with male-marked insignia
such as a phallus, a penis or a dildo?»**

Benda|B.D. Binder stepping in front of lectern. B.D. Binder:

Benda, a dildo is a dildo is a dildo? It is matter with history, not a re-presentation, a genital *wiedergaenger*, a replica of male oppression – analogue to the non-sameness of a being who

⁴ E.g., gay male bio-fem kings.

⁵ See Haraway, 1995, pp. 33-72.

⁶ The title, as well as the terms 'contra-discipline' and 'dildotectonics' are my translations. See Beatriz Preciado: «*Die Kontra-Sexualität macht aus der Dildotektonik eine Gegen-Wissenschaft, die in den Hetero- und Homokulturen die Widerstandstechnologien entdeckt, die in erweitertem Sinne in 'Dildos' umbenannt werden können*» (The contra-sexuality produces a contra-science from dildotectonics that discovers within hetero- and homocultures such technologies of resistance which could be renamed 'dildos' in a broader sense; my translation), in: *kontrasexuelles manifest*, 2003, p. 37. Preciado refers to a 'contra-XY' in a Foucauldian sense, i.e. emphasizing its productive factor.

transgresses gender binaries in the course of life, who does not become exclusively 'woman' or 'man'. This process can be described as excess, defined by Sue Golding as

«Not-not negativity, this multiplicity of the in between. A kind of spiralling [...] interiority which regurgitates right outside the limit, and in that wake, constitutes it: neither/nor»⁷.

In the example given by Golding in an interview, a male drag queen giving herself a butchy edge could be further queered and has actually been queered on stage by Mo B. Dick, performing a white gay homophobic king. Taking this kind of excess is a political act and «all these acts are in themselves multidimensional» (Golding, 1997), i.e. transgressive not only in terms of gender.

Benda|B.D. Binder, stepping near lectern on stage. Benda, shouting cheerfully:

«Sabotage!»

Benda|B.D. Binder stepping in front of lectern. B.D. Binder:

(Echoing Benda) Sabotage! (Pauses, composes herself) Right, but we did not mention analytical methods yet, Benda, such as face to face or telephone interviews as well as CFAs (Call for articulations)⁸ via threads in net-groups. Communication should be based on Jean-Claude Kaufman's Das verstehende Interview⁹ and active participation in on and off stage kinging.

Practices of kinging are invested with a critical potential for theory. Thus, these practices will be understood as a productive philosophical counter-discourse, a practice of «dis-identification» (Munoz) and «minor politics» (Thoburn, Deleuze)¹⁰. Certainly, these practices will not 'save us'. They are supposed to

⁷ See Sue Golding in an inter(net)view with Joanna Zylinska: http://culturema.chine.tees.ac.uk/Cmach/Backissues/j001/articles/art_glde.htm, as well as Golding 1997.

⁸ This term does not exist (yet). The 'usual' term is CFP, call for papers. This term, CFP, is bound to the elite academic sphere, thus it does not seem proper to use in the context of net-groups since not all kingz belong to the academic sphere or want to articulate themselves via a(n academic) paper, but, e.g. via photography or poetry. The term CFA is broadening the term CFP to non-academic articulations on topics posted via net-groups (including [academic] papers, they are articulations as well, of course).

⁹ Jean-Claude Kaufman: *Das verstehende Interview* (The Comprehensive Interview; my translation), 1999.

¹⁰ As to the terminus 'dis-identification', see Munoz, 1996, pp. 144-79. As to 'minor politics', see Thoburn, 2003.



tell of a creative handling of binary gender trauma induced every day by various violent, actualized effects on predominantly 'female' bodies all over the world.

Benda|B.D. Binder stepping near lectern on stage. Benda, enthusiastically:

«More open questions and linking collectives!»

Benda|B.D. Binder stepping in front of lectern. B.D. Binder:

How could empirical methods be optimized? Why are transgender lives not a supranational recognized form of identity (implying consequences e.g. for refugees)? Why is non-confirmative gender behavior a constant menace to society leading to hate crimes? Why is the interrogation of masculinities in history only a recent phenomenon?

How can transgender modes of existence establish alliances and build collectives within Europe's academic and kinging scenes? At the moment, there is a call for papers from any genre for a Drag King book by a team in Germany. What about an electronic magazine for gender-queer articulation?

Benda|B.D. Binder stepping near lectern on stage. Benda:

**«For the sake of promoting the Kingdom to the world:
Promo-Reel Join the Stage! by Rexi Tom Reweller.
Enjoy and discuss!»**

(Promo-Reel Join the Stage! by Rexi Tom Reweller, Germany)

«I dream of the intellectual destroyer of evidence and universalities, the one who, in the inertias and constraints of the present, locates and marks the weak points, the openings, the lines of force, who incessantly displaces (h)er/itself, doesn't know exactly where (s)he's heading nor (s)he'll think tomorrow because (s)he is too attentive to the present ...» (Foucault, modified).

Bibliography

Deleuze, Gilles: *Foucault*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1992.

Golding, Sue: *Eight Technologies of Otherness*, London, New York: Routledge, 1997.

Golding, Sue: http://culturemachine.tees.ac.uk/Cmach/Backissues/j001/articles/art_gldc.htm (last accessed 07 December 2005).

Haraway, Donna: «Ein Manifest für Cyborgs, Feminismus im Streit mit

den Technowissenschaften», in: *Die Neuerfindung der Natur, Primaten, Cyborgs und Frauen*, Frankfurt am Main / New York: Campus Verlag, 1995.

Human Rights Watch: *Hatred in the Hallway, Violence and Discrimination Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students in U.S. Schools*, New York, Washington, London, Brussels, 2001, on-line version: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/uslgbt/toc.htm> (last accessed 07 December 2005).

Kaufman, Jean-Claude: *Das verstehende Interview, Theorie und Praxis*, Konstanz: UVK, 1999.

Latour, Bruno: *Pandora's Hope: An essay on the Reality of Science Studies*, Harvard University Press, 1999.

Munoz, José: «Famous and Dandy like B.´n´Andy: Race, Pop, and Basquiat», in: José Munoz et al.: *Pop Out: Queer Warhol*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996.

Preciado, Beatriz: *kontrasexuelles manifest*, Berlin, b_books, 2003.

Thoburn, Nicholas: *Deleuze, Marx and Politics*, London, Routledge, 2003.

Biographical Note

B.D.Binder received M.A. in Japanese Studies, Media Studies and English Philology with a thesis on Japanese Organized Crime as a social phenomena and its representation in Kitano Takeshi's movies. Currently, (s)he is a research fellow at the University of Cologne.



'On the Border' – Sodomasochism, Gender-fuck and the Inter-Relationship with No Border Politics

Jet Moon and Alex Woodland

Jet Moon:

My momma is the uber femme: beautiful, immaculately dressed, so perfectly feminine. From her I learned how to walk, how a real girl talks ... and how to behave. To speak softly, to laugh at the right moments, to carefully calculate the effect of my movements. To phrase and consider everything I did until I became an embodiment of artifice, a moving object. Growing up with my mom was like going to geisha school.

Sometimes my femininity feels like a cage, walking down the street I feel the way my body moves, hips swiveling, little steps, dainty gestures, it's painful in its contrivance. But anything else would take a conscious effort, it's what my body has been conditioned to do. I would have to think hard to move differently.

I lust after high heels, lingerie, trashy clothes. Sometimes it feels like there's someone else pulling the strings.

True or false: dragging up into my real self ...

We're talking about gender ... and we talk about femme.

I try to explain, I know it's a construction, I know I have some heavy conditioning ... just try growing up in my family! But I also know that I can't and don't want to get rid of it: getting rid of my femme-ness would be like trying to remove my bones. There's so much internal fakery that makes up the real me. And so many heavily fetishised objects to which I attach my identity, my fascination with the external symbols, the clothes, wigs, shoes, make up ... I know this stuff is crappy make believe. But I want to explain that when I put on this drag, this fake, this costume ... that's when the outside begins to match the how I see myself inside. When I dress up I'm becoming who I really am. I'm like a transvestite husband dressing up in his wife's clothes.

Alex Woodland:

I'm in the launderette in Peckham doing the washing, and I'm sitting waiting for the dryer to stop. Opposite me are two girls, aged about fifteen or sixteen, and they're looking at me, then each other, then me again ... at first I think they've spotted me as a weird butch dyke ... but no – they're cruising me. They think I'm a local lad doing the laundry for his mum. It's very uncomfortable – it's hard to avoid their eyes and I'm praying the laundry lady doesn't speak to me cos then they'll know. I feel like a pervert, a pedophile, even though it's not me doing the cruising but them – very 'Lolita' ... I also know I'm in a degree of danger, because if they realize I'm a woman and I'm pushing thirty, teenage gender panic may ensue and in their minds I will be a pervert and harassing them, simply by

looking how I look ... my only hope is to keep up the pretense of teenage maleness or I could get myself in trouble, even though at the same time not correcting their mistake could be seen as encouragement. I think I'm playing hard-to-get with children.

I'm lucky; they don't realize. I escape the launderette alive.

It happens again at the bus stop, but the bus comes and she doesn't get on the same one.

I wonder how I must appear today.

What would that do to a teenage girl? «I fancy that lesbian freak who's twice my age even though I fancy boys (I think) ... »

Teenage boys do it too – not cruising, but that macho look up and down, sizing you up, letting you know they've seen you and they're harder than you are. I have to act like a man to prove myself – a macho competition with kids half my age. In order to stay safe, I have to meet their eye (so as not to be an easy target) but not for so long as to invite aggression ... and I certainly can't speak, because if I do, they'll know I'm a nice middle class girl who looks like them and therefore must be a freak ...

But I know they're acting too ... they, too, are learning to be men.

It's like experiencing a different identity you didn't know about that is usually closed to you ... the language and culture of teenagers is not one I know any more, and I don't know how to act appropriately. By simply making them think I am what they are, I've trespassed into their world even though they've invited me in by their recognition.

JM:

I pass at work ... in a place full of working class Essex boys, the grief of being out is just not worth it. Sometimes it's strange, sometimes guys flirt with me. My shift supervisor is helping me, he's such a butch top; «there you are» he says «that's the kind of man I am, I do everything for you» ... And I think «well that's the kind of woman I am, so where does that get us?». Sometimes work is strange.

Sitting during a break at the anarcho-feminist festival, I feel the urge to freshen up my lipstick. I get out my hand mirror and my lipstick and I begin to apply ... across the room I see one of the young 80's style Croatian feminists looking at me, her face a cross between disapproval and pity ... like I'm soooo oppressed for wearing makeup. I laugh to myself and I think «just you wait girl ... let's see the look on your face when I get my dick out during the performance tonight ... ».

How many times have I put up with sexist behavior from butches? They assume that because I'm femme I'm also stupid and passive. There's something dodgy going on there ... some deep buried belief that femme is 'normal', 'natural', the default



mode for females. Fail to see the genderfuck of femme, read me at face value and we've got nothing to say to each other.

«Queer is not an identity category: it is a process of continual disruption.»
Linell Sidcome

I'm stone, I don't like to be touched. Unless I ask for it specifically, rarely. This is my self-possession, my taking back, I own my body. No more trying to enjoy the invasion of my physical space. I love to dress up as an object of desire and remain untouchable ... all the codes of attraction and availability, totally under my own possession ... look, but don't touch.

There's a certain sadistic pleasure in it. The object of desire has its own desires.

AW:

At work, my students treat me with the respect a teacher deserves; cultural differences however mean that sometimes they ask things because they don't know it might be inappropriate. My students don't ask about my private life, but do ask if I'm married or when I will be about once a week. After a while, they get comfortable enough with me to ask about my beard – in one class of old ladies, one of them pulled it, saying «What's this, what's this?». Another student calls me 'the boy teacher' to other teachers. African students invariably ask straight away, unembarrassed and without realizing the question may be considered rude – just for clarification. One African woman student flirts with me in class, which I take as affection but at first was very embarrassing. The men often treat me like one of the boys, and the Bengali students call me a 'two-in-one' or a '50-50'.

It's nice to be recognized and acknowledged.

I learned how to cruise by getting cruised by gay men. Just a look, a couple of seconds longer than a glance, that's all it takes. They touch you on the shoulder and look at you, maybe raise their eyebrows, and that's it. When they realize, or I don't respond, the look changes subtly and in another two seconds it's as if you'd never existed and they're on to the next one. Again, it's participation in a culture that's not mine but others include me in, but unlike the teenage world this one's fun.

When I try the same technique with dykes it doesn't work at all. They'll stare through you as if your look is threatening, or at least too forward ... or simply not part of the culture, so not recognized.

The interesting thing about fags is that sometimes they don't stop cruising me even when they know I'm not a man, and their fag sexuality isn't threatened – my masculinity will do just fine. It doesn't seem to matter as much to them what gets them up,

so long as it does. But what exactly do they want to do? Fuck me? Even without the iconic phallus? I know it's not strictly necessary but it does seem to be important ...

After getting arrested at the G8 protests in Scotland, they take me out of the cells before court. «We have reason to believe that your name is not Alex Woodland, do you have anything to say about this?», «Er, no comment» I say, caught out. When I see my lawyer, I tell him it's because I'm actually a boy now and that's why I changed my name. He tells the judge and they release me on bail.

I go back to the police station to collect my confiscated camera. An hour after being released, I am arrested again because my name is Sally Campbell, and I'm arrested again for being called Sally Campbell not Alex Woodland. Alex Woodland is a boy, and is called so because he used to be a girl with a girl's name and wanted to change it. The police apologize for arresting me (they said it was the procurator's fiscal mistake, not them), and are unexpectedly respectful about my new gender. They ask me if they should call me Alex or Sally, and call me Alex on request, apologizing again for using my old name. They also ask if they should call me he, and whether I want to be in the male or female cells. For my own safety I choose the female – the cops might believe I'm a boy but will the other inmates? I don't want to take the risk.

JM:

When I first moved to Sydney I got asked to 'identify' a lot. Everyone kept asking me – are you gay or straight? And they didn't want me to say 'no', they wanted me to say one way or the other. «Are you gay or are you straight?».

I decided to try and figure it out, I started to keep a diary, to write down every time I identified, every time I felt attracted to a person or was aware of my sexual identity.

Three days into the process and I'm sitting at a cafe on King street, my eyes follow a man as he crosses the street ... and I realize I'm a gay man.

Things are getting complicated.

I'm strutting down the street feeling hot cos I've just fucked my girl till she's a messy heap on the floor, I'm cruising in a macho femme kinda way, cock of the walk, no one better fuck with me. And a guy in the street catches my eye and gives a wink ... like it's all for him. Jesus, can't he tell I'm a faggot?

Coming back from Sydney I go to visit Crystal, a 20-stone six-foot-tall drag queen who has taught me so much about being a strong woman ... «Honey, don't ever mess with a drag queen».

And suddenly I'm sitting in the living room with Steven ... I've never heard her use her birth name or identify as a man ... but she's met someone, and he doesn't like her to dress as a woman



... so now she is 'Steven'. I do a double take, readjust my bearings ... Okay, now my friend is a man.

The second night after we arrive in Beograd Alex is nervous, not knowing what to expect in terms of homophobia here, not knowing what we can and can't do ... feeling blind in a potentially dangerous situation. The next morning we dress to be visible and damn it, whatever happens, happens. Better than living in fear. I dress up high femme, leopard print dress, make up, stockings, Alex is handsome in a shirt and tie ... and we walk boldly into the day.

Alex passes completely ... everyone thinks she's a boy. I on the other hand can read the gaze of the old guy in the street ... he thinks I'm a whore. I've stepped over the line in my performance of the feminine. Just one step either way ... and I'm the one who fails.

In the Cross – the red light district of Sydney – everyone calls me Kitty. I'm the only one of my friends who isn't a sex worker. Tammy Jo: sometimes she's still a rent boy, depending on what the client wants, but mostly for a while now she's been Tammy Jo in real life and for work. Talking about a job she did last night she tells me «Girl, guess what?! I licked pussy!» and I'm so caught up in her identity and the idea that she's never slept with a woman before that I say «Eugh, really?». I can't get my head around it; I'm genuinely revolted.

Gender police G8

The queer crew has reached the first police checkpoint in our long trek to block the M9 motorway; the police try to divide us into girls and boys in order to make a Section 60 search. There's a lot of confusion. The police officer in charge of the search keeps asking us, «Are you sure you're all female?». Mili stays with us and the police don't even notice him ... it's Alex and Sue they keep staring at and asking «Are you sure that everyone in this group is female?».

The state is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of behavior; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently.

AW:

Public toilets: realm of the gender police.

Obviously I get questioned about my gender in toilets all the time, most of the time not verbally. This usually takes the form of a visual double-take, staring for longer than is polite with an expression of concern or hostility, or the 'sign on the door' double-take – looking at me, going back to check the sign on the door, looking at me again in a pointed way, hoping I'll realize my mistake.

