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Abstract This section includes eighty-six short original essays commissioned for the inaugural issue of *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*. Written by emerging academics, community-based writers, and senior scholars, each essay in this special issue, "Postposttranssexual: Key Concepts for a Twenty-First-Century Transgender Studies," revolves around a particular keyword or concept. Some contributions focus on a concept central to transgender studies; others describe a term of art from another discipline or interdisciplinary area and show how it might relate to transgender studies. While far from providing a complete picture of the field, these keywords begin to elucidate a conceptual vocabulary for transgender studies. Some of the submissions offer a deep and resilient resistance to the entire project of mapping the field terminologically; some reveal yet-unrealized critical potentials for the field; some take existing terms from canonical thinkers and develop the significance for transgender studies; some offer overviews of well-known methodologies and demonstrate their applicability within transgender studies; some suggest how transgender issues play out in various fields; and some map the productive tensions between trans studies and other interdisciplines.

Abjection

ROBERT PHILLIPS

Abjection refers to the vague sense of horror that permeates the boundary between the self and the other. In a broader sense, the term refers to the process by which identificatory regimes exclude subjects that they render unintelligible or beyond classification. As such, the abjection of others serves to maintain or reinforce boundaries that are threatened.

This term can be used to think of the instability of gendered and/or sexed bodies—especially those occupied by transgender individuals—which are at the center of academic debates surrounding queer, feminist, and trans subjectivity. Drawing on a psychoanalytic reading of subjective identity as a defensive construction and on the French literary obsession with monsters, psychoanalyst and linguist Julia Kristeva develops the term *abjection* in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982).

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Pedagogy

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Pedagogy, narrowly construed, is the study of teaching and learning; more generally, it pertains to the social construction of knowledge, values, and experiences. The common assumption that the classroom is the exclusive site where pedagogy transpires is challenged by educational theorists such as Henry A. Giroux (2004), Antonia Darder (2002), and bell hooks (1994), whose definitions of pedagogy extend it beyond the classroom and who, like Paolo Freire, advance a conception of pedagogy as a "practice of freedom" (Freire 2000: 80). Freire similarly redefines "educator" to mean more than a mere classroom instructor; for him, being an educator should encompass the multiple perspectives of "border intellectual, social activist, critical researcher, moral agent, radical philosopher, and political revolutionary" (Darder 2002: 249). Pedagogy, broadly defined in this way, engages questions of teaching and learning with questions of culture and power, of democracy and citizenship. It points to the multiplicity of sites (corporeal, spatial, temporal, psychic) in which education takes place and where, most importantly, knowledge is produced.

Transgender studies, as a framework or lens through which to theorize the myriad ways in which people understand, name, experience, and claim gender in relationship to such other processes as racialization, class, nationalism, and globalization, needs to incorporate a critical pedagogical perspective. In the 2008 *Women's Studies Quarterly* special "Trans-" issue, Vic Muñoz and Ednie Kaeh Garrison coined the term *transpedagogies* (291), seeking a word to capture the dialogic relationship between trans subjects and pedagogical practices. They

envisioned the term as a "coalitional concept" that encompassed transsexual, transgender, and gender/queer perspectives, through which an analysis of the production of knowledge could be linked conceptually to varying experiences of gender socialization or gender identity in diverse contexts.

What might such a transpedagogy encompass? A pedagogical perspective on transgender studies should, at a minimum, note that teaching and learning about transgender phenomena take place across a spectrum of social practices and locations and that transpedagogies are part of a broader public politics not solely limited to what goes on in schools. But more expansively, a pedagogical perspective on transgender phenomena can also help unsettle historically and contextually specific knowledge(s) that shape understandings of normative gender. Transpedagogies should offer students the tools they need to participate in the political and economic power structures that shape the boundaries of gender categories, with the goal of changing those structures in ways that create greater freedom. In a transpedagogical approach, processes of learning become political mechanisms through which identities can be shaped and desires mobilized and through which the experience of bodily materiality and everyday life can take form and acquire meaning.

Transpedagogies supply a discursive mode of critique for challenging the production of social hierarchies, identities, and ideologies across local and national boundaries. They represent both a mode of cultural production and a type of cultural criticism for questioning the conditions under which knowledge of gendered embodiment is produced. They provide a space for affective engagement, for the affirmation or rejection of values, and for the inhabitation, negotiation, or refusal of culturally prescribed gendered subject positions. Understanding pedagogy as a mode of cultural production in this way underscores its performative nature. It is how theory becomes practice.

