

The Flourishing of Transgender Studies

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Transfeminist Perspectives in and beyond Transgender and Gender Studies

Edited by A. Finn Enke

Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012. 260 pp.

“Transgender France”

Edited by Todd W. Reeser

Special issue, *L’Esprit Createur* 53, no. 1 (2013). 172 pp.

“Race and Transgender”

Edited by Matt Richardson and Leisa Meyer

Special issue, *Feminist Studies* 37, no. 2 (2011). 147 pp.

The Transgender Studies Reader 2

Edited by Susan Stryker and Aren Z. Aizura

New York: Routledge, 2013. 694 pp.

For the past decade or so, “emergent” has often appeared alongside “transgender studies” to describe a growing scholarly field. As of 2014, transgender studies can boast several conferences, a number of edited collections and thematic journal issues, courses in some college curricula, and—with this inaugural issue of *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*—an academic journal with a premier university press. But while the scholarly trope of emergence conjures the cutting edge, it can also be an infantilizing temporality that communicates (and contributes to) perpetual marginalization. An emergent field is always on the verge of becoming, but it may never arrive.

The recent publication of several new edited collections and special issues of journals dedicated to transgender studies makes manifest the arrival of a vibrant,

diverse, and flourishing interdisciplinary field. The work collected in these volumes follows agenda-setting scholarship by Susan Stryker, David Valentine, Joanne Meyerowitz, Paisley Currah, and others in the 1990s and early 2000s (Stryker and Whittle 2006; Stryker 2008; Meyerowitz 2004; Valentine 2007; Currah, Minter, and Juang 2006). What will now surely be known as the *Transgender Studies Reader 1*, edited by Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle and published in 2006, gave a name to the field. With its door-stopping heft and 768 pages, it literally weighed in on the field's existence. The equally substantial and perhaps even more sweepingly ambitious *Transgender Studies Reader 2* (hereafter *TSR2*), coedited by Stryker and Aren Z. Aizura, follows and complements the first volume, collecting together new and recently published articles and book excerpts and charting the multiple directions of the flood of work published over the past several years. While *TSR1* traced the conceptualization of gender variance historically, from nineteenth-century sexology through foundational theoretical, autoethnographic, and political texts of a century later, *TSR2* charts the field's emerging trends and lines of analysis.

While *TSR2*, organized into ten thematic sections of five essays each, strives for broad coverage, other recent collections take more topical approaches. The past year also saw the publication of *Transfeminist Perspectives in and beyond Transgender and Gender Studies* (hereafter *TP*), edited by A. Finn Enke, which was honored with a Lambda Literary Award in 2013. *TP* assembles twelve essays that reflect on what Enke characterizes as “the productive and sometimes fraught potential” of the relationship between feminist studies and transgender studies (1). Two exciting journal special issues devoted to transgender studies have also appeared in the past couple of years. A thematic issue of *Feminist Studies* titled “Race and Transgender” (hereafter “RT”), edited by Matt Richardson and Leisa Meyer, includes seven essays, poetry, an art essay, and an interview that together bring transgender studies and critical race theory into dialogue. And a special issue of *L'Esprit Createur*, the international journal on French and francophone studies, titled “Transgender France” (hereafter “TF”), edited by Todd W. Reeser, makes note of the French theorists who have inspired transgender theorists (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari) and includes twelve essays, in English and French, that bring transgender analysis to French and francophone texts and contexts.

A review of these collections gives me the opportunity to take account of this exciting interdisciplinary field at this moment of its explosive growth and to consider the inspiring work taking place under its rubric. I cannot hope to do justice to these collections in their entirety and certainly cannot capture the richness and range of the eighty-two articles published in them. What follows is a selective tour through these new volumes, a series of transects through the field that maps its animating themes and questions.