At work, even though I teach a women-only class (and therefore have to be female), some students still give me the double-take and look disgusted. I try to use only the disabled toilet to avoid this. It's embarrassing for everyone if they throw me out of the toilets for being a boy, and then I'm their teacher. The power dynamic shift is just too great. I don't mind (I'm used to it), but for them it's mortifying.

I'm washing my hands in the toilets of the pub, and a girl tells me I'm in the wrong place. I politely tell her I'm not, and (as usual) on hearing my voice she realizes I'm a girl after all. She's your average straight girl, but tells me I'm «well handsome» for a girl ... because I look like a boy and that's what she's attracted to, the fact I'm female and she knows it doesn't seem to disturb her heterosexuality at all ...

In Trafalgar Square I'm heading to the toilets, there's one main entrance and you go left to the men's and right to the ladies. I walk past the guy at the door, this big African man, and go right, and he calls out to me ... «Hey!». I went back, and he says to me «Are you looking for something nice?». I don't understand, I think he's maybe trying to hit on me or sell me drugs. I ask him again, and he repeats ... and I realize what he means. It's such a friendly way of telling this young man he was about to use the ladies, so conspiratorial, all guys together. I like him. I say «Oh, you want me to go in there!», gesturing towards the gents. By the time I speak, people usually realize I'm female from my voice, but this guy doesn't. I tell him I'm a girl, and he looks disbelieving and says «Are you sure?». I laugh and say yes. He says «Ok ...» doubtfully, and off I go to the ladies, which is empty anyway. When I come out, just to play with him some more, I call him over and say to him, «You know what? I'm not really a girl!». He believes me, relieved he was right all along, and laughs hard. All guys together, brothers.

JM:

My last night in Beograd, I've been sitting for half an hour trying to find some common thread of conversation with the mainstream fag on my right. Then he turns to me and says ... «Well I don't know about SM, but really to me it's the least sexual of all things. It's really a Western intellectual construct that comes from a binary dualistic way of thinking. Either you're a sadist or a masochist and things are divided that way ...»

And I think «Wow, you really don't know anything about SM ... No understanding of the subtleties of power, of the constantly shifting dynamics, of the confusion inherent in entering into this sort of play. Defined in black and white is the one thing it will never be».

I'm not interested in justifying my SM practice. Of course I've thought about it, and I've chosen to accept. If I question my sexual practice, should I also then question my orientation ... my



status as queer ... abnormal, clinicalized, medicalized, psychologized, pathologized: in relation to what?

Heteronormativity and all its behaviors are a construct, an enforced mode of behavior. If I'm not fucking to procreate then why should I follow the normal models of sexual behavior? I examine my own relationship to power in my intimate personal life and from there I deconstruct my relation to power in every other area where I encounter it. My politics steps out of the bedroom and back into relation with the world again.

AW:

In Belgrade we dress up and go out: me in shirt and tie, boots and braces, and my bondage cuffs, and her dressed like a lady, all flimsy black see-through and leopard print ... full-on drag. I am a well-dressed boy, a young stud – I get full approval ... people glare at her like a cheap cradle-snatching whore ... they imagine what they see is real. In a way, it is ... today I am her boy, and she is a woman who displays her sexual power ... but in our perversity, our *faux* heterosexuality, I feel safe ...

Presumptions

«Which one of you's the man?»

Me. I'm the man around here. She's my girl, but I'm her boy.

That anyone would think I'm the dominant one ... it's so funny. I wear the trousers and that's as far as it goes ... I'm usually not wearing them for very long ...

Roles and practice

I am her boy, her bitch

Bootlicker

Whipping boy

Slut

Butch bottom

Fuck pig

Evil bitch goddess

Whore/pro-dom/john

Mistress/slave

Babysitter/schoolboy

Rapist/victim

Serial killer

JM:

As I drag my fuck up the stairs I can see the fear in their eyes, I throw them against the wall hard, inflicting the kind of pain

that makes them angry enough to resist.

And I realize I'm every evil fucker I've ever known, I'm my own serial killer fear and fantasy ... except this time I'm the perpetrator. It scares me, and I feel powerful.

When you're a cocky lad, when I'm a whore, when I'm your evil mistress, when you're my slave, when you're a ladies' man, and I'm a nasty girl, these characters who are pieces of who we imagine ourselves to be. Where the power plays are explicit and nothing is hidden anymore, these games are real.

People who don't like SM often say it's a reinforcement of the oppressive power relations in this world. What can I say ... to me straight sex is one of the most loaded power games there are. Vanilla sex makes me nervous. I freeze, I feel disempowered by it, or I don't feel anything at all ... I'm bored.

... On the other hand SM is the only kind of sex I've ever had where people sit down and negotiate before they play, where they talk about their boundaries and desires before even touching, work out safe words, how far they want to go and what result they'd like to achieve ...

AW:

«One can say that SM is the eroticization of power, the eroticization of strategic relations [...] the SM game is very interesting because it is a strategic relation, because it is always fluid. Of course there are roles, but everyone knows very well that those roles can be reversed. Sometimes the scene begins with the master and slave, and at the end the slave has become the master. Or, even when the roles are stabilized, you know very well that it is always a game; either the rules are transgressed, or there is an agreement, either explicit or tacit, that makes them aware of certain boundaries. This strategic game as a source of bodily pleasure is very interesting.»

Michel Foucault, in an interview with Advocate.

It's Christmas morning and it's cold. The girl took me home and fucked me last night and we're not done. She wants to hit me, and it makes me wet. I've always fantasized about this, wanted this. She wants to see how far we can go, and so do I – I've never found my limits before and I'd like to see where they are. She shows me her new riding crop and asks me if I want to try ... I do. So we begin. After 5 minutes, she's still scoring my chest with her fingernails and I'm shaking ... I'm scared already and say so. She smiles ... she begins to hit me with the crop, again and again. It hurts, it hurts ... this is not what I thought it would be. I cry out in pain and when I think I can't take it, I begin to weep. She doesn't stop. That's not the way it works, she says. She hits me again and again, on my back, ass, arms and thighs ... it hurts so fucking



much, I want to stop, I can't take it ... but I do. I want to take it for her, not me. The only thing in my mind is the pain and my safeguard, I'm ready to say it in just one second, I can't take this I should stop it, but I don't ... after almost an hour, she stops. I've been crying for half an hour, tears and snot running down my face, a mess ... and I can't stop. I slide down to the floor, and keep crying while she holds me.

I feel undone, my defenses gone.

It was so beautiful, so intimate ... I feel so cared for. In beating me she has found a way into my heart. I am serene for days. My body is black and blue, bruises and welts that last for 2 weeks. I wear them with the pride of a hero's wounds, the token of a lover.

We live in a society that practices nonconsensual sado-masochism everyday. Our cultural inheritance is male dominance, abusive relationships, authoritarian businesses, schools, churches and a legal system that stresses the threat of punishment for deviance. However, SM can offer a way of conscious liberation from cultural conditioning. Thus SM becomes a parody and comment on life in our culture.

JM:

I respect subs, they do things that I can't do, open themselves up, make themselves vulnerable, that ability to totally let go and allow someone into their physical and emotional space. Let someone else take control and push their limits. I'm in awe whenever I see a bottom taking pain, really going under for someone. I can't believe what they can do, I'm fascinated.

That dynamic turns me on ... that they take what I want to give ... the balance, the flow, the complexity of power ... the dynamic is always shifting between us, sometimes I'm the caretaker, sometimes I'm the sadist, sometimes I need to be taken care of, to be worshipped, to be loved, to have my fragility acknowledged and respected. The dynamic of power is always shifting, never simple.

In my sexual practice I am constantly and explicitly aware of power, the construction of roles and functioning of dominant and submissive are always being worked out and a complex understanding of our own abilities to enter into and perform roles. I think because of this I've become more aware of these exchanges taking place in the world around me, in a non consensual real world context, now I have a clearer analysis of how the manipulation of power and this consensual hallucination we call reality stay afloat. I see the constructed nature of these exchanges. Question the power dynamics of SM and you must question the power dynamics of everything else; of heterosexuality, of the relations between men and women, between genders, between the state and citizen, the function of

the police and military.

What may have once looked like 'normality' to me, 'the way the world works' ... is now a scene of explicit power plays and roles, the mannerisms of power and domination seeming glaringly obvious.

AW:

«Meaning is derived from the context in which it is used. Not everyone who wears a swastika is a nazi; not everyone who has a pair of handcuffs on his belt is a cop; and not everyone who wears a nun's habit is a catholic. SM is more a parody of the hidden sexual nature of fascism than it is a worship of or acquiescence to it.»

Pat Califia, Sadomasochism and Feminism, 1980, Public Sex, Cleis Press.

We're in Beograd now, and I'm scared. I can't speak, understand, and they've told me I'm in constant danger from fascists looking like I do, a freak queer. Can I go to buy some tomatoes without getting killed? I don't know.

I go to the market, ready to run for my life. I buy some tomatoes. I go back to the apartment in triumph.

«The repetition compulsion seems an elegant model for sadomasochism, in which both partners, functioning under the benign dispensation of make-believe, re-enact not their own private troubles but our society's nightmarish preoccupations with power, with might. No acute person can fail to respond to the gross economic exploitation, the subtle oppression, the alienation and authenticity of modern life.»

Edmund White, Sado Machismo, 1979, The Burning Library, Picador.

JM:

An account from inside Baxter detention centre.

«The cameras move and look at you all the time. There is systematic control – a high level of security – like they have learned from the camps. They have more experience and can really defeat us. They want to make people give up, now they can really make us mad. You have to see everything in front of your eyes, you cannot imagine, it's really hard to describe. They say one fence has a strong electric current. We can't see anything but the sky. In Curtin we could see out, we could see some trees and the road which led away to freedom.»

After the people have called Woomera a hellhole, there is



no word for Baxter.

Standing outside yet another detention centre, this time in the suburbs of Sydney. People in the demonstration remember the times before mandatory detention, when the camps were not closed, when people came and went freely. M. lived in this camp as a child when his parents first came here from Chile ... the razor wire didn't used to be there, the people inside weren't prisoners then.

I call Harriet again. I've been calling every couple of days to see how the Ugandan women are ... They've been on hunger strike in the Yarlswood detention centre for over 30 days now. When Harriet answers the phone her voice is faint. I ask her how she is, she answers, «I'm not so good today, I feel very weak, I stopped breathing several times during the night. The doctors say there is something going on with my heart. I have problems from when I was tortured before I came here».

I want to cry, I feel cold ... is this all I can do, to sit on the phone and listen as my country does this to another person? How can this be happening?

«The fetish is the embodiment of a lie that enables us to endure an unbearable truth.»
Slavoj Žižek, 2000

«Capital derives its profit and power from the theft and plundering of the land and the exploitation of labour. Once this was organised by the colonial powers of Europe, now they are joined by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and Washington with their structural adjustment programs and free trade treaties. This means massive impoverishment of the global South, displacing millions of people from their homes and making the survival of billions harder and harder. Some countries are economically devastated, in others there is war and genocide. As the world is homogenised, the laws we live by are increasingly the values of the market place. And while there are few borders for trade and the movement of capital, restrictions on the movement of people are being tightened.»
Melbourne No One Is Illegal Manifesto

Queer moves beyond identity politics ... it does not approach sexuality as a single issue. I don't argue for equal rights on the basis of my sexuality, I use the fact of my sexual difference to make a critique of otherness, to see myself in relation to those other who share 'difference' if not the same difference. I have no wish to ghetto-ise myself through an identity politics in which I decry my own oppression while ignoring the greater dynamic of power in operation. Queer in itself is deconstructive ... it wishes always to overturn what becomes settled, solidified, normalized; it

contains within itself a destabilizing force able to accept its own lack of coherence as a necessity of being.

AW:

«The idea that SM is related to a deep violence, that SM practice is a way of liberating this violence, this aggression, is stupid. We know very well that what all those people are doing is not aggressive; they are inventing new possibilities of pleasure with strange parts of their body – through the eroticisation of the body. I think it's a kind of creation, a creative enterprise, which has as one of its main features what I call the desexualisation of pleasure [...] The possibility of using our bodies as a possible source of very numerous pleasures is something that is important. For instance, if you look at the traditional constructions of pleasure, you see that bodily pleasure, or pleasures of the flesh, are always drinking, eating and fucking. And that seems to be the limit of our understanding of our body, our pleasures.»
Michel Foucault, Advocate.

All the sensation is mine, at a level of intensity I can barely accept. I am screaming, the tears are rolling down my face. Come is dripping down my legs and I try to hide it, I feel ashamed that this is what I desire ... «I'm your bitch» I say, because she tells me to.

«The dynamic between a top and a bottom is quite different from the dynamic between men and women, blacks and whites, or upper- and working-class people. That system is unjust because it assigns privileges based on race, gender, and social class. During a SM encounter, roles are acquired and used in very different ways. If you don't like being a top or bottom, you switch your keys. Try doing that to your biological sex or your race or your socioeconomic status.»
Pat Califia, Sadomasochism and Feminism, 1980, Public Sex, Cleis Press.

The very conscious attention to the dominant and submissive roleplay is a reversal from everyday unconscious, socially sanctioned, authoritarian behavior, and thus is a way to understand the social training that lies within us. It is a way of exploring power relationships and can make us aware of our aggressive tendencies and how we handle anger, fear, hurt and love.

By playing dominant / submissive roles we achieve self-knowledge and perceive with a heightened awareness how real dominance and submission operate in our culture.



JM:

We're sitting in a refugee camp in the Ukraine, the supervisor of the place has changed his story several times as he slowly comes to realize we are no border activists, not officials come to see how effectively the border regime is being maintained. He says «I know what it is to live behind the iron curtain. Many years of my life I have been made a criminal purely by my desire to learn, using false papers to cross the border to have access to libraries that contained forbidden books. Now Europe is trying to create a new iron curtain, this time it's not to keep us in but to keep us out ... I know what it is to live behind the iron curtain».

«In June 2002 the Council of the EU adopted guidelines on the possible development of a Visa Information System – a database that would contain the personal information (including biometrics)

on every visa application (irrespective of whether the visa was issued or the application refused). SIS II (Schengen Information

System) and VIS (Visa Information System) must be seen in a wider context. Firstly, there are global plans, promoted by the US

and UK in various intergovernmental fora, to introduce biometrics in all travel documents (and the databases of the issuing

authorities). Second, the PNR (Passenger Name Record)

scheme developed by the US to allow the pre-screening of all air travellers to the US will result in practice in the creation of detailed

and lasting records on all entrants (in CAPPS II). Taken together,

SIS II, VIS and PNR will introduce the surveillance of the movements of everyone in the EU – citizens, legally resident

third-country nationals, visa entrants and irregular migrants – and the storage of their personal data on an unprecedented scale.

These systems will be used for speculative surveillance, general intelligence gathering and 'fishing expeditions', but more

importantly, individual records will increasingly result in coercive

sanctions, such as the refusal to allow travel, the refusal of visa or asylum applications, the refusal of admission to a country at

external borders, detention pending extradition, even deportation.

Moreover, the massive sharing of data between the EU, US and other wealthy nations could provide for a kind of informal 'mutual

recognition' of these sanctions, where a (potentially arbitrary)

decision taken by one country is then enforced by all the others.

In the longer term, EU-US cooperation heralds a global identification system, the global surveillance of movement and a

global police information system – what place do 'free movement' and privacy have in this scenario?»

Ben Hayes, Statewatch analysis – From the Schengen Information System to SIS II and the Visa Information System (VIS): the proposals explained, 2004

AW:

I am a submissive and a bottom, but outside an SM context, I do not like to be pushed around! I don't want to do what people tell me to do, get laughed at, ignored, embarrassed, or degraded in any way. I am a person with self-esteem to maintain, not an object or something that is lesser. I can't do that, and in reality, why would I want to? What's power exchange if you don't have any power? I am a submissive, not a loser.

If I can let go of control and rise above pain and humiliation, and rise above my ego, I am free. In my life, I want respect, dignity, comfort, autonomy and power. In sex it's something else. But my sexual persona, my fantasies are not me. They don't reflect, in reality, who I am and who I want to be. Those qualities may make you attractive as a bottom but not really as a sexy, strong, beautiful human being.

Imagine ... «I feel so proud, I'm the ultimate submissive – I'm weak, pathetic, humiliated and worthless ...»

I'm in the toilet on the train and it's stopped at the border and I don't know ... someone raps on the door and shouts in a language I don't understand ... he's angry, and marches me back to my carriage: «And stay there!». And that's when I know; we're not in the West anymore.

«You're going to have to get used to it», she says.

I'm a little shaken, but I know this is nothing; I'm a Westerner and they won't touch me. I can't even imagine what it must be like coming the other way.

«SM has always surfaced at times when a crushing power structure is beginning to topple – at the end of the Roman Empire, at the outbreak of the French revolution, and now.»
Edmund White, Sado Machismo, 1979, The Burning Library, Picador.