The proliferation of culture via new communication technologies and social media further shifts the production, reception, and consumption of knowledge about gender diversity. It allows for new and alternative modes of access to knowledge and for fresh ways of knowing that purposefully resist normative bodily comportment and that confound the boundaries of gender. Such technologies of the self create a space for what Chela Sandoval has called "differential maneuvering," where "the transcultural, transgendered, transsexual, transnational leaps necessary to the play of effective stratagems of oppositional praxis" can begin articulating themselves (2000: 63).

Stratagems of oppositional praxis are precisely what critical transpedagogical practices should aim to produce: they must shift the framework available for understanding, describing, and addressing the multiple and varying

vulnerabilities to violence faced by transgender subjects. As Dean Spade notes, there is an uneven distribution of vulnerability and violence across trans populations, and such harms are not fully described or addressed by the single vector of transphobia (2010: 447). Paying attention to the highly variable and sometimes contradictory narratives that transgender subjects actually use to describe and explain their experiences of classist, racist, sexist, and ableist exploitation is a necessary pedagogical practice. It situates knowledge production in specific or local "acts of knowing."

Centering the transgender body as a site of knowledge production is a crucial transpedagogy. It creates new opportunities for teaching and learning by working to understand how transfolk critically understand their places in the world and tactically maneuver through it (i.e., how they negotiate relations of power, privilege, and subordination) as well as how they actively participate in the transformation of their world(s). This type of transpedagogy is radical to the extent that it critiques, and can potentially transform, how power and authority construct and organize knowledge—including knowledge of gendered desires, values, and identities (Giroux 2004: 69). Transpedagogies are indeed "practices of freedom" that can link teaching and learning to social change.

Transpedagogies must keep up with the continually shifting terms and conditions through which gender is named, imagined, and theorized as well as with the ongoing neoliberal depoliticization of public life and the impoverishment of public discourse. Transpedagogical perspectives and approaches need to ask how knowledge of transgender phenomena is constructed through this absence as well as through its presence and circulation in the public sphere. Proliferating trans-knowledges in the public sphere is only the first step of a radical educational agenda. The heart of effective transpedagogy, buttressed by rigorous intellectual work and political courage, is to link theory and praxis to create new modes of resistance and collective struggle.

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Performativity

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In her 1990 *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Judith Butler connected the conceptual category of performativity to the formation of the gendered subject. A *performative*, in its early usage by speech act theorist J. L. Austin, names a type of utterance (such as "I do" or "shame on you") that, by virtue of a felicitous context and relation to authority, accomplishes the action that it also announces (Austin [1962] 1975; Felman 2003; Sedgwick 1993). In a collection of lectures first published in 1962 as *How to Do Things with Words*, the terms of Austin's classifying system proliferate and repeatedly break down in a demonstration of how even descriptive language's performativity—what it does—calls into question its referentiality—what it seems to point to in the world (Austin 1975). *Gender Trouble* braids speech act theory's insight into the scandalous power of language to posit what it describes together with strands of Lacanian psychoanalysis and poststructuralism that show that this positing power belongs to language, to "discourse" in a Foucauldian register, and precisely *not* to the authority of the intending subject employing language that Austin started with.

Yet a rhetoric of performativity has developed that strips it of this theoretical heritage and turns it into a tool for defending the power of the subject, through the conscious presence of agential intention, to intervene in the discourse of gender and so to free that discourse of its injurious potential. To paraphrase the argument: "Because I *choose* my gendered practices, I subvert their harmful functions."[1] This rhetoric of performativity is a much-weakened strain of the one articulated in *Gender Trouble* and across Butler's subsequent work. In a sense, it reduces performativity to *performance*: that is, it focuses on a single instance of a

Queer

HEATHER LOVE

What is the place of *queer* in transgender studies? The fields of queer studies and transgender studies are linked through shared histories, methods, and commitments to transforming the situation of gender and sexual outsiders. While *queer* is associated primarily with nonnormative desires and sexual practices, and *transgender* is associated primarily with nonnormative gender identifications and embodiments, it is both theoretically and practically difficult to draw a clear line between them. In distinction to both gay and lesbian studies and sexuality studies, queer studies defines itself as a critical field that questions stable categories of identity. Transgender studies also defines itself against identity, offering a challenge to the perceived stability of the two-gender system. Whether and in what context these fields should be seen as distinct is a live question; however, *queer* and *transgender* are linked in their activist investments, their dissident methodologies, and their critical interrogation of and resistance to gender and sexual norms.