Trans Optics

Pioneering activist Virginia Prince was perhaps the first to put the lexical compound of trans+gender to work, Robert Hill tells us in “Before Transgender: *Transvestia’s* Spectrum of Gender Variance, 1960–1980” (*TSR2*). Prince coined the term *transgenderist* in the 1970s, Hill observes, to distinguish heterosexual male cross-dressers from transsexuals and homosexuals. A few decades later, in the early 1990s, transgender took on a new and expansive life, first deployed by activists as an organizing principle to hail and connect a broad spectrum of gender-nonconforming people and then conceived and claimed as an identity.

Much of the early work in a field that would become known as transgender studies focused on transgender identity: pondering its embodiments, working to leverage its political utility, and debating its distinction from and/or inclusion of other gender and sexual identities, including transsexual, butch, queen, queer, and genderqueer. As Stryker and Aizura observe, “The first iteration of the field engaged in the kind of identity politics necessary to gain speaking positions within discourse, and consequently featured a good deal of autoethnographic and self-representational work by trans subjects” (*TSR2*: 3).

Given that history, perhaps the most striking development in transgender studies as represented in these new collections is the turn away from identity as a primary object of analysis and, in some work, the move to critique the notion of a coherent transgender identity or a master narrative of transgender identity formation. Indeed, much of the work in these collections is explicitly anti-identitarian. Aizura, for instance, in his essay in *TP*, “Transnational Transgender Rights and Immigration Law,” argues that we need a theory “that turns ‘trans’ in an anti-identitarian direction,” one more attentive to “where and how bodies escape or act clandestinely outside those categories—and at moments in which the categories of immigrant, transgender person, man, and woman become incoherent and inconsistent” (135). To Enke, transgender studies is limited by “a perception that [it] only or primarily concerns transgender-identified individuals” (*TP*: 2). Enke is eager to see “trans” and “feminist” “do more flexible work . . . opening broadly in all directions, . . . modify[ing] and . . . modified by participants whose names we may not even yet know” (3).

Several contributors to these volumes critique an emerging transnormativity, whereby certain transgender bodies are valued, counted, recognized, and folded into citizenship, while others are marginalized, rendered abject, excluded, and made vulnerable to violence and premature death. A biopolitics of transgender examines the processes by which some trans subjects gain rights and recognition at the expense of others. For instance, in “Convivial Relations between Gender Non-conformity and the French Nation-State,” Todd Sekuler draws on Jasbir Puar’s insights on homonationalism and sexual essentialism in the US

context to analyze a move toward the depathologization of “medically legible” transsexual subjects in France and “a transformation in the relationship of the French nation-state with transgender subjects from one of neglect and sickness to one of health, integration, and productivity” (“TF”: 15). In the process, however, Sekuler notes, the French state secures its status as a forward-thinking, human rights–protecting nation, and the non-French immigrant—usually a Muslim “other”—is cast as backward, rights-denying, and heterosexual. In “Elusive Subjects: Notes on the Relationship between Critical Political Economy and Trans Studies,” Dan Irving asks, “How do neoliberal discourses mediate masculinities to enable select trans men to be assimilated into society while those positioned in the underlayers of the trans demographic remain abject?” (*TP*: 155). An emerging body of work poses a trans of color critique, included in all these collections and featured in “RT,” the special issue of *Feminist Studies*, drawing our attention to the ways in which some white transgender subjects have become recognized as rights-deserving citizens while trans people of color often remain excluded. Bobby Noble explores the racial and class privileges of white transgender masculinities in “Our Bodies are Not Ourselves: Tranny Guys and the Racialized Class Politics of Incoherence” (*TSR2*). C. Riley Snorton and Jin Harithaworn’s “Trans Necropolitics: A Transnational Reflection on Violence, Death, and the Trans of Color Afterlife” in *TSR2* draws on Achille Mbembe’s concept of necropolitics to capture the systemic forms of violence experienced by trans people of color.