JM:

Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, Article 18 – Right to Asylum:

«The right to asylum is recognized as a fundamental right at the international level only by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which, in article 14, considers it to be universal where there is a risk of persecution in the Country of origin. By guaranteeing the prohibition of the death penalty, torture or other inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the other international texts on the protection of human rights indirectly imply the existence of a right to asylum in order to avoid such treatment or punishment. These texts indeed clearly establish the right not to be expelled or extradited towards



a State in which there is a serious risk of being subject to such treatment or punishment (the principle of not turning-back).»

«Where feminism has sided with the conservative right in the fight against pornography, if not morally, but in the defense of women. Currently in London the SM community fights against a law banning 'violent pornography' as it is these laws which may be used to police our lives. What have been, what are and what will be the limits of the problematic nation-state? Is it possible that beyond the nation-state the concept of democracy keeps not only a meaning but a force of injunction? Can we think of a democracy beyond the limits of the classical political model, of the nation-state and its borders?»

Slavoj Žižek

AW:

There's a guy on a moped parked next to our demo about the detention center in Old Street. He's looking for his sister's son, who's been overstaying his visa and was arrested. They haven't seen him for days and his family's distraught, but the immigration service won't give them any information, so he's driving around London looking for home offices or detention centers asking if he's there in person. He won't find him that way – nobody's going to tell him anything, and he never gets further than the security guards at the door who don't know anything. We tell him to call the lawyer and keep calling.

Adi works as a security guard at Communications House, the immigration reporting center. His job is to let in and search immigrants who have to report, and keep everyone else out. He reads our leaflet and is friendly to us, if a little wary, so long as we don't try to go in. I ask him for money to send to a Congolese refugee who got deported with nothing but the clothes he was wearing. Adi goes inside, but a few minutes later he sneaks out and gives me 80p. Adi's African too, not British – he keeps people out and he gets to stay in.

Within both deconstruction and queer theory lies the idea of disruption of the false binary dichotomies that constitute 'reality'. For example, Derrida's deconstructive theory asserts that binary and hierarchical relationships are hallmarks of Western thought. Therefore any text demonstrating a belief in such relationships is to that extent based on a false idea of the world and must be exposed as dangerously misleading and manipulative.

Examples of binary relationships are always opposites, not containing any aspects of the other; and one is hierarchically superior to other. Within gender, male / female, in SM, top / bottom, and in national borders, inside / outside.

Queer has been defined as «resistance to regimes of the normal» (Michael Warner, 93). It is this active resistance that makes queer differ from LGBT politics in that it sees normativity generally, rather than heterosexism and homophobia, as the site of violence.

JM:

«So why shouldn't we simply accept this post- (political, ideological ...) universe and just strive for a comfortable niche in it? The problem with this easy way out is, as we have already seen, that re-emerging populist fundamentalism, far from being a simple remainder of a primitive ideological past, is the inherent product of globalization, the living proof of the failure of the post-modern abolition of politics, in which the basic economic logic is accepted as the depoliticized Real (a neutral expert knowledge which defines the parameters within which the different strata of population and political subjects are expected to reach a compromise and formulate their common goals).»
Slavoj Žižek

«As queer our understanding of borders is clear: we reject the borders imposed between sexualities, between genders, between our abilities to live our lives as we wish and the strictures imposed by the state, that attempt to prevent us defining our own ways of living. In a society which always attempts to strengthen the position of institutionalised power by marking someone as 'other' (whether this be by race / sexuality / gender or any other means) we refused to accept this condition of nations and borders, of the containment of people by false boundaries that serve only to profit those who hold power.»
Queers without Borders manifesto

AW:

«Immigration controls are not just racist. In their nationalism they encompass virtually all reactionary ideology. Until recently there has been no provision for a gay partner to come or remain. However we are critical of the campaign for 'equality' with heterosexual relationships for gay relationships within immigration control. There cannot be equal opportunities immigration controls – unless one is in favour of the equality of the damned. Demanding equality with heterosexual couples simply ignores the inherent racism of controls and therefore the relationship between racism, sexism and homophobia. An additional problem is that the demand for the rights of gay couples elevates romance into a political goal? What about the single gay person, the celibate, the lonely, those of no sexual orientation or the promiscuous of any sexual orientation?



Including gay couples within immigration law and its spurious 'rights' means that all these other people are by definition excluded. Their status as outlaws is intensified.»

No One Is Illegal Manifesto

JM:

«It is crucial to perceive how 'postmodern racism' emerges as the ultimate consequence of the post-political suspension of the political in the reduction of the state to a mere police agent servicing the (consensually established) needs of the market forces and multiculturalist tolerant humanitarianism: the 'foreigner' whose status is never properly regulated is the indivisible remainder of the transformation of democratic political struggle into the post-political procedure of negotiation and multiculturalist policing. Instead of the political subject 'working class' demanding its universal rights we get, on the one hand, the multiplicity of particular social strata or groups, each with its problems (the dwindling need for manual workers, etc.), and, on the other hand, the immigrant, more and more prevented from politicizing his predicament of exclusion.»

Slavoj Žižek

AW:

This idea of the normal can be extended from the policing of identity and social interaction (male / female, heteronormative productive monogamy between two people – mummy / daddy) through to a belief in hierarchical power structure as 'natural' – the family, the church, the state, the first / third worlds ... That the commonly held concepts of male and female are false we take as understood; that commonly agreed upon and enforced borders are actually fluid, full of exceptions to rules, and are often contradictory is a bit harder to swallow. National borders and controls are at the same time perceived as getting more fixed and more inflexible in terms of people's ability to cross them (fortress Europe), and simultaneously dissolving; the idea of 'free trade', the global marketplace, the easy transnationality of capital.

For a national political border to exist in a certain place is often a matter of consensual agreement – the man with the uni-form and gun and stamp tells you that this is the border, so it is ...

JM:

«This non-citizenship of people we have to care for, to welcome, urges us, compels us, to think of a democratic relationship beyond the borders of the nation-state. That is the invention of new practices, new international law, the transformation of the sovereignty of the state. We all have

examples of this situation today with what are called non-governmental interventions, everything which calls for interventions, for political initiatives, which should not depend on the sovereignty of the state, that is, finally, citizenship.»
Jacques Derrida

Inside Yarlswood ... it's strange to be entering a prison, passing through the security checks, I'm more used to being on the other side after being arrested at demonstrations. I'm visiting a woman who has been badly beaten during an attempt to deport her; a GSL security guard repeatedly kicked her while putting her on the plane. They told her, «Britain is not for black people». Because of her screaming the pilot came and made them take her back off the plane. She doesn't have a solicitor, she doesn't have an independent medical assessment ... all I can offer her is to make some notes, to send her a list of solicitors, to try and find a doctor to see her ... this is the level of support ... one person trying to help another to make sense of this stupid system. Outside the visiting rooms a family approaches me, they ask if I'm a solicitor because they've seen me taking notes, I say I'm sorry but no ... They're desperate, their sister has a deportation order after 5 years of living in Britain, they don't know what to do or where to begin, all I can do is offer them the same advice, try to find a solicitor and stop the deportation ... and to explain the reality, yes there's really no one big organized movement to help ... we're just individuals trying to do SOMETHING.

AW:

«To this one in ourselves, to this image that might exclude this other one or be allergic to this other one. We know that someone who doesn't negotiate this hospitality in him or herself in a certain way cannot be hospitable to the Other, that you have to solve the problem within yourself, and it's already a society, a multiplicity of heterogeneous singularities, to be really smiling to the Other. If you are at war with yourself you may be allergic to the Other, that's what complicates the issue.»
Jacques Derrida

JM:

Late at night outside the Baxter detention centre there's a long concrete pipe that separates up from the cops and the rest of the prison, behind them a high double layer of fencing topped by razor wire, one of the fences is electrified, to touch it would knock you unconscious. There are no windows to the outside world in the camp, the detainees can't see us, all we can do to communicate is to make a noise. People find stones in the desert and together we begin to bang on the concrete pipe, the sound building and echoing in the night. At one point we pause and hear the detainees inside are



also chanting ... «Azadi, azadi!» It's the Farsi word for freedom.

AW:

At the border again, and we don't have our papers from the police. We never got them, didn't bother. But wave a red passport and they don't even look in it.

Biographical Note

Jet Moon and Alex Woodland are activists / artists living in London. Their presentation in Zagreb began with a short SM performance about border regimes. They are not academics – this paper is based on their day to day experiences as queer activists involved in no border politics. Both Jet and Alex are members of the No borders London collective and Queer mutiny London. Jet is also a member of the Queer Beograd collective.

Ministrastvo Unutarnjih Spolova: Negotiating Transition in a Foreign Language

Kate Symons

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw the rise of a Sarajevo-based television comedy show called Top lista nadrealista, or The Surrealist Hit Parade. This show was often compared to Monty Python's Flying Circus, although it had a much sharper satirical and political edge, as seen in one of its most famous sketches, which made much play with the then current efforts to split what was then known as Serbo-Croatian – *Srpsko-hrvatski / Hrvatsko-srpski* – into three separate languages: Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian, as different from one another as possible. The writers chose to highlight the three different forms of a short phrase which translates into English as «I read». In Bosnian this was «*ja čitam*», in Croatian «*ja čitam*», and in Serbian, «*ja čitam*». The point was, naturally, that they are identical. However, by using the present tense they side-stepped having to confront a fundamental characteristic of the language or languages (which I shall from now on refer to as BCS). For if the writers had used the past tense, «I was reading», they would have been forced to choose between «*ja sam čitala*» (I [a woman] was reading) and «*ja sam čitao*» (I [a man] was reading).

Adult native speakers of BCS do this without thinking twice. Non-native speakers learn to do this. For trans non-native speakers, and I think this is especially true for native speakers of English, it raises a whole series of questions. Here I shall discuss the problem from the aspect of grammar alone, but it is important to note that gendered performance of speech, with respect to the choice of lexical items, cadence, interaction and posture, plays a vital role.

The English language is fairly unusual in that it allows its speakers to avoid ascribing gender or sex to themselves, the person they are speaking to, or a third party, whether they are present or not. Although this may occasionally require some thought it can be done without a major effort, since English largely lacks a system of grammatical gender, with living creatures or personifications alone being referred to as she or he. Better put, in English grammatical gender directly maps onto social gender as a reflection of physical sex.

BCS, in contrast, is relentlessly, even remorselessly gendered. The system of grammatical gender requires a speaker to decide on the physical sex / social gender of a living being before any statement can be made, and for the sake of those who do not know BCS I would like to analyse a couple of sentences with this in mind.

The sun set, the moon rose and shone its silvery rays on



the quiet earth.

Sunce je zašlo, mesec je izašao i srebrnastim zracima osvetlio tihu zemlju.

Here the sun is neuter, the moon is masculine and the earth feminine, and if you were not aware of this already, the verb and adjective forms used specify. The rays are a special case, because this sentence is in Serbian, and they are masculine, whereas in Croatian they would be feminine. Of course, it is possible to gender this sentence in English, by personifying the heavenly bodies poetically, for instance:

The blazing sun set, the pale moon rose and shed her silvery rays on peaceful Mother Earth.

Although even here I have been compelled to defer to a lexical rather than grammatical strategy. However, in the sentence:

The moon is a satellite of the planet earth, which it orbits, and the earth orbits the sun, which is 150 million kilometers away from it,

it is not possible to take a poetic approach in English without sounding absurd. In BCS, however, where the sentence runs:

Mesec je satelit planete zemlje i on se okreće oko nje, a zemlja se okreće oko sunca, koje je od nje udaljeno 150 miliona kilometara,

the moon is still he, the sun is still it and the earth is still she. The grammatical system remains the same when people are involved as actors or subjects or referents, so that it is possible to tell from the phrase «*jedva sam stigla*» or «*jedva sam stigao*» whether the 'I' that barely managed to do something was a man or a woman.

Leaving aside such interesting questions as the rays' gender reassignment as they travel westwards, or the fact that a single child (*dete*) is neuter but becomes feminine singular (*deca*) in the plural, or the way in which Serbian male judges change gender to female when they get together in a group; I want to look at the way in which a speaker or writer of BCS is forced to gender human beings, not least him- or herself, and examine some of the problems I encountered and advantages that I discovered in terms of language when I transitioned.

I am not suggesting here that this is all a plot hatched by the Patriarchy to uphold and enforce the binary gender system, not least because, as we shall see, we are offered the possibility of

operating at least a tri-part system, and also a potentially powerful means of subversion. All the same, speaking about anyone, including oneself, in everyday speech means specifying gender. When speaking BCS, I want to present myself as a person with a coherent gender, after spending so long as a person with an incoherent one. This is an important point, and I will return to it later.

The first problem, of course, was remembering how to refer to myself, that is, remembering to use feminine forms instead of the masculine ones that I had learned before. This is something that I never had to do in English, as the first person is not gendered. In English it was my friends that had to do the hard work there, talking about me. It was in speaking BCS that I was forced to think about what I was actually doing myself, and to myself.

In the event, although I had been rather apprehensive, this turned out to be easy. Using the past tense, *ja sam bila* instead of *ja sam bio* wasn't a problem; using the feminine form of the adjective, *umorna* instead of *umoran* wasn't much of a problem; and any errors I made, and make, are probably lost among the mistakes in grammar that are regular features of my discourse. I did find fixed phrases more problematic, because they were formulae without a great deal of meaning for me, and so for some time I would sign off emails and letters as «*tvoj Kate*» instead of «*tvoja Kate*» until this was kindly pointed out to me. It was only very recently that I learned that foreign female personal names don't decline, whereas male ones do, and I shouldn't be writing «*za Jelenu, od Kate-a*» at all.

Now I am well aware that anecdotes are not data, but they are all I have to work with here, and the fact that, despite my expectations, I found it easy to gender myself as female when talking about myself as an actor, using verbs, and fairly easy to do so when describing myself, using adjectives, seems to me to support the idea that gender identity is extremely deeply rooted, even when it does not coincide with physical sex. This, by the way, is why I chose the title «*Ministrastvo unutarnjih spolova*». I've attempted to generate an English translation for this, but in the end all my attempts were extremely artificial. And since it was something that I actually came across *na terenu*, in the wild, I'll just explain that it is a typo for *Ministarstvo unutarnjih poslova*, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, where the Ministry has had the word *strast*, passion, inserted in it, and the Internal Affairs, *unutarnjih poslova*, have become *unutarnjih spolova*, or Internal Sexes.

I think it is significant that I have had and still do have much more difficulty with the words *ti* and *Vi*, singular and plural you, where *ti* is used to address familiars, small children, and God, and *Vi* to address strangers, and superiors. This is not simply with regard to etiquette, but also to number. However hard I try I am perfectly capable of coming out with «*Ljudi, molim te*», where *te*



should be *vas*, or of using *Vi* to a close friend, or *ti* to a stranger, stand-offish in the first instance and overly intimate in the second.

This gendered system was advantageous when introducing myself over the telephone, where I could establish my gender straight away by saying something like «*Dobar dan, zovem se Kate Symons, dobila sam Vaš broj od ...*». It's practically impossible to do something as simple as this in English. In addition, you receive a lot more unconscious feedback from other people, who gender you when addressing you or when talking about you in your presence. On the other hand, when someone is actually aware of your status and wants to attack you, it hands them a very powerful weapon. This has indeed happened to me, and it was very unpleasant, as they unremittingly used the masculine forms of verbs, adjectives and pronoun directly and indirectly.

Where I do start to run into problems is on occasions when I want to avoid ascribing a gender to myself, and this usually happens when I talk about myself in the distant past. I'm certainly not going to say «when I was a little boy», and I can't bring myself to say «when I was a little girl». I wasn't. So I simply say, «when I was young» or something of the sort. Or if I'm talking about a former girlfriend, I'll just say, «my ex». It is not possible to do this in BCS. I am forced to say, «*kad sam bila mlada*», feminine, or «*kad sam bio mlad*», masculine, or «*moja bivša partnerka*». The neutrality of English is not an option, and I miss that option. Even when I begin: «in my childhood», «*u svom detinstvu*», I know that I am going to run into gender trouble very soon. In practice, of course, I use the feminine forms, although I do feel slightly uncomfortable about it. And I feel really uncomfortable about referring to myself as a *muzičarka* or *novinarica*, which are feminine marked forms for musician and journalist, particularly because of the feminist move to exclude marked forms like actress and poetess from English. I realise that in these countries introducing the marked forms, is a move in quite the opposite direction. And I understand the reasons for this, as evinced in a number of papers that have been given at this conference, but it still feels odd to use them.

On the other hand, this gendered grammatical system opens up a wide field of subversive options. Apart from anyone being able to use whatever form they choose, regardless of their physical sex, current gender role, gender history and so forth, it allows me to say, «*kad sam bila mlada*», using a feminine verb form and a masculine adjective, or the other way around, «*kad sam bio mlada*». I've tested this on close friends, people who are quite aware of gender issues, and the common reaction is simply: «No, no, you can't do that. It's just wrong, you can't say it». Of course I can say it if I wish to, but nevertheless many native speakers find it disturbing and unnatural. Ideally, fruitfully so. I might even say,

«*kad sam bilo mlado*», neuter, if I want to avoid either the one or the other. Much as in English, though, that too can potentially be used insultingly. I certainly never hope to be called 'it' ever again.