Challenging discrete categories of identity has been central to the work of both queer and transgender studies from the start. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, *queer* emerged as an activist slogan that sought to capture the radical energies of struggles for sexual and gender freedom in the face of the AIDS crisis. By reclaiming a homophobic slur as the name for a movement and, soon after, a field of study, queer activists and scholars indicated the significance of violence and stigma in the experience of gender and sexual outsiders. Queer, with its valences of strange, odd, and perplexing, was also meant to indicate a range of nonnormative sexual practices and gender identifications beyond gay and lesbian. Forwarding a model of coalition among the marginalized and the excluded, queer as at its most capacious was imagined as a rallying cry against "the regimes of the normal" (Warner 1993: xxvi), poised to address "the fractal intricacies of language, skin, migration, state" (Sedgwick 1993: 9).

Transgender is also a term that emerged in an activist context in order to challenge the rule of identity. If *queer* can be understood as refusing the stabilizations of both gender and sexuality implied by the categories gay and lesbian and opening onto a wider spectrum of sexual nonnormativity, *transgender* emerged as

a term to capture a range of gendered embodiments, practices, and community formations that cannot be accounted for by the traditional binary. Although the precise origins of the term are contested, it has taken root over the past couple of decades as an activist, scholarly, and vernacular term that refuses normalizing and clinical views of gender in favor of a more capacious and mobile account. In *Transgender History*, Susan Stryker (2008: 1) defines the concept of transgender as "the movement across a socially imposed boundary from an unchosen starting place," capturing the critical force and flexibility of the term. While *transgender* functions as an umbrella term, able to conjure a spectrum that can include transsexuals, cross-dressers, and butches and femmes, it also signals a resistance to the taxonomic framework implied by the model of the spectrum (even as it "overcomes" it). Such a critical impulse—the refusal of all categories of sexual and gender identity—might be called *genderqueer*, a term that suggests the intimacy between *transgender* and *queer*.

Queer and transgender studies are linked not only in their shared critique of sexual and gender normativity but also in their resistance to disciplinary and methodological norms. The counterdisciplinary thought of Michel Foucault has been crucial for the development of both fields. Foucault's (1978) account of the disciplinary force of the modern regime of sexuality informs the antinormative, anti-identity politics of transgender and queer studies. In addition, Foucault's genealogical approach to history allowed him to consider a range of genders and sexualities—for instance, in the story of the complex nineteenth-century figure Herculine Barbin (Barbin and Foucault 1980)—outside modern categories of identity. Such unsettled and unsettling instances of embodiment, practice, and identification threaten not only discrete categories of sexual and gender identity but the very distinction between gender and sexuality. Finally, Foucault's critique of the will to knowledge masquerading as scientific objectivity is crucial to the methodology of both queer and transgender studies. Since those with nonstandard embodiments and sexual practices have been disproportionately subjected to the clinical gaze, Foucault's (2003) critical history of the human sciences has led to an insistence in both fields on queer and trans people as the subjects rather than the objects of knowledge. Such insistence points to a shared commitment to the politics of knowledge, to the idea that new ways of being in the world depend on new ways of thinking and new critical frameworks.

Despite historical, methodological, and political overlaps, queer and transgender studies have not always traveled in tandem, and it is not clear, as these fields age, to what extent they should. It is clear that the anti-identitarian, antinormalizing, and coalitional aspects of queer have been useful in articulating and

furthering transgender scholarship and politics; and indeed this shared commitment to crossing disciplinary and identity boundaries can make it hard to distinguish sharply between queer and transgender studies or to sort out these lines of influence. However, while *queer* at its most capacious is understood to indicate a wide range of differences and social exclusions, it has often been critiqued for functioning more narrowly in practice. In her important account of the exclusions of queer politics, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens," Cathy J. Cohen (2005) indicts *queer* as a false universal, one that claims to address the situation of all marginal subjects but in fact is focused on the concerns of gays and lesbians. One can see a similar critique of *queer* among some trans scholars, who have argued that queer studies has not engaged fully with the material conditions of transgender people but has rather used gender nonnormativity as a sign or allegory of queerness.