If transgender *identity* raises problems for many contributors to these collections—problems of false coherence that flattens out differences among transgender subjects, of required conformities for recognition as authentically transgender, of the implicit whiteness and middle-classness of the transgender subject—transgender *analysis* holds considerable promise. Many scholars in these collections put transgender to use as a mode of analysis rather than as an identity category. Transgender (and sometimes *trans-* as prefix or *trans* as verb—transing disciplinarity, citizenship, childhood, cisgender, nation, species, feminist and women’s studies, pedagogy, and more) emerges in this new body of work as an illuminating analytical lens.

Scholars and activists who contribute to these four collections bring that optic to a wide range of topics. A transgender analytic allows Reeser to identify and critique what he terms the “omnipresent sexual binarism of the nation state” that defines and polices normative gender through its educational system, citizenship laws and passport regulations, carceral systems, and marriage (“TF”: 9). Paisley Currah and Lisa Jean Moore’s “‘We Won’t Know Who You Are’: Contesting Sex Designations in New York City Birth Certificates” (*TSR2*), a fascinating account of debates about the appropriate sex designation on birth certificates of

transgender people in New York City between 1965 and 2006, reveals how post-9/11 anxiety about the fixity of identity has had particularly harmful consequences.

Others bring a transgender analytic to questions of political economy. For example, Irving argues for the importance of the socioeconomic logics of capitalism and neoliberalism to transgender subjectivity, embodiment, and politics. Those logics, Irving notes, promote the construction of “the active/proper/worthy/deserving neoliberal citizen, a construction that disrupts and further devastates the lives of trans people for whom the systemic barriers to emulating these ideals are insurmountable” (*TP*: 154).

Transgender is a way of seeing; it is also, in some new work, a way of knowing. Some contributors reflect upon transgender as an epistemological position from which new, dissident forms of knowledge are produced. An excellent example of this kind of analysis is Marlon M. Bailey’s “Gender/Racial Realness: Theorizing the Gender System in Ballroom Culture,” in which he details the epistemological inventiveness of poor Black queer communities in Detroit’s ballroom scene (“RT”). There, Bailey explains, the category of “realness” functions both as a metric of competitive performance and as a creative survival strategy for people vulnerable to race-, sexuality-, and gender-based violence.

Trans Lives

Framed in universalizing terms (employing Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s framework developed for queer studies [1990]), transgender is widely relevant to understanding the constructedness of gender and the normativizing power of the gender binary that governs everyone’s lives (and, analytically, it is widely relevant to those who work in fields other than transgender studies). However, as Reeser astutely reminds us in his essay “*TransFrance*,” “We are all trans, and some of us are trans” (“TF”: 13). A minoritizing framework highlights the distinctive vulnerabilities and world-making possibilities of transgender and gender-variant people (13). As Currah and Moore propose in their essay in *TSR2*, “Instead of asking what transgender activism does to/for gender,” it remains important to “center the effects of the current gender regime on trans people” (609). While transgender studies has developed new analytics of gender normalization, regulation, and surveillance that affect everyone’s lives, scholars and activists in the field remain attentive to the lived experiences and material circumstances of transgender and gender-nonconforming people.

Much of that work focuses on the encounter of transgender people with the violence of systems of normalization and on the cultural, legal, and state insistence on binary understandings of gender. If earlier work in transgender studies identified medicine as the disciplinary technology with most significance for trans and gender-variant people, new scholarship featured in these collections

interrogates newer administrative, discursive, and surveillance regimes. In this shift, transgender studies reckons with the most important global geopolitical changes of the past ten years: new forms of state power with the tightening grip of neoliberalism and the post-9/11 expansion of surveillance, securitization, and border control. Toby Beauchamp offers perhaps the closest analysis of the links between the policing of transgender and securitization in “Artful Concealment and Strategic Visibility: Transgender Bodies and U.S. State Surveillance after 9/11,” a critique of post-9/11 surveillance policies that are, Beauchamp argues, “deeply rooted in the maintenance and enforcement of normatively gendered bodies, behaviors, and identities” (*TSR2*: 47). For Beauchamp, transgender studies “provides an ideal point of entry for thinking through state surveillance of gendered bodies” (*ibid.*).