Naturally, there are lexical matters to deal with as well. The first time someone asked me whether I was married while I was in transition, I didn't have a clue what they were talking about. A married man is *oženjen* and a married woman is *udata*, and having spent my life as *neoženjen* I didn't catch on at first. Once again, this opens up an area for creative play. Since I have not yet got round to taking advantage of the recent United Kingdom Gender Registration Act (2004), I can still legally marry a woman, but not a man. Thus as a woman I can say, «*nisam oženjena*», another linguistic monster, and one that I am rather fond of, because it tells a certain form of truth.

The problem is that in practice I am unwilling to do so. I spoke earlier about wanting to present myself as a person with a coherent gender, but I might equally have said that I'm a person conforming to a gender, or a person with a simple, consistent and natural gender, which of course I am not. Maybe no one is, but I certainly am not. So in the end, after having pointed out the opportunities offered by BCS for gender subversion and creativity, in everyday life I do the very opposite: I hide my trans status, underline the illusion of a gender binary, and as much as I can, I make myself invisible. It's very tempting for transpeople to become complicit in the erasure of their own identities and attempt to vanish from sight, and this is something which has led to fierce polemics. Yet on the other hand, facing these problems, thinking about them, and experiencing them, have perhaps led me along some of the journey from being a *domaćica* to becoming an *aktivistkinja*.

Biographical Note

Kate Symons is from the UK, has a long-standing interest in the cultures of South-Eastern Europe, and has worked on human rights in the area for an international organisation. She is currently working as a translator.



If a Whore Can't be Raped, Can an Angel?: Using Poetry and Art to Reach the Silent Survivors of Sexual Assault

Marta Sanchez

Presenter goals

When I speak, I speak for survivors of sexual violence. I do not represent them, because it is virtually impossible to represent a silent, isolated community that rarely makes its voice heard. I speak for them, so that they will know that the violence they experienced was not their fault, and so they will know that they are not alone.

As a survivor, I face many of the same challenges that keep other survivors silent. We are silenced by a society that does not appreciate individuals based on skewed valuations of factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status. We are silenced by myths that perpetuate both blame and shame. We are silenced by media focus on the details of the violence, rather than on the harm it causes.

In order to overcome this silence, I use poetry and art to facilitate dialogue, in hopes of reaching both silent survivors of sexual violence and community members who would like to do something to end it, but who find themselves unclear about how to help. Neither I nor any of the participants express detailed accounts of the sexual violence we have experienced. Instead, the focus is on using the artwork to talk about the obstacles that prevent survivors from accessing help, and to help participants express the feelings, such as isolation, that occur as a result of sexual violence.

In working with gentle non-challenging forms of expression like poetry and art, the message easily transforms into one of hope for healing and strength, specifically the strength to break down the barriers preventing individuals from accessing support and reporting perpetrators.

Workshop process

This workshop uses paintings from [The Angel Series](#), which were created to accomplish three tasks: 1) to challenge the way some members of society are valued over others, 2) to counter rape myths, and 3) to shift blame from survivors of sexual violence to perpetrators of sexual violence. In particular, this workshop encourages participants to consider how minorities, women, intersex people, trans people, and LGB populations are particularly affected by stereotypes regarding sexual violence. It concludes with a collective effort to determine solutions to the problem of reaching silent survivors, in order to further the goal of

ending sexual violence.

At the beginning of the workshop, participants are asked to select the images that they most identify with, that speak to them, or that they connect with. They hold these images with them throughout the session.

After selecting images from approximately thirty angel paintings and prints, the participants are asked to share their feelings and reflections with the group. The question is usually posed as «What made you choose the image you hold, and what does it make you think about?». Often the angel becomes a means for survivors to share their own experiences, or those of their loved ones, in an anonymous and safe way. It is only after the participant shares their input that the group is told why the particular image was created, and other ways that image has been viewed. There are no right answers, and the main goal is to create a safe space where dialogue can flow.

After each participant has shared their reflections, and each image in the series has been discussed, the participants are asked to consider «How can we reach the silent survivors?». Many have already mentioned the considerable myths and misperceptions that prevent survivors from accessing help, so the next step is to decide how to counter these myths. Participants are also asked to think about what they are feeling at the end of the workshop and to write about their responses.

The Angel Series

Each Angel in the Series brings a particular message to the workshop dialogue. What is discussed tends to differ based on what the individual who chooses the image perceives, but the basic idea is usually the same. The messages of the first three paintings reflect the principle goals of both the series and the workshop.

The Angel Series begins with a painting entitled If a whore can't be raped, can an angel?. There is an assumption that women who are promiscuous or who sell their bodies for a living cannot be violated. They are thought to be too flawed to have a voice, or too desperate to want to use their autonomy to make the decision to deny anyone access to their bodies. Either people assume that their consent is implied in the way that they live their lives, or they feel that rape is a fitting punishment for a woman who refuses to live within the lines of what is considered proper behavior for a woman. So often it is the survivor whose lifestyle, behavior, preferences, sexuality, and status become relevant to deciding whether or not an assault has occurred. Credibility somehow has become linked to purity, innocence, perfection.

And yet, culture dictates that the perfect woman would never be raped. The myths all state she would know better than to



'get herself raped'. She would protect herself, avoid risky behavior, only associate with reliable characters, and would never have to worry about sexual assault. So often, talks said to cover sexual assault prevention actually focus on risk reduction. Women are told things like «trust your instincts», «don't go out at night», «don't go out alone», «don't use drugs or alcohol», «if you decide to drink watch your glass at all times».

While these are all worthwhile things to implement if we are concerned with reducing the risk that we will experience sexual violence, passing this list off as sexual assault prevention gives many people the impression that if you are following the guidelines you will never experience sexual violence. The focus on risk reduction directly contradicts the main message advocates later try to express to survivors: «It was not your fault». Asking survivors of the crime, or possible victims of the crime to prevent it, encourages misplaced blame. It supports this dichotomy of whore and perfect woman, neither of whom, according to prevailing rape myths, are capable of being raped.

The second image in the series plays with the line between whore and perfect woman, by featuring a bright red nude angel. This angel's message focuses on why it is problematic to accept the rape myths as true. If we accept the myths and say that some women do ask for it, some people do deserve to be raped, the challenge is how do we know who is an angel and who is a whore? And who gets to decide? We have to acknowledge that in accepting that some women deserve to be raped, we then have to allow for error. This means that anyone can qualify as deserving to be raped, because ultimately the perpetrator has discretion, and will get to determine who fits the stereotype. This means none of us are safe until the day that we are all safe, all worthy of legal protection, and all worthy of being respected.

If neither a whore nor a perfect woman can be assaulted according to rape myths, all we have left are angels. So, the third image in the series asserts «Only an angel can be raped». This image is meant not only to critique how high standards are set for survivors to be considered credible witnesses to their own assaults, but also to reassure survivors that they are not to blame for someone else's actions. In order to shift blame from survivors, the painting asserts that all survivors of sexual assault are angels. In the moment that they are assaulted they are perfectly innocent, flawless. There was nothing they could have done differently, and there was nothing they did to deserve what was done to them.

Unlike the rape myths, the angel series acknowledges that anyone can be a survivor of sexual violence, regardless of their gender, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, or occupation. The series also asserts that no one deserves to be sexually assaulted.

Participant responses from the Transgressing Gender Conference

Although the participants provided insightful comments throughout the workshop, only responses to the final stage of the workshop were written down before being shared. During this part of the workshop, participants were asked three general questions:

- How can you reach out to the silent survivors in your community?
- How can we best counter rape myths?
- What are your thoughts and feelings at the end of this workshop?

These are some of the responses the participants provided at the Transgressing Gender: two is not enough for gender(e)quality conference.

1.) «I had my different thoughts about people I know who were hurt by other people's not respecting their bodies. Powerful idea of '*mi cuerpo es mio*', I will be thinking more about that, the relation between your body and its pleasure or pain and others. Rape in lesbian community where I live is quite common, it's just not seen as such. I feel like having some kind of workshop on trust and where the limits are of consenting and how important it is to talk about sex and feelings. Thank you Marta. *Muchisimas Gracias*. I really like Angelita concept, because it is feminine, no feminine name for an Angel in Russian ☺. Powerful paintings.»

2.) «'How do we reach the silent survivors?' We can't assume that they will feel comfortable coming to an organization or group devoted to issues of sexual violence, gender, and/or feminism (obviously). So, I propose an outreach to other groups. If we propose a workshop to these groups, perhaps some people who are involved and need help will get something they didn't feel able to go out and get themselves.»

3.) «Make a play about it with people who lived through those problems and survived it. Travel the world with it ... Once again I see my way. I am inspired and know that my decisions are the right ones for me.»

4.) This participant drew two diagrams. The first diagram was a large circle, next to a smaller circle labeled «need help». There were questions like «useful?» and «space?». One interpretation could be a perception of the gap between those who need help and those who provide it, and questioning how we can be most



useful, and what is the best space in which to reach out to those who have experienced sexual violence. The second diagram was:

violence
silence = loneliness

The participant then drew a line between loneliness and the word «place». An arrow indicated the place caused by violence was one where survivors are alone, where they have either «no voice» or «voice that you don't want to hear». «The voice that you don't want to hear» was broken down into: «perpetrators voice» or «voice of people who don't pay attention».

5.) «'How do we reach the silent survivors?' Listen, be quiet, learn when you have to be silent, especially when you are in a position of privilege / domination. Be cautious not to use alienating language and other things.»

6.) «Approach them with an open heart and listen to them. Show them that they are not alone and that we empathize with them. We cannot pick the pieces of their broken soul, but maybe we can help them to put them back together again.»

7.) This participant supplied a list of suggestions:

- Rape survivors need to see someone like themselves when they go for help.
- Advertising that mentions trans people or other minorities.
- Articles about how silent survivors have felt about sexual violence.
- Advocates to help people apply for money for therapy.
- Training for police and emergency room personnel.
- Hot-lines with diverse volunteers to create more rapport.
- Research on the frequency of sexual violence in minority communities.
- Poets / artists representing this topic.
- Not being silent if we can afford to speak out.

Conclusion

Each participant had a wealth of knowledge to share, and approached this issue from a unique perspective. Their feedback was encouraging, as it supported the belief that the collective solutions we find will always be more powerful and far-reaching than anything we can develop individually. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to present this workshop in such a diverse setting,

to such an amazing group.

Biographical Note

Marta Sanchez, a self-taught visual artist and poet, was born and raised in the Republic of Panama. She is a sexual assault survivor who, in sharing her work, aims to simultaneously raise awareness, reassure other survivors and encourage the advocates who support them. Sanchez, a former rape crisis center educator, is a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law and Spelman College. To view her work please visit www.poetryandart.org



Strategies against Transphobia

Vlatka Frketić and Persson B. Baumgartinger

This article is a summary of the workshop Feminist Strategies Against Transphobia held on the conference Transgressing Gender – Two is not enough for gender (e)quality in Zagreb from 7th to 9th October 2005.

Theoretical background

The theoretical background of our workshop is mainly informed by critical discourse analysis (CDA) – situated within the framework of Viennese critical discourse analysis, queer linguistics and different feminist and antiracist approaches.

The approach of CDA underscores the action-oriented character of discourse and sees it as a social practice. It emphasizes the situatedness and contextualization of discourse. There is also an underlying understanding of critique that directly corresponds to socio-political engagement, critiquing the abuse of power and hegemonic structures in society and formulating emancipatory claims. CDA focuses on knowledge, differences and commonalities of knowledge within discursive mechanisms, and especially on racist and discriminatory¹ discourses, self-empowering and self-liberating discourses, as well as the effects of this knowledge.

We don't see discriminatory discourses as only pertaining to transgendered² people. They affect migrants, lesbians and gays, Black people, disabled people, religious and other marginalized groups³. Different discriminations work on different categories that can't be separated but are deeply linked and depend on the context people are in. As different categories of one person are linked together, different people of one (communicative) situation and their different and/or similar categories are linked together – very often someone is not only a woman but also e.g. a disabled Black woman or a gay intersexed person etc.

Stressing the common shared discriminations does not cover up the difference, different matters and needs of separate

¹ We define discrimination as an effective worse positioning based on socially systematic power asymmetry grown historically between different societal groups.

² In this text the terms trans or transgendered are used as umbrella terms that include all gender variant people by self-definition and also by definition of others (e.g. medical definition in case of intersexuality). We are aware of critique particularly of transsexuals who don't find themselves under the term transgendered especially because of their medical and surgery treatments. In this text we decided to use the term transgendered to make the transgressing process visible.

³ The term «marginalized group» does not refer to a low number of group members but to their lower power towards a hegemonic majority.

groups but stresses the mechanisms that take and remain in effect on the individual groups.

Discriminative acts or practices change the discriminating as well as the discriminated person or group on an individual and socio-political level. When someone does not intervene in a discriminatory act, that individual confirms and legitimates the discrimination and also his/her own propitious status and privileges in the society. The absence of anti-discriminatory laws legitimate discrimination in this same way. This is why we think that phobic violence against transgendered people does not only pertain to transgendered but to all involved. In this text and also in the workshop the focus mainly lies on the individual level that is involved in structural discriminatory practices.

Survival strategies

Developing counter strategies on an individual and structural level relies upon the knowledge of the different systematic mechanisms of discrimination. Because of that there is a necessity for differentiated approaches to and discussions on this topic. Just as discriminating acts affect ALL the involved people of a specific (discursive) situation, so do counter strategies affect ALL people involved. If only the discriminated would develop counter strategies the individual, social and political responsibility for discrimination would be left on them. Because counter strategies often facilitates survival in a social and physical sense, we also call them 'survival strategies'.

Survival strategies and transgendered

Transgendered people have to find their own strategies to deal with transgender-specific exploitations, exclusions and violence in every day life situations. This makes it necessary to develop and use several survival strategies. They could be realized through transgender sensitive education in political groups or groups void of political objectives and numerous other contexts.

A very important survival strategy for us is to label oneself, to re-appropriate a derogative term. In doing so, an opposition is taken within the framework of resistant positions and actions. For example, when transgendered people in German speaking countries take on the word «*Transe*» (a derogatory term for transgendered) and change the connotations linked to it, this could be an act of self-definition and self-empowerment equal to terms like «*queer*» or «*fag*» in Anglo-American history.

Why people choose to appropriate a label – to mark themselves – and when someone decides to resist such labeling remains a constant field of contention.

There are numerous categories for analyzing discriminatory discourses, in CDA as well as in other branches of analysis. However, there are only a few suitable methods for analyzing anti-discriminatory discourses. Questions as to how anti-discriminatory discourses are constructed or which strategies are applied could be asked then.

Frequently Said Bullshit (FSB)

The method we used in our workshop on the Transgressing Gender Conference in Zagreb is based on 'Frequently Said Bullshit' (FSB) that was compiled by a group called Political Black Migrants⁴ from Vienna. FSB is a collection of questions, comments etc. that migrants and Black people do not want to hear anymore, although they are frequently repeated. Araba Evelyn Johnston-Arthur coined this expression. Based on this FSB collection, that group worked out counter-strategies against racism and discrimination and in doing so, they developed the FSB method. This method was also appropriated by Persson B. Baumgartinger in the field of transgendered people by collecting FSB in mailing lists.

Workshop description

The goal of our workshop was not only to talk about experiences with transphobic violence, but also to develop empowerment strategies against this violence⁵.

First the FSB utterances were collected. Afterwards small groups formed to play out situations with at least one of the collected FSB. The role-plays were shown to the other participants, and then they chose one role-play to repeat. Now the participants had the chance to freeze wherever they wanted to and try out how several counter strategies could work by taking over different characters. The participants then discussed the

⁴ Members of the Political Black Migrants are: Abi-Sara Machold, Araba Evelyn Johnston-Arthur, Vlatka Frkezić, Erica Doucette, Ildiko Naetar-Baksci, Georgia Sever, Krisztina Der et al.

⁵ «One principle of empowerment is that assistance is replaced by the introduction and support of a process by means of which the women (transgendered, migrants, Black people) obtain the control over their decisions and actions regarding the different aspects of their lives. They express their needs and mobilize themselves in order to obtain a better political, social and cultural strength to respond to their needs and at the same time get involved in making of decisions regarding the improvement of conditions of their lives and their community. Empowerment, as we understand it, implicates that the formation of power is sustained by a social transformation». Rubia Salgado and Ilona Horwath, (eds.) (2004): *Empowerment and training for migrant women*. Workshop Summary, Murcia 24.10.2003. Partnership against Racism and Discrimination. Cooperation for Equality in the European Union. Transnational Feedback Circle, <http://no-racism.net/tfc>

each intervention. The discussions made clear that not every intervention would work as a counter strategy, so the participants could find out which may be useful in real life and which may not.