Such tensions about the status and inclusiveness of queer do not take place in a vacuum but rather in fraught material, professional, and institutional contexts. Queer studies, despite some notable successes, remains an understaffed and underfunded venture. Nonetheless, the field is in a stronger position than transgender studies, which is often taught as an addendum to queer studies or gender studies. How women's and gender studies programs and LGBT studies programs can best support institutional initiatives in the field of transgender studies is a crucial question in the present. Inclusion of transgender material in courses and curricula is a double-edged sword, since it advances knowledge of the field and meets considerable student demand, but it arguably forestalls the most crucial step in the institutionalization of transgender studies: the hiring of scholars primarily situated in transgender studies and of trans-identified scholars to tenure-track positions in the university.

Furthermore, despite significant overlap in the intellectual formations of queer and transgender studies, the conceptual fit between them is not seamless. Queer has proven less useful than transgender studies in accounting for embodiment. Trans studies makes accounting for material experience and making space for new forms and experiences of embodiment central (in this aspect, one sees significant links between transgender and disability studies). Queer is deeply tied to the intellectual formation of poststructuralism, particularly as it developed in literary theory and psychoanalysis. The field of transgender studies also was influenced by this framework—particularly in canonical texts such as Sandy Stone's "The *Empire* Strikes Back" (1991)—but it has tended to be more methodologically inclusive and diverse. While queer studies continues to resist social science methodologies in favor of a more humanistic version of interdisciplinary or cultural

studies, trans studies has stronger ties to legal studies, transnational analysis, the history of medicine, architecture and design, ethnography, and political economy.

It is not clear whether *queer* is best understood as a substantial term with historical links to communities marked as gender and sexual deviants or as a more abstract theoretical term, one that describes a capacious nonnormativity, political critique, and resistance to identity. A similar ambiguity marks *transgender*, which can refer to particular modes of embodiment or communities of people but can also be understood as a theoretical term that points to the crossing and denaturalizing of identity categories. The powerful destabilizations that both queer and transgender have effected are crucial, but in the present they may need to be balanced by an awareness of the continuing force of identity. Etymologically, both *trans* and *queer* refer to crossing, and in that sense both terms invoke mobility as well as its limits. Given that more and more gender-normative, economically and racially privileged, coupled, and metropolitan gays and lesbians are crossing into the mainstream, these fields may need to turn their attention in the present to crossing in the sense of being crossed or thwarted in one's desires, ambitions, or life chances. Social class, race, region, ability, and gender presentation play a crucial role in determining rights, access to resources, and freedom from violence; and transgender, transsexual, and genderqueer people suffer disproportionately from what Amber Hollibaugh and Cherríe Moraga, writing in 1981, called "queer attack" (403). If *queer* has political force in the context of struggles for gender and sexual freedom, it is because of its ability to convey the ongoing realities of stigma, violence, and exclusion.

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Reveal

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The reveal is a moment in a trans person's life when the trans person is subjected to the pressures of a pervasive gender/sex system that seeks to make public the "truth" of the trans person's gendered and sexed body. While the reveal is frequently used as a narrative technique in literature and film, it also profoundly impacts trans people's actual lives, as seen in media event reveals, like Christine Jorgensen's, and as experienced by trans people in a variety of situations in daily life—such as border crossings, doctor's visits, and job interviews.

At stake in reveals is the issue of agency. Inextricably bound to narrative, the reveal can be seized upon by a trans person as a moment to exert agency and reveal oneself, to determine the meaning of one's own life and body. Unlike the act of coming out for gays, lesbians, and bisexuals, which can have the effect of affirming an "identity," the reveal results in a predicament in which the meaning of the trans body is contested, and competing "truths" vie for dominance. And yet such a "performance," of revealing instead of being revealed, frequently demands that trans persons continuously reassert and defend their truth.

When used as a narrative technique in literature and film, the reveal presents previously "hidden" or unknown information to the audience, often in a manner that twists the plot or produces a climax. In popular narrative fiction and film representations of transgender people, the moment in which a trans character's trans status is discovered by the audience, or by another character, typically functions as a reveal. This reveal is often highly sensationalized, dramatized, or eroticized, though it is also sometimes depicted as comic. Reveals involving trans

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Transgender

CRISTAN WILLIAMS

The word *transgender* entered widespread use as an umbrella term for describing a range of gender-variant identities and communities within the United States in the early 1990s.[1] At that time, Virginia Prince (1913–2009), a self-identified heterosexual cross-dresser from Los Angeles who later started living socially as a woman full time and who played an indisputably important role in the formation of gender-variant communities, organizations, and identities within the United States in the mid-twentieth century, was often credited with coining the term (Feinberg 1996). Her role in this regard has been overstated, and the history of the word itself is far more complex than has been previously understood.