While no collection—even one as wide-ranging as *TSR2*—can cover everything, the relative lack of engagement of scholars in these collections with the continued expansion of mass incarceration and the experience of transgender people in prisons, jails, and other institutions of punitive confinement is a striking and surprising omission. There is a brief but powerful mention, in Che Gosset’s “Silhouettes of Defiance: Memorializing Historical Sites of Queer and Transgender Resistance in an age of Neoliberal Inclusivity,” of the “deadly telos of the prison regime, its threat to and destructive agenda for queer, trans and gender non-conforming people of color and our communities” (*TSR2*: 589). The prison distills many of the dynamics of most concern to this generation of transgender studies scholars and activists—strictly policed binary gender and the exposure of the most marginalized of trans and gender-variant people, especially people of color, to harassment, surveillance, violence, discrimination, and death—and there is ample opportunity here for future scholarship as well as an urgent need for activism.¹

If the prison is a place of profound vulnerability and violence for transgender people, the academy is a contested site of struggle for recognition and inclusion. Enke’s *TP* includes several essays that examine the place of transgender people in university infrastructures. Clark Pomerleau outlines a set of best practices to make universities more welcoming to transgender and gender-variant university students and staff in “College Transitions: Recommended Policies for Trans Students and Employees.” Vic Muñoz elaborates a “decolonizing pedagogy of transing” that recovers historical and contemporary experiences of colonization and is based on a politics of location, in “Gender/Sovereignty” (23). In “‘Do These Earrings Make Me Look Dumb?’: Diversity, Privilege, and Heteronormative Perceptions of Competence within the Academy,” Kate Forbes writes as a scholar in the natural sciences to critique heteronormative and sexist perceptions of competence, calling on the academy to address “how it views feminine

people and all individuals who do not mirror the dominant paradigm” (34). Pat Griffin explores the consequences of sex segregation in collegiate sports for trans and gender-variant student-athletes. And in “Trans. Panic: Some Thoughts toward a Theory of Feminist Fundamentalism,” Bobby Noble tracks the ambivalent, ghosting presence of transgender in women’s studies.

Trans often functions as a metaphor of geographic movement, and several of the essays in a section of *TSR2* consider the movement of trans bodies in and across space. In a critique of the valorization of the urban in trans studies, Lucas Cassiday Crawford considers “new creative potentials” in trans lives in rural spaces and small towns and asks us to imagine “the very different affects and lives that could be realized there (475, 481). In his intriguing and thoughtful biographical essay “Longevity and Limits in Rae Bourbon’s Life in Motion,” Don Romesburg tracks the “multiple forms of mobility and migration”—across national borders, “shifting terrains of social attitudes, law enforcement, performance trends, . . . subcultures,” performance genres, and racial, class, sex/gender, and sexual subject positions—undertaken by performer Rae Bourbon over her sixty-year career and impressively long life (484).

Much of the work in these collections responds to critiques of earlier limitations and blind spots of the field, taking aim, as Stryker and Aizura write, at “its implicit whiteness, U.S.-centricity, Anglophone bias, and sometimes the suspect ways in which the category *transgender* has been circulated transnationally” (*TSR2*: 4). Moving from the predominantly US-centered focus of earlier iterations of the field, these collections make visible what Todd A. Henry calls an “increasingly globalized transgender studies” (*TSR2*: 404). That global approach goes far beyond what Stryker in *TSR1* characterized as “around the world in eighty genders,” to explore how geographic and geopolitical location and histories of empire, colonialism, displacement, and settlement shape different gender-variant subjectivities, identities, and embodiments (14).