The role-play situation the group was working with was as follows: a feminist group had a meeting in a bar. A former friend of one of the group members arrived and was introduced to the others. When it came time to introduce the transgendered group member the former friend started to be aggressive and transphobic. By freezing and changing the played situations the whole workshop group tried out different counter strategies. Survival strategies worked out during the role-plays:

- Asking other people for help in situations where the transgendered person was attacked;
- Stand up as a group against the aggressor without being asked by the attacked;
- Introduction by others (preferred name and pronoun).

All the strategies we found can be useful in some situations, and in others not. Context, space and atmosphere are always important categories not only within phobic situations. But especially in violent situations people most of the time have to decide individually what survival strategies can be useful and how they empower themselves.

The first two counter strategies share the idea that a group may be stronger than an individual. Silence and non-acting may co-construct and determine a hetero-normative violent situation and as we mentioned above discrimination does not only concern the discriminated. Whereas in the first example the attacked him/herself asks people for help, in the second strategy people within the situation react by themselves. Both strategies were empowering for the attacked ('I am not alone') and weakening for the aggressor ('I am alone'). When group members intervened the responsibility of reacting in an anti-discriminatory way was transferred at least to a small part of the society. This may demonstrate why in the role-play the aggressed didn't feel alone anymore but the aggressor suddenly did. If the group members would not have intervened, the situation would have been discriminating twice: first through the aggressor and second through the silence and non-acting of the others. Such actions confirm and strengthen the discriminatory act on an individual and a structural level.

Introducing someone by their preferred name and referring to this person by chosen pronouns were other counter strategies found in the workshop during role-play as well as during discussions afterwards. These strategies give the transgendered person a confirmation and authority by others and so to speak, by



the public. This is important because often people don't seem to believe in individual opinions and situations but do co-perform (e.g. gender, ethnicity etc.) if others do this too.

Because gender is constructed in every discursive action, and because the binary gender system has a very strong social currency, gender variant people have to construct themselves and be co-constructed by others in discursive actions again and again to stress their preferred gender, especially if they don't pass or don't want to pass as male or female. Referring to a person by preferred pronouns is a strategy frequently used by friends of transgendered people to emphasize and co-construct their chosen gender in a space where gender is seen in a binary gender system. That shows the impact and empowerment of co-constructing and stressing the chosen gender in discursive actions on a linguistic level.

Counter strategies were also found during the discussions after the role-plays. For example, to make the preferred gender clear from the beginning of a situation, others can introduce the transgendered by preferred name and if the language allows this by the gendered article. For example in German you can introduce somebody by saying «*Das ist DER Martin*» / «This is THE (masculine article) Martin» or «*Ich bin DIE Gabi*» / «I am THE (feminine article) Gabi». Because in German the articles are gendered (feminine, masculine and neutral), it is possible to stress the chosen gender by emphasizing the male, female or neutral article. This strategy can be used by transgendered themselves (self-construction) and by friends and supporters (co-construction).

Empowerment strategies

We see the two methods, collecting FSB and trying out several counter strategies against phobic violence as empowerment strategies.

Trying out several counter strategies within role-plays can be very powerful to find out in which situations a strategy may work and in which it may not. For example, during the role-play the participants, inspired by the idea that being touched by the transgendered would shock the aggressor and make him or her go away, tried out flirting with the aggressor. In our role-play this strategy turned out not to work, the aggressor was empowered and became more aggressive on a supplementary level of sexuality.

In our opinion there must be as much space for strategies turning out to work or to work sometimes as well as the ones not working. In real life situations it is as important to know strategies that support the oppressed position and also to know which ones don't. So that one may avoid making an already aggressive

situation more aggressive. One may avoid strategies that don't empower the oppressed but give more power to the aggressor.

Collecting utterances that never ever want to be heard again by transgendered (FSB) seems to be a good strategy for empowerment for marginalized people and also for understanding and reflection for (in this specific context on several specific categories) non-marginalized people. This was once again confirmed by the workshop on the Transgressing Gender Conference in Zagreb in October 2005. We want to show the great variety of Frequently Said Bullshit collected in our workshop and list them as they appeared in the workshop:

What do your genitals look like?
How do you want your genitals to be?
Do you really want a penis?
You are transgender? – Ah, I know somebody who is gay.
Oh, but you were/are so feminine!
You are in the wrong place (in the toilet, no matter if men's or woman's).
But you are/were such a nice girl!
You are not even a real butch.
You are just confused!
Wanna take off your breasts? But they are so nice!
What is trans?
How does it feel to be trans?
If sex and gender are constructions, why would you want to transition?
If you try to come to terms with your body, you will get over it!
What? You want to be a MAN?
If you want to get fuck with guys, why don't you do it as a woman?
Oh, but you will always be Lisa to me.
He was ... she was ... whatever ...
Justus said, that she did ...
I don't feel as a woman – Oh, you want to be a man?!
You WANT to be a man?
It is not natural.
Surgery on a healthy body is sick.
Are you a man?
You're T? That's because of the bad influences of the urban queer scene.
You're getting way too deeply involved into your research topic.
You read too many gender books.
You just have to love yourself.
You're too insecure about yourself.
Do you have problems with your sexual life?
The old person I knew is now dead?
You have internalized lesbophobia.
So what identity change is going to come next?



I do not accept the idea of trans because I'm against gender roles.
You always wanted to be special.
I always wanted to have sex with somebody exotic.
You don't feel as a man or woman? So why do you want to go on hormones / do surgery etc.?
Splitting past and present into he and she: e.g. in school she was, well then he was a she ...
How did your parents react?
We lost two feminist activists (coming from feminist activist).
You're trans, so you want to become a woman (asked to FTM).
Speaking about trans* (FTM) and referring to them as a transWOMAN.
You're a traitor to womanhood.
Transgenders are freaks. They are afraid of fully transitioning (which they'll do in the end, 'cause you cant live as transgender) [coming from TS].
You are gay? But you're a trans person.
Since you say you are genderqueer, I can call you anything.
So when should we start calling you he?
Maybe you need some more time to think about it before you decide.
But YOU have to know.

A lot of these questions do not only affect transgendered but also e.g. Black people, migrants, disabled etc. We shortly want to go into this field just touching upon several thoughts. For example the questions «What do your genitals look like?». A lot of heterosexuals, gays, transgendered etc. ethnically exoticize the genitals of Black or Arabic men with utterances like «The penis is surely bigger than the penis of white men». Also the question about how it could feel to be somebody seen as non-conformative seems to be a very important question: «How does it feel to be transgender?» «How does it feel to be Black?» «How does it feel to be Migrant?» are very frequently asked questions. 'Naturality' is another construction that is mentioned very often when hetero-normative systems seem to be called into question: «This is not natural» is often heard in contexts of gender, relationship between Black people and Whites or even the hair of Black women. Or the idea that somebody can be 'seduced' by theories and/or books is stressed by mentioning, «You read too many gender books / antiracist literature». Last but not least we want to mention the links that are made to sexuality if somebody is seen as 'exotic'. The ideas of having 'exotic' sex are formerly stirred up by several myths that are told about 'pervert' sexual behavior of people not seen as hetero-normative. This may affect gays and lesbians, Black people, transgendered etc.

In this workshop the participants concentrated on individual levels of exchange but nonetheless structural levels are

always present. The individual and structural levels are linked together since the latter are built by discursive actions individuals construct and determine in their everyday discursive behavior.

Biographical Note

Vlatka Frketić is engaged in activism and theoretical work in the field of minority rights, trying to queer anti-discriminatory work. Vlatka works as the trainer in the fields of anti-discrimination, antiracism and empowerment.

Persson B. Baumgartinger is pursuing a PhD in queer linguistics, engages in activism and trainings on the topics trans*, anti-discrimination and queerness.



Social Contexts

Cutting Both Ways: TransSurgery¹ and the Discursive Currency of the Cosmetic

Anne Koch-Rein

«Dear Breasts,
If I had you surgically removed, would you:
a) feel abandoned,
b) haunt me,
c) notice?»

(Storm Florez)²

Intro

Judith Butler's suggestion that we «understand cosmetic surgery on a continuum with all other practices that humans engage in order to maintain and cultivate primary and secondary sex characteristics» (86) is exemplary of a larger trend in queer (and/or) feminist and transgender scholarship that links transSurgery and other forms of bodily modification, especially cosmetic surgery³. While in previous⁴ analyses, these were sometimes pitted against each other to denounce one, or compared to criticize and dismiss both, they are here – as if in a countermove – made equivalent to depathologize both.

To assess under what conditions this 'cosmeticization' can be successful as a move to rethink transSurgery, the following paper – after fleshing out and situating the proponents' arguments a little further – sketches some of the challenges, contexts, and potential pitfalls. The equation of transSurgery and cosmetic surgery does not have to be to the detriment of one or both, but

¹ Throughout this paper, instead of problematic, contested or narrow terms like sex / gender reassignment or sex change surgery, the neologism transSurgery will be used (except in original quotes, of course) to denote all kinds of surgical bodily modifications undergone by transgender-identified people. This term is intended to encompass the surgical considerations and practices of more kinds of trans* and to complicate misconceived notions of a single magical operation as the be all and end all of transsexuality.

² Florez 111.

³ Incidentally, this same link probably motivated Reed Erickson, a millionaire transman who in 1964 established a foundation (EEF) mainly to support homosexual, transgender/sexual and new age movements, to also fund «the Interplast (International Plastic Surgery) project, which provided corrective plastic surgeries at no charge to impoverished children in Latin America and Africa» (Devor and Matte 187).

⁴ This is not meant to subscribe to a notion of a teleological progress of theory/-ies, or imply that any of these arguments are not being put forth by someone the second I write this.

can be mutually beneficial, especially in thinking more complexly about the dilemmas of agency, embodiment, and the perpetual search for subversion.

Situating the cosmeticization: theory and technology

The new discursive currency of the cosmetic that re-conceptualizes transSurgery must be understood in the larger context of theoretical work that has turned the body from a stable ground and unquestionable biological given into a site of becoming and transformation which can «expose realities to which we thought we were confined as open to transformation» (Butler 217). The body has not only been under de/construction in academia, its destabilization has also happened on an explicitly hands-on level through its increasing technological malleability. And once the body emerges as a site of speculation, hands-on experimentation, and questioning, «natural gender and biological sex» become «merely antiquated categories» (Halberstam 129).

With this abandonment of 'sex', «the social-interactional body» has emerged «[...] as a work-in-progress» (Kessler 132) through a doing of gender that frequently relies on technological intervention. These interventions are multiple: «cutting and stitching the flesh, piercing, tattooing, branding, [...] prosthetics» (Nataf 188). Cosmetic surgery has likewise been contextualized as «a practice [...] [l]ike [...] pierced-nose rings, tattoos, and hair sculptures [...] a vehicle for staging cultural identities» (Balsamo 78). Others have, e.g., linked transSurgery to bodybuilding (Cromwell 129) or cosmetic surgery to dietary regimes and exercising (Kubisz 24). Butler speaks of «technologies of the body (surgical, hormonal, athletic)» that «generate new forms of gender» (203). Judith Halberstam illuminates some reasons and goals of these invocations of the cosmetic:

«I do think that the terms we have inherited from medicine to think through transsexualism, sex changes and sexual surgery must change. [...] I propose that we call all elective body alterations for whatever reason (postcancer or postaccident reconstruction, physical disabilities, or gender dysphoria) cosmetic surgery» (Halberstam 130).

Her anti-'exceptionalist' argument drives at understanding transSurgery along the lines of other body alterations, and not as a special case of a medicalized, supposedly pathological gender identity disorder. Cosmeticization serves to make transSurgery carry no more or less a burden of justification than other kinds of cosmetic surgery (or bodily modification or non-modification). TransSurgery becomes, in Alice Kessler's words «neither more nor less elective than a face lift» (Kessler 122).



Contexts: mutilation, narcissist stigma, and 'body project'

Likening transSurgery to, or understanding it as, cosmetic surgery is not a new phenomenon and there have been different argumentative benefits reaped from making this connection.

a) Against God and Nature: 'mutilation'

Even before large-scale debates about transSurgery in the U.S., «[David O. Cauldwell in 1949] portrayed sex change surgery as mutilation» (Meyerowitz 105). This was (and is) a charge frequently brought against what is argued to be 'nonfunctional surgery'. Jay Prosser explains

«[...] the cultural stigmatization of transsexuality and the misconceptions that underpin this: that transsexuality consists in the brutal mutilation of healthy bodies, that sex reassignment surgery does not so much effect sex change as it transmogrifies 'normal' men and women [...]» (Prosser 81).

One of the reasons why charges of mutilation seem remarkably persistent is an underlying Judeo-Christian conceptualization of the body as «divine creation» (Kubisz 86), obvious for instance when Jacob Hale reports being told transSurgery is «sinning» (252). But outcries against mutilation also come in more secular versions. And they are not exclusive to criticisms of transSurgical practices, even though here they often appear to be particularly loud, because they «meddl[e] with the intricate, intimate, and rarefied domain of sex to a much greater degree» (Prosser 81). Many other forms of 'messing with' the body, like cosmetic surgery, share the risk of being perceived as 'going too far', as disturbing ideas of natural (god-given) beauty (Haiken 254).

The rhetoric of self-mutilation is one place where transSurgery and a wide range of other practices of bodily modification have intersected to their detriment. Calling transSurgery cosmetic in this perspective only means it is sinful and 'unnatural' mutilation, which understandably makes some trans* activists cringe at the renaissance of the term.

b) What's in a name? Cosmetic stigma, cosmetic costs

Unfortunately, cultural critics often leave unquestioned, even reinforce, the all too neat separation of the term 'plastic surgery' in medical parlance, in which «reconstructive surgery works to repair catastrophic, congenital, or cancer-damage deformities, [and] cosmetic or aesthetic surgery is often an

entirely elective endeavor» (Balsamo 58). This distinction has frequently served to maintain the respectability of reconstructive against cosmetic surgery. In actuality, it is a highly unstable differentiation that depends on who thinks surgery is beneficial or 'medically indicated', and for what reasons. Take for example having «the local transgender surgeon [...] step in» to do a reconstruction «in the likeness of a male» (Baird 261) instead of 'fake boobs' after a cancer-induced mastectomy that entirely queers the idea of a stable differentiation between reconstructive and cosmetic.

The distinction between cosmetic and reconstructive is also a «moral» (Rubin 60) one. Jay Prosser explains the moral distinction as one of superficiality: «'[C]osmetic' implies a greater superficiality, as if cosmetic surgery intervened in an even more 'surface' surface of the self» (82). And even now that cosmetic surgery's uses, representations, and numbers proliferate, there is still a strong residue of precisely this «stigma associated with voluntary surgery» (Rubin 61), a «stigma of narcissism» (Haiken 7), as Haiken puts it. She argues that it has largely vanished, but I would insist that it is still present and strategically employed to distinguish acceptable from unacceptable, natural from unnatural (desires for) bodily change. It lurks behind the mix of freak show scopophilia and desire to see beauty crafted on flesh that drives the countless television shows on cosmetic surgery in the U.S. (and Germany). That the line is shifting and contestable is precisely what makes it an effective discursive weight to shift around.

There is also a significant financial and therefore equally strategic dimension to the distinction between 'voluntary' / cosmetic and reconstructive. Putting transSurgery in «association with the cosmetic enables many health insurance companies to classify it as such in an attempt to evade funding responsibilities» (Prosser 81). TransSurgery in general is very costly, even if prices between the various procedures differ greatly. Arguing that transSurgery is cosmetic to depathologize it, and strip it of any freakish extraordinariness, thus runs the risk of making it financially unattainable for even more people. Judith Halberstam has addressed this problem as follows:

«As always, discursive effects are altered by capitalist relations in ways that are unforeseeable. I do not think we should give up on the cosmeticization of transsexualism in order to appease insurance companies. Rather, we should argue that cosmetics are never separate from 'health', and insurance companies should not be the ones making such distinctions, anyway» (Halberstam 133 Fn. 11).



Judith Butler envisions a coalition between breast-cancer survivors and transsexuals «to petition insurance companies to recognize the role of autonomy in producing and maintaining primary and secondary sex characteristics» (Butler 86). This might at first appear to be a coalition formed more on the 'reconstructive' end, but in its insistence on the role of autonomy, it, too, works to destabilize and politicize the distinction altogether⁵.

c) The lure of self-making: the commodified 'body project'

Even if Haiken probably overstated her point that the stigma of narcissism had largely vanished, there is a strong mainstream current that endorses cosmetic surgery. What Gesa Lindemann has called «'tinkering' with the body» (Lindemann 142) at this particular moment emerges as a neo-liberal rhetoric of individualized responsibility for self-making and self-management, a 'body project' philosophy, «which holds in its center the notion of the body as workable, flexible, plastic and malleable» (Kubisz 10). In an «ideology of consumption», Kubisz argues, there is a «particular emphasis upon body maintenance and appearance» (Kubisz 8).

A simply celebratory rhetoric of cosmetic surgery produces «self-disciplining bodies whose significance depends on the result of the confrontation with the ideal of the mediated body» (Kubisz 20), yet clothes it in appealing and seemingly empowering terms of willful control over one's body and destiny, flexibility, self-management and self-marketability. This illusion of an individualistic freedom glosses over important cultural (and financial etc.) constraints. After all, «[t]he freedom of choice and of body projects function only in a clearly determined space» (Kubisz 33).