Prince did describe herself with such terms as *transgenderal* as early as 1969 and *transgenderist* as early as 1978, as a means to name the specific behavior of living full time in a chosen social gender role different from that typically associated with birth-assigned sex, without undergoing genital sex-reassignment surgery (see Ekins and King 2006). In 1975, *FI News* featured an article about the term *transgenderist* (Mesics 1975), defining it in the manner Prince would later use, and in 1976, Ari Kane, a contemporaneous gender-variant community leader on the East Coast, used the term in a similar fashion (see Mesics 1975). Prince and Kane, however, did not use the word "transgender" in its contemporary all-inclusive sense, nor were they first in coining words involving some compound of trans + gender. More importantly, the earliest documented uses of "transgender" do not distinguish cross-dressing or living full time without surgery from transsexual identities.

In 1965, for example, Dr. John Oliven proposed that the term *transsexualism* be replaced by the term *transgenderism*, arguing that the concept of sexuality could not account for the "all consuming belief that [transsexuals] are women who by some incredible error were given the bodies of men" (1965: 514). On April 26, 1970, a *TV Guide* newspaper insert used the term "transgendered" to describe the transsexual title character of Gore Vidal's sex-change farce *Myra Breckinridge* ("Sunday Highlights" 1970). In 1974, Drs. Robert Hatcher and Joseph Pearson used "transgender" as a term for operative transsexuals, writing, "The transvestite rarely seeks transgender surgery" (1974: 176). During that same year, Oliven again used "transgender" but this time as a term inclusive of both transvestites and transsexuals (1974). By 1975, transvestite/transsexual groups began using "transgenderism" as a term inclusive of transsexuals and transvestites (Dowell 1975). In 1979, 1982, and 1985, Christine Jorgensen, then perhaps the world's most famous transsexual, publicly rejected the term *transsexual* in favor of the term *transgender* (Parker 1979; Associated Press 1982; Canadian Press 1985). In 1984, *TV-TS Tapestry* magazine featured an article recounting the importance of a "transgender community," in which "transgender" was used as an umbrella term inclusive of transsexuals and cross-dressers (Peo 1984). By the mid-1980s, "transgender" had been used multiple times—in medical, pop-culture, and trans community sources alike—as an umbrella term inclusive of transsexuals, cross-dressers, and other gender-variant people.[2] The dramatic rise in the term's popularity in the early 1990s, therefore, should be seen as the acceleration of a longer trend rather than the creation of a new meaning for an existing term that originally meant something else. The coinage, uptake, and diffusion of "transgender" was an organic, grass-roots process that emerged from many sources, in many conversations happening in many different social locations.

This new understanding of *transgender*'s etymology not only has important implications for tracing the complex recent history of gender and sexuality; it can also intervene in contentious identitarian disputes within and among various contemporary trans communities. One common polemical use of what might be called the "Virginia Prince Fountainhead Narrative" of *transgender*'s origin is that a motley movement of various gender-nonconformists, transsexuals, and queers commandeered a term that referred specifically to heterosexual cross-dressers who chose to cross-dress full time—*transgenderists*—thereby colonizing the identity label of another group and forcibly assimilating them into political and social formations they wanted nothing to do with.[3] Prince herself felt this way; she claimed ownership of the term and objected to the broader use of "transgender" (Prince 1991).

Etymological research clearly documents, however, that since the 1970s, "transgender" has in fact been used with a variety of meanings. One important use

has been to group together different kinds of people who might otherwise have virtually no social contact with one another. This grouping together across fine gradations of trans experience and identity can facilitate communication and hence build the experienced reality of a shared community, with overlapping and intersectional social needs and political goals. It is this expansive, rather than narrow, use of the term that encompasses the intellectual and political promise of a *transgender studies*.

Cristan Williams is the founder of the Transgender Archives in Houston, Texas, and is the executive director of the Transgender Foundation of America.

Notes

1. See the chart documenting the rising popularity of *transgender* in Stryker and Aizura 2013 (2).
2. See the extensive citations published in Williams 2012.
3. See, for example, the opinion of Billie Jean Jones (1992), publisher of cross-dresser magazine *TV Guise*.

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