The global and transnational scope of the field is on full display in *TSR2*, integrated in most of the volume’s ten sections and in the other collections as well. That fascinating body of work includes Marcia Ochoa’s “Perverse Citizenship: Divas, Marginality, and Participation in ‘Loca-Lization,’” about the alternative political imaginaries that Venezuelan trans women articulate in the face of violence and marginalization. In “Unlikely Sex Change Capital of the World” (“RT”), Elizabeth Bucar and Enke explore the media-generated astonishment at the “unlikeliness” of “sex change capitals” in Tehran, Iran, and Trinidad, Colorado, spinning Tehran as the site of homophobic violence and coercion while representing Trinidad as a model of American liberalism. In “*Kaming Mga Talyada (We Who Are Sexy): The Transsexual Whiteness of Christine Jorgensen in the (Post)Colonial Philippines*” (*TSR2*), Stryker reflects on the appearance of

Jorgensen in a 1962 Filipino feature film to consider the encounter of white American privilege with postcolonial histories of Filipino sex and gender, producing “global mappings of disparate and differently subjugated assemblages of sex/gender/sexuality” (552). In “Reading Transsexuality in ‘Gay’ Tehran (Around 1979)” (*TSR2*), Afsaneh Najmabadi offers a tentative mapping of what she terms “non-heteronormative Tehran” in the 1970s (380). Aizura considers the political and affective economies of travel for sex reassignment in “The Romance of the Amazing Scalpel: ‘Race,’ Labor, and Affect in Thai Gender Reassignment Clinics” (*TSR2*). Aizura examines the orientalist discourse of tourist-marketing strategies aimed at white trans women and the emotional labor of Thai gender clinic workers to contribute to “a critique of economies of feminized and racialized transnational labor” (505). Kale Bantigue Fajardo explores the transformative nature of global markets and movement in his study of the complex and fluid masculinities forged by Filipino seamen in the global shipping industry through their “intimate relationalities” with tomboys (*TSR2*: 529).

While most work in transgender studies is understandably focused on the contemporary moment, I was excited to read new work on the historical possibilities of the concept of transgender in the past. Some use the concept of transgender to name gender-variant phenomena in the “pre-historical,” ancient, medieval, and premodern record. In “Towards a Transgender Archaeology: A Queer Rampage through Prehistory” (*TSR2*), Mary Weismantel critiques the ways in which archaeological disciplinary practices have ignored or suppressed transgender phenomena. Deborah Miranda reconstructs the history of the genocidal extermination of gender-variant native people by Spanish colonizers in “Extermination of the Joyas: Gendercide in Spanish California” (*TSR2*). And Gary Ferguson examines stories of early modern gender change and ambiguities of the sexed body in late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century France in “Early Modern Transitions: From Montaigne to Choisy” (“TF”).

Others explore gender-variant lives in the more recent past. In “Elusive Subjects: Notes on the Relationship between Critical Political Economy and Trans Studies” (*TP*), Irving offers a fascinating reading of 1950s medical studies of transsexuality by sexologist David O. Cauldwell alongside early transsexual autobiographies to locate the roots of neoliberal discourses of the good transsexual as “a flexible, courageous, and physically/mentally and financially fit individual who displays productive potential” (169). Hill’s exploration in *Transvestia* magazine of the identity terms used to distinguish MTF (male-to-female) heterosexual cross-dressers from homosexuals and transsexuals in the 1960s and 1970s looks at the period of “taxonomic revolution” after World War II, when doctors, sexologists, and people from across the gender spectrum “began to map and sort out the overlapping subcultures of gender and sexual variance and make ontological

distinctions among the categories of ‘sex,’ ‘gender,’ and ‘sexuality’” (*TSR2*: 366). *Transvestia*’s readers and writers, Hill finds, “engaged in a relentless and often-times vicious politics of respectability when classifying and differentiating types of (trans)gender embodiments, practices, and identities” (*ibid.*).

What are the temporal and conceptual borders of transgender history? Who are its subjects? Scholars who explore the portability of the contemporary concept of “transgender” to the past reflect on questions of temporality and sometimes bend and break the methods of disciplinary history. For Christy Wampole, the “impudence” of Claud Cahun’s repudiation of gender norms in her 1920s self-portraiture signaled a self-styling in which history had not quite caught up, forecasting “with confidence the arrival and permanence of transgender as a category” and anticipating a future transgender subject (“TF”). Kadji Amin offers an intriguing reading of nonnormative genders and sexualities in Colette’s *The Pure and the Impure*. Instead of reading Colette’s texts for depictions of same-sex and cross-gender subcultures, Amin writes that they “demand a form of literary close reading attuned to the text’s ellipses, limits, and contradictions . . . and its persistent soldering of a discourse on gender and sexuality to concerns about historicity and time” (“TF”: 114).