Any work towards a cosmeticization of transSurgery needs to be weary of the lure of a 'body project', so as to not move from outright condemnation to a celebration of surgeries that fails to acknowledge their social situatedness. Rubin writes that FTM body modification

«is not simply a 'do-your-own-thing' version of radical freedom or an individual nihilism that denies all cultural norms regarding gender, embodiment, and identity. Rather, [it] is a situated, contextual project of authenticity based on the principles and demands of recognition in modern society» (15).

⁵ Read against the backdrop of Butler's examples of absurd insurance struggles to keep different options of breast surgery separate this becomes even clearer. Cf. Butler 85f.

If fantasies of radically free self-making are on the one end of the spectrum that discourse on transSurgery can mobilize, a complete scholarly erasure of trans* agency and subjectivity is on the other.

TransSurgery for 'the dupes of gender'?

One notorious academic feminist critique of transsexuality is Bernice L. Hausman's book Changing Sex. It serves to exemplify some of the negative argumentative work the connection between transSurgery and cosmetic surgery has been put to do. For Hausman, the basic problem with transsexuality is its constitutive relation to medical discourse and technology⁶. She reduces transsexualism to a 20th century techno-medical phenomenon of which to be critical⁷. Surgery and transsexuality here are basically the same thing, and surgery is the problem⁸. Thus, it is no surprise that she uses the reader's assumed familiarity with feminist critiques of cosmetic surgery to problematize the idea of transsexuals as 'constructed' patients:

«Public knowledge about medical advances and technological capabilities produces a situation in which individuals can name themselves as the appropriate subjects of particular medical interventions, and thereby participate in the construction of themselves as patients. This process is especially true with regard to elective surgical procedures, such as cosmetic surgery» (Hausman 23).

In order to criticize transSurgery, Hausman makes a mockery of 'nonfunctional' / cosmetic procedures (for their [trifle?] focus on 'patient happiness'):

«'Patient happiness', an elusive response, became the mark of successful cosmetic procedure, since no functional goal could be sought. (Imagine open heart surgery, or even the removal of callouses, as having a primary goal of 'patient happiness'. [...])» (58).

In her transphobic⁹ Lacanian interpretation, she argues

⁶ This argument is all over her book, cf. for instance Hausman 3.

⁷ And severely critical she is, somehow half-heartedly declaring: «While in the end I am critical of the phenomenon of transsexualism, I hope it is clear that I do not (cannot) condemn transsexuals themselves» (Hausman xi). The word «condemn» speaks volumes here.

⁸ Skeptics might be inclined to locate the problem elsewhere – in a strict gender system with a male-female binary that takes its cues from physical characteristics, for example.



that «gender identity is a 'cover' for a desire to engineer oneself» (Hausman 138), and accuses transsexuals of engaging «in the semiotics of gender, on the order of simulation, in order to transgress the law of sexual difference that would mandate that they accept and accommodate themselves to the sexual meanings of their natural bodies» (Hausman 192). Even though she criticizes preceding texts like Janice Raymond's for «their nostalgia for the 'natural' or 'original' female body» (Hausman 10), she herself ultimately invests in the body as a no less romantic harbinger of resistance, setting limits to «plastic ideologies» (Hausman 66). In Hausman's view, gender identity is only a rhetoric cover for what (Hausman's scapegoat) transsexuals are really after, namely 'self-engineering', and the «antihumanism of technological self-construction» (Hausman 174). But in her view, the body thankfully 'resists' such 'misguided' attempts at engineering and 'simulation' «legible, for instance, in plastic surgeons' continuing difficulty in constructing penises and in the medical silence surrounding problems with vaginoplasty [...]» (Hausman 200). The agency lies not with the embodied subject, but on the contrary, the body itself becomes the agent of resistance. When bodies resist, it is usually nature that calls the shots. So, to no surprise, Hausman quite simply doesn't believe in transitioning¹⁰, or any reality of transsexuality, but in the «material distinctions of sex» (Hausman 69).

The bottom line of Hausman's anti-surgical stance is: In foolishly believing they could «engineer» themselves into perfectly gendered bodies of the 'opposite sex', «transsexuals are the dupes of gender. [...] [T]hey produce themselves as the simulacra of sexual difference» (Hausman 140).

When it comes to surgery, transsexuals are not alone in having been suspected or denounced as dupes, of course: «Who are thousands of women who decide to surgically improve their 'imperfect' bodies? Are they dupes, victims of the male gaze [...]?» (Kubisz 32). The next section will therefore pick up on this problem of agency more specifically by considering some of the feminist academic responses to cosmetic surgery.

⁹ Cromwell aptly calls her a «Raymond-esque feminist» (Cromwell 9), and she does e.g. quote (the notorious *The Transsexual Empire* author) Janice Raymond's controversial, dismissive views on transgenderism in the affirmative (Hausman 197).

¹⁰ Much like the hospital attendant Link describes: «It wasn't my pain he didn't believe in; it was my balls. [...] Only this time, the other person is the one with the little fucking problem dealing with reality. The little miracle of surgery is the way the surgeon can take your mental disorder and graft it on to someone else. The attendant was attempting to reject the transplant» (Link 90).

Cosmetic surgery: feminism, agency, and the politicized body

Female agency and subjectivity have traditionally been precarious in our persistent culture of male supremacy. Thus the question of agency has been an especially troublesome and crucial one for numerous feminist attempts at analyzing cosmetic surgery. There seemed to be a wide-spread consensus that from a certain perspective,

«[...] feminism and cosmetic surgery are unalterably opposed: cosmetic surgery represents capitulation to the cultural ideologies and beauty myths that have historically victimized women, while feminism [...] empowers women to resist such pressures» (Haiken 274).

But there was also considerable unease with what this meant for the agency of those undergoing such procedures. Kathy Davis «disliked the concomitant tendency among feminists to treat the recipients as nothing more than misguided or deluded victims» (455). In her study, Davis found cosmetic surgery to be «a complex dilemma» (456) and sought a compromise to salvage a degree of female agency on the level of the individual, while still criticizing societal beauty norms: «It is difficult to imagine that cosmetic surgery might entail both compliance and resistance» (Davis 463). In contrast to a critique that assumes an overwhelming cultural endorsement of cosmetic surgery that critics need to defend female bodies against, Davis found that the women she interviewed often pursued surgery «[...] in the face of considerable resistance from others» (460).

Some have argued that if in certain feminist perspectives 'succumbing' to ideals of beauty and surgical procedures means being a dupe deprived of agency, the reverse has to be true, too: One kind of embodiment makes a dupe, another makes the revolutionary. In this view, the body is a site on which feminine praxis becomes apparent, should be culturally critiqued, and a feminist praxis struggled for to «restore a concern for female praxis to its formerly central place in feminist politics» (Bordo 104f.)¹¹.

The lack of choice that this form of feminist surveillance produces is one of the problems of such cries for a totally politicized (or politically totalized?) body. They run the risk of falling back into a mode of counterproductive simplification, in

¹¹ Similarly, Bartky argues that «[f]emininity as a certain 'style of flesh' will have to be surpassed in the direction of something quite different, not masculinity, which is in many ways only its mirror opposite, but a radical and as a yet unimagined transformation of the female body» (Bartky 147).

which agency and politics are thought to clearly materialize and be legible on the body. As the battle of a certain strand of lesbian feminism «around the definition of the lesbian body» (Creed 122) documents, the idea of correct ways to negotiate one's subjection to gender and embodiment proved to be incredibly simplistic, normative, and oppressive, and to always privilege those who happened to have little adaptation to do to approximate the latest ideal. Normative concerns for bodily praxis also ran out of fashion because of their tendency to uphold a naturalized sexual binary. Balsamo therefore suggests «that feminists [...] abandon our romantic conceptions of the 'natural' body – conceptions that lead us to claim that a surgically refashioned face inevitably marks an oppressed subjectivity» (79).

Cosmetic surgery for many feminist critics exemplifies a gendered form of oppression, «the social pressures which are exercised upon women through their bodies – in particular, the cultural beauty norms» (Davis 458). The gendered dimensions of cosmetic surgery can seem rather simple and clear-cut in this view: «[W]omen are often the intended and preferred subjects [...] and men are often the agents performing the surgery» (Balsamo 58).

While this kind of 'sex counting' might statistically still be somewhat accurate, it disregards or marginalizes the degree to which male bodies, too, become surgical (Kubisz 25). In addition, such a binary analysis produces generalizations that fail to incorporate trans* perspectives. For instance, what does a sentence like: «[The] differential treatment of gendered bodies illustrates [that] the meaning of the presence or absence of any physical quality varies according to the gender of the body upon which it appears» (Balsamo 69), mean if, as in transSurgery, the gender of the body is precisely the object of the surgical (dis-)appearance of a physical quality? And who is to be counted among the subjugated class of 'female body' – a transman, a transwoman, both, or neither? The critics are surely right in noting a gendered dimension to cosmetic / body modification surgery. But it is more complex and shifting than some will have it.

Understanding transSurgery as cosmetic has to work both ways to rethink the all too familiar trajectory of what Kubisz calls «[t]he either/or question» of either oppression or empowerment that «does not allow for the specificity of the context in which the phenomenon of cosmetic surgery takes place» (Kubisz 32). With a similar «inevitable binarism of a debate about whether transsexual operations are redundant» (Halberstam 130) in relation to transSurgery, the debate on cosmetic surgery can profit from Henry Rubin's view that «[t]ranssexualism is not necessarily either hegemonic or subversive with regard to gender» (173).

If both cosmetic and transSurgery¹², i.e. if 'cosmetic

surgeries' in the broad sense, are about negotiating identity, and if drawing a fundamental distinction between surgical and other 'technologies of the body' is impossible, then the entire notion of the 'electiveness' of these surgeries must be questioned. Green writes that «the body is where we live and through it we communicate to others» (95), and there is nothing truly elective about this. Through identity, subjectivity, and the body we are part of an intricate web of meanings that we cannot escape, only negotiate within an incredibly small margin of appreciation. Butler explains why the question of agency, if put too simply, can never lead to a satisfactory answer: «If I have any agency, it is opened up by the fact that I am constituted by a social world I never chose». And not only «agency is riven with paradox» (Butler 3), the body, too, is constituted by the social world: «The body has its invariably public dimension; constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is and is not mine» (Butler 21).

The 'hegemonic or subversive' binarism is so futile because it is posed as if body modification or 'natural', seemingly non-modified embodiment could *per se* be classified as either one or the other, and as if politics and agency could be read off the body. But for any body not having surgery doesn't automatically translate into resistance (or necessarily means that the body is in any way less 'technological' or 'elective'), just as surgical modification isn't a telltale sign of compliance and 'dupe' status. Gayle Salamon helpfully suggests that we shouldn't simply consider the embodiment or its modification, but more importantly its lived meanings and their transformation through the insistence on the livability of embodiments (120) – «canonical, oppositional» (Kubisz 98) and ones that transcend the distinction.

Cutting both ways

The new discursive currency of the cosmetic turns a figure familiar from pathologizing mainstream accusations of mutilation or narcissism, and certain feminist condemnations of transSurgery on its head. The proponents of this new cosmeticization rely on the idea that thinking of transSurgery as cosmetic works both ways, or to stay closer to the surgical realm, 'cuts' both ways. 'What if', they seem to be saying, 'there really is good reason to conceptualize the cosmetic to encompass transSurgery?'. It turns out that this relation can relativize both cosmetic surgery (in the narrower sense) and transSurgery, and paradoxically make them seem more (as a technology of identity, it is no longer trifle) and less serious (if it is related to bodybuilding,

¹² Davis finds that «[c]osmetic surgery was an intervention in identity» (Davis 460), much like, regarding transpeople, Rubin highlights «the importance of physical cues for the attribution of identity» (Rubin 151).



it is not mutilation) at the same time. It also allows for an end to minoritizing discourses of trans* exceptionalism, that are the flipside of the various kinds of scrutiny that trans* bodies can be subjected to¹³. It asks us to fundamentally acknowledge the ways both embodiment and agency are socially constituted, unstable, and technologically mediated, and say goodbye to notions of a romanticized and/or 'natural' body.

After all, Storm Florez' breasts would, of course, not notice.

Bibliography

Baird, Wally. «Disorderly Fashion». *GenderQueer: Voices From Beyond the Sexual Binary*. Eds. Joan Nestle, Clare Howell & Riki Wilchins. Los Angeles, New York: Alyson, 2002. 260-262.

Balsamo, Ann. «On the cutting edge». *Technologies of the Gendered Body*. Durham: Duke UP, 1996. 56-80.

Bartky, Sandra Lee. «Foucault, Femininity, and Patriarchal Power». *Writing on the Body*. Eds. Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina & Sarah Stanbury. New York: Columbia UP, 1997. 129-151.

Birkle, Carmen. «Barbies without Underpants». *Sexualities in American Culture*. Ed. Alfred Hornung. Heidelberg: Winter, 2004. 161-171.

Bordo, Susan. «The Reproduction of Femininity». *Writing on the Body*. Eds. Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina & Sarah Stanbury. New York: Columbia UP, 1997. 90-110.

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

Creed, Barbara. «Lesbian Bodies». *Feminist Theory and the Body*. Eds. Janet Price & Margrit Shildrik. New York: Routledge, 1999. 111-124.

Cromwell, Jason. *Transmen & FTMs: Identities, Bodies, Genders & Sexualities*. Urbana, Chicago: U of Illinois P, 1999.

Davis, Kathy. «'My Body is My Art': Cosmetic Surgery as Feminist Utopia?». *Feminist Theory and the Body*. Eds. Janet Price & Margrit Shildrik. New York: Routledge, 1999. 454-465.

Devor, Aaron H. & Nicholas Matte. «One Inc. And Reed Erickson». *GLQ* 10.2 (2004). 179-209.

Florez, Storm. «Dear Breasts». *From the Inside Out: Radical Gender Transformation, FTM and Beyond*. Ed. Morty Diamond. San Francisco: Manic D Press, 2004. 111f.

Green, Jamison. *Becoming a Visible Man*. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2004.

Haiken, Elizabeth. *Venus Envy: A History of Cosmetic Surgery*. Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1997.

Halberstam, Judith. «F2M: The Making of Female Masculinity». *Feminist Theory and the Body*. Eds. Janet Price & Margrit Shildrik. New York: Routledge, 1999. 125-133.

Hale, C. Jacob. «Whose Body Is This Anyway?». *GenderQueer: Voices From Beyond the Sexual Binary*. Eds. Joan Nestle, Clare Howell & Riki Wilchins. Los Angeles, New York: Alyson, 2002. 250-252.

¹³ For a variety of critical eyes with a host of different agendas cf. Hale 252.

- Hausman**, Bernice L. *Changing Sex: Transsexualism, Technology, and the Idea of Gender*. Durham & London: Duke UP, 1995.
- Kessler**, Suzanne J. *Lessons from the Intersexed*. 1998. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2002.
- Kubisz**, Marzena. *Strategies of Resistance: Body, Identity and Representation in Western Culture*. Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2003.
- Lindemann**, Gesa. *Das Paradoxe Geschlecht: Transsexualität im Spannungsfeld von Körper, Leib, Gefühl*. Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1993.
- Link**, Aaron. «Freaks». *GenderQueer: Voices From Beyond the Sexual Binary*. Eds. Joan Nestle, Clare Howell & Riki Wilchins. Los Angeles, New York: Alyson, 2002. 90-93.
- Meyerowitz**, Joanne. *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States*. Cambridge/Mass., London: Harvard UP, 2002.
- Nataf**, Zachary I. «Skin-flicks». *Eight Technologies of Otherness*. Ed. Sue Golding. London, New York: Routledge, 1997. 172-189.
- Prosser**, Jay. *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality*. New York: Columbia UP, 1988.
- Rubin**, Henry. *Self-Made Men: Identity and Embodiment among Transsexual Men*. Nashville: Vanderbilt UP, 2003.
- Salamon**, Gayle. «The Bodily Ego and the Contested Domain of the Material». *differences* 15.3 (Fall 2004): 95-122.

Biographical Note

Anne Koch-Rein is majoring in American Studies and Gender Studies at Humboldt-University Berlin (Germany) and currently writing a *Magister* thesis entitled Passing Moments: FTM-bodies in contemporary transgender photography. (S)he was fortunate to spend the academic year 2003/04 as an exchange student at the University of California, San Diego. In addition to queer studies and transgender issues, Anne's ever-expanding interests range from 20th/21st century U.S. literature and culture to gender and law.

Transgenderism Now: Comparative Female Masculinities

Judith Halberstam

In this paper, I want to combine models from my work on 'female masculinity' on the one hand and 'queer space' on the other to propose different models for studying the erotic practices, gendered embodiments and variant sexual identities of so-called 'lesbians' and female to male 'transgenders' in a variety of cultural contexts (Halberstam 1998; 2005). Cross-cultural models of sexuality and gender can be extremely useful in denaturalizing Euro-American notions of embodiment, community and relation but, unfortunately, as we all know, they are too often used to cast Euro-American models as contemporary and liberated while registering queer forms of desire elsewhere as anachronistic. Some of the mistakes made by anthropologists of gender and sexuality when studying gender and sexual variance in non-Western contexts could be avoided by using different methods for gauging the similarity or differences between the various models. For example, while we might not want to presume any particular similarity between tomboys in Indonesia and 'lesbians' in the Midwest of North America, we might be surprised to find that if we use a different standard for comparison, like urban gender variance or rural gender variance, certain structural similarities do exist – so can we break out of wholly NATIONAL models for understanding gender variance? For example, a number of different studies show that many rural communities in Russia as well as Eastern Europe and in parts of the Indian subcontinent, feature girls who have been raised as boys when the labor of the farm demands male labor. These 'men' or 'husbands' should be studied in relation to each other, rather than in relation to urban transgender bois in the US.

Comparative female masculinities

When I was writing my book, Female Masculinity, I did not presume that 'female masculinity' was a purely Euro-American phenomenon, but nor did I have the tools or the skills to make the cross-cultural application. Furthermore, I was very aware of the fact that sloppy cross-cultural comparisons, especially when they are made by cultural studies scholars, can be facile at best and arrogant at worst. At the same time, my hunch was that 'female masculinity', precisely because it names a gendered mode of being rather than an identity, actually does have cross-cultural applications. When visiting Taiwan, Japan, Hawaii as well as Eastern Europe and Australia subsequent to my book's publication, I saw that the term, even as imprecise as it is in my book, can resonate in other cultural contexts where gender roles

are a feature of same sex erotic communities. Female masculinity cannot 'explain' or categorize *Ts* in Taiwan, *onnabes* in Tokyo or *marimachas* in Latin America, but it can provide a holding category for a variety of cross-gender practices.

In the liberal Euro-American context, modern gay and lesbian history has favored a narrative about progressive enlightenment within which the same sex couple emerged into liberation towards the end of the twentieth century by throwing off the tyranny of the gender variance and by inhabiting normative gender identities and refusing role play. Early twentieth century understandings of same sex desire always featured inverted homos and their pseudo homosexual partners, and such couples were cast as lonely and mired in pathos. When Euro-American medical discourse shifted gender variance out of the category of homosexual and recognized a new subject position in the transsexual, the continued link between gender variance and homosexuality was cast as anachronistic and pre-political. Today, in the US and Europe, particularly in white gay and lesbian communities, 'same sex' is a reassuring description of the happy stability of the sex-gender system. And so, when US researchers find evidence of cross-gendered homosexualities elsewhere, they have a tendency to interpret it as wholly different from Euro-American models and as pre-modern. This has the strange effect of erasing the centrality of cross-gender identification within Western homosexualities and projecting it onto other sexual formations as 'pre-political' phenomena.

North American gay and lesbian researchers have faced a very particular set of problems when researching transgender and same sex desires and identities and until very recently, they have often not been too adept at meeting those challenges. Some researchers have explained female to male transgender identifications elsewhere as characteristic of the absence of a feminist context (Blackwood, 1995); and others have cast same-sex desire itself as wholly absent from non-Western contexts (Seizer, 1995). New work on toms in the Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand (Sinnot, 2004; Wilson, 2004), *onnabes* in Japan, *marimachas* in Mexico, 'aggressives' in New York City and 'enforcers' in Puerto Rico, provide a rich and complex picture of alternative sex-gender systems. This new work turns the emphasis away from the rather convoluted knot of questions that had previously pre-occupied G/L researchers (such as what happens during fieldwork to the researcher's own sense of sexual identity) and allows us to start looking for models of research beyond the subject / object frame. By the 'subject / object' frame, I mean a framework of analysis which implies full awareness and solid identification in the position of the researcher and implies the possibility of total understanding of the meaning of the other's identifications and practices. The 'us / them' comparative frame



blocks out other frames like space, class, practices, labor and so on.

I would like to proceed with a few comments about Western anthropological research into gender variance, suggest some models of cross-cultural research that are space-based rather than simply national or identitarian, and I will conclude with the proposal that we narrow the use of 'gay and lesbian' to Euro-American frameworks of reference and then as researchers and intellectuals, I propose we produce useable categories for cross-cultural and culturally specific research. Just to draw from my own work, the category of 'female masculinity' could have cross-cultural uses because it does not presume 'lesbian' or 'transgender' as its point of reference. Also, both 'female' and 'masculinity' in this phrase can be categorized and defined in relation to the specific understandings of sex and gender in any given location. Other categories like this one would include, obviously, 'male femininities', 'men who have sex with men', gender variants.

Notes on cross-cultural gender variance

1.) Anthropological fascination with gender deviance has had the effect of over-representing and exoticizing gender variant individuals when researching minority sexual identities or practices. The fascination with *hijras* in India for example or *bakla* in the Philippines or *onnabes* in Japan or *travestis* in Brazil has had several effects – first it has cast such gender variant groups as representative of transgender practices in those places but second it has linked gender variance to sex-work making it unclear when a cross-gender identification has been made for the purpose of selling sex and when it has other kinds of motivations. Anthropologists seem to have been less interested in transgender identifications outside of sex work contexts.

2.) Anthropologists have often focused on gender variant 'women' rather than female to male transgenders – again, the relationship between sex work and gender variance (which really needs to be theorized in relation to how anthropologists find their informants) dominates the research field. Sex workers are a little easier to find than say passing women or masculine women in any given community. Why has there been so little research on female-bodied transgender subjects? What is the connection between research funds and sex work / AIDS research and so on, and what kinds of funds have been and are available for researching 'women' where there is no connection to health concerns *per se* or informal economic circuits? What are the particular problems faced by queer female researchers studying queer sexual practices? Are there different problems for diasporic

researchers versus North American researchers? Antonia Chao, for example, has written eloquently about her problems as a Taiwanese anthropologist returning to Taipei to study *T-Po* relationships (Chao, 1995). As a Taiwanese lesbian, Chao was expected to both be familiar with the *T-Po* system and to fit into it. When neither was true, her informants positioned her as a 'big sister' in order to resolve the dissonance between her identifications and theirs. Here we might think not just about the strategies used by the anthropologist to work with her informants but also the strategies and deliberations of the informants who want to and have to deal with the researcher. What happens when a context of 'suspicion' mediates between the informants and the researcher? What is the effect of an overly structured methodological approach and how does it actually break down more intuitive relations between any given community and a researcher trying to learn about that community? Can we talk about the fetishization of method in relation to anthropology?

3.) The 'feminist problem': Has 'feminist' anthropology impeded the work on gender variant women by 'looking for lesbians'? For example, when masculine women have entered the field of research in contemporary queer anthropology, they have often been cast as examples of pre-feminist 'lesbian' formations. Some researchers have read these queer contexts only through a North American understanding of 'lesbian' as 'feminist', 'same-sex' and 'androgynous' and have rendered them as dupes of patriarchy (Blackwood, 1995). In many contexts, feminist networks actually facilitate the research on same sex desire in any given region and so access comes through an educated and politicized group rather than through contacts that lie outside of academic networks. Furthermore, in many places, there is a loudly articulated set of conflicts between feminists and cross-gendered queers and so the gender variant subjects are continually interpreted through and by their often recalcitrant relation to feminism. And so, the research that emerges from 'looking for lesbians' or constructing a feminist framework can be and should be cast as a helpful record of the identifications and commitments of the researcher herself, but it tells us very little about gender variant subjects elsewhere. And so, for example, Evie Blackwell's fascinating work on Indonesian tomboys is a complex account not of the tomboys but of Midwestern white lesbians.

4.) Female masculinity: Female masculinity can lead us around the 'feminist problem' and the 'gay and lesbian' problem because it is a much more flexible category than 'lesbian' and it does not carry the same expectations with regards to an equivalence between feminist and 'gender neutral'. Female



masculinity can and does describe modes of gender identification for many groups that have been cast as 'lesbians' and it allows for description rather than the absorption of the queer subject into a pre-existing category.

I will just conclude with a few research areas that strike me as interesting:

1.) Female masculinity and sex work: In Japan in particular, but possibly also in other locales, sex work cultures include services for women seeking interactions with non-male masculine partners. The *onnabes* in Japan, masculine sex workers, have been the object of much fascination in the US and there is even a film about 3 *onnabes*, [Shinjuku Boys](#). In the research on *onnabes* that I have heard about, there is much speculation about why women would hire so-called 'male surrogates' for companions and about whether there is any sexual interaction between the *onnabe* and the client. There are also questions about the degree of transgender identification made by the *onnabe*. In relation to *onnabe*, I would place the research on them in relation to other work on sex work and transgenderism and not assume any essential relationship between the *onnabe* himself and cross-gender identification. Female masculinity could be useful here as a catchall category, which denies the classification of these interactions as lesbian but also, sustains agnosticism with regards to the transgenderism of the scene. Here as in other contexts, the desire of the clients is a really important part of the phenomena and should not be overlooked in the rush to classify the *onnabe* themselves.

2.) Tomboys: In her research on *T-Po*, Antonia Chao suggests that 't for tomboy' could be a term that entered Taiwan through the presence of American soldiers. I think a project on tomboys that was cross-cultural and looked for similarities and differences might be very fruitful. Is tomboy always an American derivative term? What are the relations between toms and sex work, toms and labor, toms and age?

3.) Partners of masculine women: sometimes the 'tom's' partner has a term too – in Taiwan it is *Po* from the Cantonese for 'woman', in Thailand it is *dee* meaning 'lady'. More research needs to be done comparatively on the relations between these different categories across cultures. In many places the lady friend is someone who will dip in and out of the queer culture or in and out of a specific relationship with a masculine partner. Often the lady will eventually get married. What kind of description or label fits this temporary set of desires? How do they function socially? How do they influence definitions of womanhood and femininity in

general?

4.) Diversify the research base in the US: until very recently, representations of and research about and by transgenders and gender variant people in the US has focused almost exclusively on white subjects. What difference does it make when we consider TG and its lived contexts in relation to race and class? How does this allow us to challenge the hegemony of US definitions and accounts of gender variance? One film, The Aggressives, for example, focuses upon a group of transgender / butch Black 'studs' in New York City and follows them for a period of 5 years. As a documentary, The Aggressives is not particularly interesting formally. But, as an account of the very different experience of gender variance for women / men of color, it is crucial. Calling themselves 'aggressives', these butches readily distinguish themselves from both 'women' and 'transsexuals' and they talk about their sexual practices, their early childhood experiences, their relationships, their work life. But they also discuss their relation to the law, to drug cultures, to money, poverty, hardship, their very negative experiences with the medical world and their complete lack of social support.

Over the course of the 5 years, one butch has an unexplained hysterectomy, one goes to jail, one joins the army and then goes AWOL when commissioned to go to Iraq, one struggles to keep a job and does drugs. Some have children, some live with their parents. Unlike conventional TG documentaries in the US that focus on the struggles of an individual with his gender issues and the response to them by his family and friends, The Aggressives shows that transgenderism cannot be separated out from the complex constellation of social pressures that converge on the Black body in the US. It reminds us of the futility of discrete analysis, and of the importance of what Rod Ferguson calls «queer of color critiques» which bind studies of sexuality and gender to considerations of class and race (Ferguson 2003).

Conclusion

As a non-anthropologist and a scholar who does not usually do transnational work, I make my comments here tentatively and with great respect for the research that has been done by others. After I finished my drag king book, I was asked several times about links between drag king cultures and cross-dressing performance cultures in Japan and elsewhere. I resisted then and I continue to resist making any facile comparisons between theatrical phenomena like the Takarazuka review and Western drag scenes. However, I do think that some queer phenomena can and should be tracked cross-culturally. The



framework of 'lesbian', as new work now confirms, is crude and ill equipped to describe the intricacies of gender variance and sexual practices, special modes and labor oriented genders that constitute so-called same sex desires across a range of locations. The interaction of post-colonial insight with queer theory, and diasporic and local researchers with North American anthropology does promise new insights into female same sex desire in the near future: 'women loving women' is one of the least appealing ways of bringing this work together and I offer the term 'female masculinity' as a marker, an index and a term for tracking the creative modes of being that queerly gendered people, couples and groups cultivate in a variety of trans-local contexts.

Bibliography

Blackwood, Evelyn. «Falling In Love with An-Other Lesbian» in *Taboo: Sex, Identity and Erotic Subjectivity in Anthropological Fieldwork*, eds. Don Kulick et al., New York: Routledge, 1995: 51 - 75.

Chao, Antonia. «Performing Like a P'o: Reculturating into the Indigenous Lesbian Circle» in *Sex, Sexuality and the Anthropologist*, eds. Fran Markowitz et al., Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999: 128 - 144.

Ferguson, Roderick. *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Halberstam, Judith. *Female Masculinity*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1998.

Halberstam, Judith. *In A Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: NYU Press, 2005.

Seizer, Susan. «Paradoxes of Visibility in the Field: Rites of Queer Passage in Anthropology», *Public Culture* Vol. 8, No. 1, 1995: 73 - 100.

Sinnott, Megan. *Toms and Dees: Transgender Identity and Female Same Sex Relationships in Thailand*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2004.

Wilson, Ara. *The Intimate Economies of Bangkok: Tomboys, Tycoons and Avon Ladies in the Global City*. Berkeley, CA: University of CA Press, 2004.

Biographical Note

Judith Halberstam is the Director of The Center for Feminist Research at the University of Southern California. Judith teaches courses in queer studies, gender theory, art, literature and film and is the author of Female Masculinity, The Drag King Book, Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters and a new book from NYU Press titled In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives.

Masculinity in Crisis, Is It Really So?

Katarzyna Wojnicka and Maria Adamczyk

Our presentation varies from the previous ones, that we have been witnesses to so far, at this particular conference, because the theme we are about to discuss is neither about transexuality nor transgender exactly, and that is so, because, due to our socio-cultural heritage we understand the meaning of transgender differently than the most of the Western scholars do.

To start with, we should all be aware of the fact, that in Poland the achievements of feminism are quite fresh. There is a great confusion about grave issues between various branches of feminism because they all have been taking place simultaneously (there is no clear division between first, second, and third waves) and the history of the modern political feminist movement is barely 15 years old.

The knowledge of what feminism is about among the common people is very low and due to an omnipresent stereotype of a men-hating hairy, masculine and repulsive Polish feminist, most Polish women seem to be afraid of feminism and feminists especially, even more than men do. On the contrary, being feminine or feminine enough is the aim of the game. Being worthy as a woman, as a catch, means being feminine. One either has to subdue or to vanish in a gender vacuum.

As fascinating as this topic is, we have to leave it aside for the sake of this article, because our story is about men, masculinity or masculinities while the context it takes place in, is that of our socio-cultural heritage, that is the world of two genders and of two sexes. In today's Poland the public domain belongs to straight men, the private domain to heterosexual women, the backstage is being occupied by gay people and queers are the margin or rather the exotic and undiscovered periphery, the territory unconquered by the common discourse.

The playing field of the permitted discourse has been captured and divided among the rest of the players, but the queers did not get their share. In the social scenario they are not allowed to play good nor bad nor ugly.

The point we are making is that our area of interest, even though a bit distant from the main theme of the conference, includes what is still considered edgy even in the Polish gender studies. Of course from time to time, queer conferences happen (albeit kept in secret), however this issue as such is not considered significant enough to become the subject of regular courses at the University. Maybe it means that we, as a society and as a young and imperfect democracy, are not ready for this yet, but maybe, eventually that is not that bad. After all, 'step-by-step' is a smart command. We should learn how to walk before we mount a horse.



Regardless of it all, transgender discourse does occur in our country. Moreover, it is present at the most traditional, outdated and heavily criticised level of dual thinking about gender, in Poland still popular. In our world, where two still seems to be enough, masculine gender evolves and multiplies. It revolts against the norm and tries to escape from straightforward categorization of being or not being man enough. Even though it is happening on a micro level, this is still a sign of a greater change that has started to take place in popular culture

Both of us would like to take a closer look at metrosexuality and machismo, while men who belong to these social trends or categories consider themselves to be men and to be masculine. The social public does as well, while at the same time, they construct their own image or their own identity by the usage of different fragments of gender attributes than the rest of men do. Machismo and metrosexuality are two opposing poles of traditional masculinity. Hopefully you will find our lecture entertaining and queer enough to match the level of other presentations and articles.

Even though it seems a bit odd at this place and time, or particularly in this context, questions like «What makes a man?» and «Who is a real man and who is not?» are crucial at the birth of the masculinity discourse in the academia and the Polish media.

In the Western countries, second and third waves of feminism have helped a great deal to screen and finally to refute the clear concept of femininity; now the same is happening to the notion of masculinity. In Anglo-Saxon culture, men's studies flourish, while in the former Soviet block countries there is a shortage of information and interest. Men's studies in Poland have not been founded yet. As we have already mentioned, it is the Antarctic of the Jagiellonian Gender Studies – something to be explored, the wild area of interest. So let us take our tools and start searching.