Beginning in the early 1990s and accelerating with the turn of the twenty-first century, representations of transgender lives in films, novels, the Internet, and television have made transgender an increasingly familiar concept. Contributors to these collections consider transgender representation in narrative, experimental, and documentary film and literary texts. Darren Waldron offers an insightful reading of Celine Sciamma’s 2011 feature film *Tomboy*, admiring the director’s departure from the theatricalization of gender identity in a story focusing on a gender-nonconforming ten-year-old child. *Tomboy*, Waldron writes, “reveals the conditionality of all gendering by highlighting the performative strategies undertaken by boys to comply with compulsory masculinity” (“TF”: 60). *TSR2* includes a chapter from Jack Halberstam’s *In a Queer Time and Place*, which considers the operation of the “transgender gaze” in recent popular films and the multiple meanings of the transgender body to multiple audiences.

Trans Conversations

These collections showcase a deeply interdisciplinary and intersectional field in conversation with other disciplines and interdisciplines. Transgender studies as represented in these collections enters into and transforms multiple fields of study. The scholarly dialogue most fully developed in transgender studies is in some ways one of the most surprising: from a history of conflict, dismissal, and epistemic disconnect with feminist and women’s studies, transgender studies scholars have developed a body of theoretical and empirical work under the

rubric of “transfeminism.” Enke’s excellent introduction to *TP* outlines a conversation between transgender studies and feminist studies, organized around their “mutually constituted but highly ambivalent relationship” (vi). As Enke elaborates, both trans studies and feminist studies are committed to the notion that gender is made; both are committed to “some version of gender self-determination and resistance to binary gender norms”; and both fields, at their best, are dedicated to an intersectional analysis (5). In *TP*, Enke argues that trans “might be central, not marginal to gender and women’s studies” and offers models for the fields’ integration and mutual transformation (2).

Richardson and Meyer’s coedited special issue of *Feminist Studies* offers a series of essays that engage “the varied intersections and mutual constitutiveness of transgender and critical race theory” (“RT”: 247). Work in that issue considers the “impact of race on transgender theory” and challenges critical race studies to think about “how our studies of racialized communities would be different if we put transgender subjects at the center of our work” (248). Contributors consider the mutual constitution of race and gender identity through a wide range of themes, including racial and ethnic cross-identification in gender performance, racialized meanings of media representations of transgender subjects, and subjugated knowledges shaped by gender difference and race. “RT” reprints Emily Skidmore’s prizewinning article, “Constructing the ‘Good Transsexual’: Christine Jorgensen, Whiteness, and Heteronormativity in the Mid-Twentieth-Century Press.” There, Skidmore shows how race mattered in mid-twentieth-century constructions of transsexuality, contrasting the public reception of three white transsexual women in the 1950s with that of three transwomen of color who appeared in the mainstream, tabloid, and African American press in the 1950s and 1960s. Transsexual women “with most proximity to white womanhood,” Skidmore finds, gained visibility in mainstream press as “authentic”; their stories “therefore came to define the boundaries of ‘transsexual’ identity” (271).

A few articles in these collections suggest the possibility of an emerging conversation between transgender studies and disability studies. Enke draws on disability studies to pose an astute and provocative critical genealogy of the term *cisgender*, in “The Education of Little Cis: Cisgender and the Discipline” [*TP*; reprinted in *TSR2*]. Enke’s critique of the embrace of the term *cisgender*—especially in the gender studies classroom—as reifying a cis/trans binary and for encouraging “investments in a gender stability that undermines feminist, trans*, queer, and related movements” is enabled by Enke’s conversation with disability studies (*TP*: 62, 61). Both transgender and disability studies are about “movement and change,” Enke writes, “but disability studies may do a better job of recognizing that bodies, abilities, and core identities change” (74). As Enke observes, disability studies would never reify ability as a static condition: “Cis-abled?!