Traditional masculinity

As much as we are aware of what it means to be a man in a traditional and therefore an outdated meaning of the term, there is a great confusion about the actual connotations. Due to the lack of adequate literature on the topic of traditional masculinity we are forced to use sources of English origin. Robert Brannon lists a number of desirable traits of a traditional real man. Let us enumerate them: no girlie stuff (all feminine qualities are to be avoided), be a winner (gain status, success and respect), be a tough guy (be self-reliant, strong and confident), give them hell! (never let anybody get a head of you and use aggression or even violence if you need to) (Stainton Rogers, W. & Stainton Rogers, R., 2001; 239).

Funny as it is, quite similar characteristics constitute a refrain of a popular Polish rock song (by Perfect): «build a house, plant a tree, foster your son, kill your enemy». The manly traits emphasised here are the ones of success, activity, aggression and passing on your genetic material.

Peter Baker, an English writer, describes quite similar traits crucial to the understanding of the concept of the real manhood; the most important of them is being in control not only of the others but also of oneself. A real man does not break down and cry, on the contrary: he has got a stoic facial expression, makes no shaky movements – his silhouette expresses self-confidence and sheer determination. To be in charge for a real man also means to be active, as long as a man is doing something, no matter what activity that is exactly, he is still acting manly. A pondering philosopher or a neurotic intellectual like Woody Allen are no good examples for men to follow, quite on the contrary, the dominant or traditional version of masculinity labels them as wussies and gladly turns them into the objects of popular jokes. Being independent and fearless are 'musts' for a real man. Being pan-sexual and promiscuous are equally desirable traits (as long as the ones he is having sex with are the members of the opposite sex). He is always on top: he is stubborn, strong-willed, aggressive and testosterone-driven. These are concepts most popularly associated with manhood but some of them are being questioned, specifically their value as such. Aggression, dominance and control can currently be viewed more as vices than virtues. The strengths can easily change into weaknesses. The embodiment of all these traits or actually even the parody of them, the macho man has been evaluated by the majority of Western women movements quite negatively – it has become an anti-ideal or even a villain.

Since our self-identified Western Culture in Poland is famous for its obsession with dualisms, the notion of masculinity is constructed in contrast to that of femininity. 'Us and others', a popular anthropological idea has its usage here as well. Tough guys need sissy boys, men need women, and heterosexual men need gays to secure their own identity. Something to define oneself against, to separate oneself from and to consequently negate and dismiss as less valuable becomes a necessity. Dualisms such as nature and culture, mind and body, reason and unreason, being and negation and the one most important for us – identity and difference – have been carefully screened by such postmodernist scholars as Jacques Derrida or Helene Cixous. Moreover, in the end, dualisms always involve privileging one side over the other. To be a man means not to be a woman, masculinity therefore cannot exist without femininity.

Elisabeth Badinter, in her book Identity XY, one of the very few published in Poland on the topic of Polish masculinity wrote



that to be a man means three things: not to be a woman, a child or a homosexual. A man strikes to attain true masculinity throughout all of his life. If he fails, his masculinity could be denied from him, simply taken away for unlimited timing. «He has got no balls, what a wuss, such a sissy» (notice how these comments signal womanly connotations), men keep hearing these insults from early childhood up until mature adulthood. Even though what we are to say may sound controversial for some, as much as a girl is tied to her womanhood by the rope of biological destiny (her period, pregnancy and motherhood) a boy constantly needs to prove his manhood. The same pressure is put on Polish men; «He's got no balls» is the most commonly used insult to emphasise author's scorn toward a particular male who has failed to 'be a man enough'.

Macho – the never ending story of traditional masculinity at stake

Badinter claims that psychologically violent and total negation of the feminine aspects of a male identity result in the social construction of an impoverished, one-dimensional version of masculinity: the machismo.

Macho is a word of Spanish origin, meaning 'extreme masculinity' or 'male domination'. A boxer, a fighter, a cowboy, a football player, a bullfighter or a truck driver (and many others) all stand for this ideal. In Poland, machismo is most representative among football fans, bouncers, men in 'tha hood' (Polish: *blokersi*) and 'disco guys'.

Emotionally frigid, pan-sexual, ever-ready to become violent, depersonalising other people and treating women as trophies has recently become an object of heavy social criticism. It has so happened, especially in the West, where feminism has changed from theory to social practice. In modern Poland, in Warsaw clubs and 'artsy-fartsy' parties, macho is also *de mode*.

Macho is, as such, phallogentric. In his mind the universe revolves around the mythical phallus – the source of his potency. His daily life though, spins around his most cherished and precious organ – his penis. Women and the conquest of them are crucial and necessary part of his identity. The race he is taking part in is peopled with other men, also ready to rush for success, money and most of all: power. As a social being, macho is always in control and emotionally distant. Only when drunk can he reveal his true feelings as well as his anxiety and existential dilemmas. Women, children and gays are to be subdued and disciplined. Often macho uses physical force to underline his power and dominance over others. Adrenaline and testosterone are the two hormones driving his lust for living. Viagra and vodka are his two best mates. The lack of potency means the fall of the macho, the

complete and instant destruction of the erected monument of masculine power, so everything must be done in order to prevent the loss.

Cigarette-smoking lonely cowboy from the Marlboro ad embodies the Western macho. A bit softer or pop version of the macho is represented by Robbie Williams in one of his latest music clips. In Free Love, Robbie breaks in a wild horse, only later to do the same to Daryl Hannah in a car backseat. Space, nature, sex and melancholy, all in black and white give a moving portrait of a strong, yet at the same time, affectionate individual. Attributes of a real macho man like a cowboy hat or cigarettes are what is really left of the ideal. The essence has evaporated, it has been fragmentarized into a set of props. Masculinity is more a performance, a play, not real world. Identity becomes an image. In Poland we are not ready for this last act of the gender play. Psy (Dogs) a cult movie directed by Władysław Pasikowski portrays a man's idol: Frank Maurer (Bogusław Linda), a former employee of Polish Security Police who is caught in a struggle between Police and Polish mafia. But what we want to focus on is the way masculinity is constructed in these movies (Psy I and Psy II). First of all, it is constructed in relation to women who are to be subdued mentally and physically, used and rejected. The relation between Frank and his female lovers (Angela and Nadia) is based upon sexual exchange and becomes more of an economic transaction than an actual relationship. Frank is an experienced, middle-aged man, strong and aggressive. Male bonding and male solidarity are of greatest importance, female lovers are a threat to it and they need to be disciplined. In Psy I and Psy II, women are portrayed as unpredictable, unfaithful and therefore unworthy to treat them as partners but as sex-toys. Surprisingly (or maybe not) Psy became totally popular among young men. Some of the sayings, «She left because she was a bad woman» (*Odeszła bo to zła kobieta była*) and «I don't wanna talk to you now» (*Nie chce mi się z tobą gadać*) became a part of everyday speech.

A negative picture of the modern macho man is painted by Kimberly Pierce, the director of a drama titled: Boys Don't Cry. The story takes place in Nebraska – at first glance it seems to happen in the middle of nowhere, only later to change into the middle of hell. All 'real' men are portrayed more as beasts than humans. Hormone-driven, impulsive, aggressive, jealous and uneducated, they base their demeanour upon sort of tribal norms and rituals. Fighting, drinking and getting into trouble with the police are proofs of their masculinity. Women are treated as trophies, as commodities, no less than houses or cars. Fear of what is different or unknown is the most pervading feeling among all males in Pierce's film. Hierarchy is a fact, more manly macho, 'the macho of machos' needs other mates to serve as his 'little helpers'. Women and anything that could be ascribed to them is



deeply hated and rejected as repulsive or weak. Ironically, the most common impression, by the end of the movie, is that the only 'real' man there is a real woman (Brandon). Without the hormones, without a hanging dick, and with monthly blood leaking down her legs, she is a man enough for Lena, who is played by Chloe Sevigny.

A crashing critique, isn't it so? The one and only true paradigm of masculinity is rejected as discriminatory and obsolete.

Metrosexual – manhood in transition?

In the West the debate goes on. The new model of masculinity – is there anything as such? Masculinity or rather masculinities – plurality of conceptions, different but to be treated as equally worthy. The conception of the modern masculinity is founded on partnership not dominance, androgyny instead of machismo, and getting in touch with your inner child as well as the feminine side of identity. These ideas are in reality the offspring of social constructivism, the heritage of the 1970's, second wave revolution. The eternal essence of manhood has evaporated; what is left there – at the very bottom – is quite problematic. Historical, cultural, geographical and finally social factors are to be taken into consideration. The role that they play is major. The old man is dead. But has the new one been born? Apparently, yes, he has.

In 1994 Mark Simpson – a British journalist coined a new name for supposedly a new phenomenon 'metrosexuality' – the state of being a metrosexual man. The connotations though, were not very positive; metrosexuals were category of men quite narcissistic and consumption-obsessed. The majority of them were young, affluent, highly educated, working in the entertainment industry and scarcely committed to long term relationships. Most of all they were committed to cultivating their own interests (mainly self-interest). Still, their passions hardly belonged to a manly category (psychology, arts, yoga, cooking). These men indulged in all sorts of 'self-improvement'. As well as their minds they enjoyed their bodies and used lots of money to take proper care of them. Solarium and sauna, swimming pool and gym became part of a weekly routine. So did hair cosmetics and even some make-up. Metrosexuals certainly were for aesthetics and individual style. What Simpson seems to have missed was also changes in psyche.

New metrosexual men varied from the rest in the way they acted toward others: they had very proper manners, were extremely gentle, kind and patient but by no means shy and reserved. They simply knew their worth and had a high sense of self-esteem. The terms that they used while describing their self-

esteem included phrases like sensitive, caring, affectionate and even romantic (these traits of character are usually ascribed to women). Also, their looks matched these traits. The majority of them were beardless, slightly muscular but did not invest too much in bodybuilding, their figures were slender, all had trendy hair cuts. A prime example of a Western metrosexual man is David Beckham, a football player. In Poland, there is a Beckham copycat: Radek Majdan, also a football player. It is interesting to notice that this social phenomenon takes part only in larger cities – mostly metropolises. Warsaw is a metrosexual kingdom. During the last few years metrosexuality has changed from western phenomenon to a more global occurrence. Still in non-Western countries like Asia or South America the changes in male psyche did not follow the variances in the looks. In Latino lands, where metrosexuality has spread, the concept of masculinity still remains traditional, only the physical appearance evolved. Therefore the sceptics of this new male version, criticised the conception of androgyny and opted for consumer-oriented explanation of this trend.

In Poland, the public opinion research agency IPSOS – Trend Observer investigated and analysed the concept of metrosexuality and its social reception. The results were a bit surprising: a Polish metrosexual was viewed by the public not only as a consumer target but as a new man – unafraid of his feminine aspects, androgenic to the bone. He was portrayed as kind, loving, affectionate, sensitive, outgoing, full of empathy and warmth, while still possessing the 'manly' qualities of strength, determination, ambition and leadership skills.

The 'new men' researched by Trend Observer were for emancipation and tolerance. They tried to understand women and tried to think the way women do. They were not as homophobic as traditional males. Partnership was what they were aiming for in personal relations. They matched the definition of metrosexuals also in taking care of their appearances (solarium, sauna, brand name cosmetics, good clothes, trendy hair and so on). They even asked for professional help to improve their image (they dieted when it was needed or asked a stylist to advice them on their clothing style).

An American drama, also a cult object in Poland among young intelligencia, Fight Club, directed by David Fincher, depicts a man in his thirties, a successful manager who suffers from insomnia and feels isolated from any sort of community. In searching for 'real life' experiences, Norton joins many self-support groups for people suffering from all kinds of diseases. During one of the sessions he breaks down and starts crying. This outburst of emotions is very releasing and he finally is able to sleep again. He and his ideal alter-ego Tyler Durden describe themselves as men raised by their mothers. The absence of a



father, either symbolic or factual has a crashing effect upon the psyche of a main protagonist. Obsessed with objects, with aesthetics in style, and with his own self-analysis, he projects all his unfulfilled fantasies into an imaginary friend. Is Fight Club a study of modern masculinity or rather a masculinity crisis? We leave this question open.

Narcissism is often perceived as a major factor in the construction of the new man. It plays an equally important role in construction of modern identity. On the one hand Western consumerism advises individuals to take scrupulous care of their bodies and indulge in bodily pleasures; one's own interests and needs are treated as most urgent and important of all.

On the other hand Christianity, the most prevalent faith in Poland emphasises brotherly love, altruism and compassion. Narcissism is treated as one of the deadliest of sins. And in the field of psychiatry it is also treated as psychopathology. The Culture of Narcissism written by S. Lasch concentrates on this growing social trend. Some more conservative-oriented scholars think that twentieth century individualism has paved a straight way to narcissism. The narcissistic component is taken under consideration when analysing metrosexuality.

In American Psycho, the main protagonist, an affluent yuppie, is driven by two major feelings: scold and the lust for glory and fame. He is emotionally frigid, he himself admits to having a feeling of pervading shallowness. He is as empty as his own reflection, which he admires in the mirror, while fucking two prostitutes at once. The main protagonist is also obsessed with his body perfection. With apparent satisfaction he enumerates prestigious cosmetic brands that he uses to underline his appeal. Right corporate brands, right people, right places, right *clichés* to utter constitute a modern narcissistic hero. But is that a true version of a metrosexual man or rather a study of a schizophrenic mind, where narcissism is just one of the components?

At first glance these two models (machismo and 'the new man' – metrosexual) seem completely contradictory, still, at times, in certain geographical latitudes, under specific socio-economical and cultural conditions they tend to blend or to mix. Both of them have developed and persisted nowadays in the Western culture as well as in our mother country – Poland.

As much as Polish macho remains a macho in a traditional sense – even though he lacks a stallion and uses Viagra more rarely than his Western counterpart, a Polish metrosexual differs from a South American metrosexual because androgyny is what he really stands for. He fully unites both feminine and masculine aspects of his identity. This departure from the age-long script is actually a transgender change. A new man is a complete individual able to handle the ups and downs of what life is to bring. He can be very firm when the situation demands it, but

also emphatic and affectionate. But is this change going to spread beyond the corporate chairs and artistic niche? And what about androgynic women, are they as ideal as their male counterparts? Is androgyny in Poland equally desirable in both sexes?

Men in Crisis?

Both machismo and metrosexuality are types of masculinity globally popular. The most crucial question to be asked is if they are symptoms of a masculinity crisis. Western machismo has been scolded and laughed at as a caricature of modern man. Such males are viewed much more as aggressors than partners and criticised for their stubborn persistence for obsolete and outdated pillars of 'true masculinity'. They constantly need others to define and contrast themselves against. Is it possible they do so because these pillars on which they have built their identities are quite shaky?

Metrosexuality is really androgyny wearing the pants. It's critics deny that this is still masculinity, yet supporters claim that it is the new, improved version – a perfect one, a man cut out for our times. Evolution does not have to mean extinction. New times demand new heroes. More choices available – more masculinities to choose from and belong to – mean that less men will feel inadequate and finally: not man enough. Less of them will feel the shame, meet social condemnation and exclusion on their hard way to their true and voluntarily chosen identity. And that is certainly good news.

Bibliography

- Arcimowicz**, K, *Obraz mężczyzny w polskich mediach: prawda, fałsz, stereotyp*, GWP, Gdańsk, 2003.
- Badinter**, E, *XY on Male Identity*, Columbia University Press, NY, 1995.
- Bourdieu**, P, *Męska dominacja*, Oficyna Naukowa, Warszawa, 2004.
- Conell**, R, *Masculinities*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1995.
- Eichelberger**, W, *Zdradzony przez ojca*, Wydawnictwo Do, Warszawa, 1998.
- IPSOS**, *Trend Observer*, June 2004.
- Lasch**, S, *The Culture of Narcissism – American life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, Warner Books, New York, 1979.
- Melosik**, Z, *Kryzys Męskości w kulturze współczesnej*, Wydawnictwo Wolumin, Poznań, 2002.
- Segal**, L, *Slow Motion – Changing Masculinities, Changing Men*, Rutgers University Press, New Jersey, 1990.
- Simpson**, M, Here Come the Mirror Men, *The Independent*, November 15. 1994.
- Stainton Rogers W. & Stainton Rogers R**, *Psychology of Gender and Sexuality*, Open University Press, Buckingham, 2001.



Filmography

Fincher, David, *Fight Club*, USA, 2000.

Horrn, Mary, *American Psycho*, Canada-USA, 2000.

Pasikowski, Władysław, *Psy I*, Poland, 1992.

Pasikowski, Władysław, *Psy II – Ostatnia Krew*, Poland, 1994.

Pierce, Kimberly, *Boys Don't Cry*, USA, 1999.

Biographical Note

Katarzyna Wojnicka (1981) is student of sociology at Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Interested in gender sociology – particularly in feminist thought and 'men studies'.

Maria Adamczyk (1981) is student of sociology at Jagiellonian University in Krakow. Interested in sociology of the body, narcissism and consumption.