Impossible" (ibid.). In "Body Shame, Body Pride: Lessons from the Disability Rights Movement," Eli Clare imagines "a disability politics of transness," described as "not one of simple analogy, but one that delves into the lived experiences of our bodies, that questions the idea of normal and the notion of cure, that values self-determination, that resists shame and the medicalization of identity—a politics that will help all of us come home to our bodies" (*TSR2*: 265). A disability studies analysis is implicit but powerfully enabling in Clare Sears's examination of the history of cross-dressing laws in late nineteenth-century San Francisco, alongside the history of the dime museum's freak shows, to explore their "similar disciplinary effects, producing and policing the boundaries of normative gender" (*TSR2*: 555).

Trans Visions

New work in transgender studies sharpens analytical critiques of technologies of power and regimes of normalization; it also strives to make the world more livable for transgender and gender-variant people. Contributors to these collections conjure a range of transgender political imaginaries and visions of justice and freedom. While some promote visions of rights and protections for transgender people, one of the most striking and challenging moves in the field is the turn away from a politics of recognition and inclusion and toward a critique of what Dean Spade and others have called "trickle-down" models of social justice, ones that prioritize neoliberal rights frameworks at the expense of interests of transgender populations most at risk: immigrants, undocumented people, people of color, low-income people, and youth (See also Cohen 1999; Strolovitch 2007). Sarah Lamble thus critiques the framing of Transgender Days of Remembrance, in "Retelling Racialized Violence, Remaking White Innocence: The Politics of Interlocking Oppressions in Transgender Day of Remembrance" (*TSR2*). Those memorialization practices, Lamble argues, deracialize violence against trans people and fail to engage white witnesses in their own complicity with the forces of racist violence. In "What's Wrong with Trans Rights?" (*TP*), Spade assails the mainstream LGBT political agenda that prioritizes antidiscrimination and hate crime legislation which, in Spade's analysis, tightens the grip of the carceral system that is so oppressive to trans and other people. Scanning more radical emancipatory horizons, Spade argues for shifting the framework of trans rights to "critical trans resistance," targeting "the sites of violence we see producing trans death" and promoting an explicitly redistributionist political agenda (193). In "Normalized Transgressions: Legitimizing the Transsexual Body as Productive," Irving promotes alliances with "other individuals who are understood as improperly sexed/gendered such as single mothers, women and men of color, those on social assistance, and those engaged in sex work" and with "anticapitalist

and antiglobalization activists who engage in queering all facets of political economy” (*TSR2*: 27).

While a number of scholars and activists call for resistance to the forces of neoliberalism that bear down on and constrain transgender (and all) subjects, Michelle O’Brien underlines the inevitable complicity of transgender people with these forces in her remarkable essay “Tracing this Body: Transsexuality, Pharmaceuticals, and Capitalism” (*TSR2*). O’Brien tracks the connections of her own consumption of hormones to the pharmaceutical companies that produce them, to insurance companies that exclude transgender healthcare, to transnational free trade agreements that make buying them more affordable in Mexico and Canada than in the United States. She considers as well as the circulation, regulation, and criminalization of needles. Locating her own body within global flows of power and capital, O’Brien cautions against the impossibility of a politics of purity even as she enjoins us to “trace the possibilities of resistance and liberation” (64). “We are all in the midst of structures of tremendous violence, oppression, and exploitation,” O’Brien writes. “There is no easy escape or pure distance from them. . . . But resist we do” (*ibid.*).

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Read together, these collections make an impressive statement about the dynamism and diversity of transgender studies. The essays in these tightly edited and thoughtfully conceived volumes cut across many disciplines and interdisciplines, including history, philosophy, anthropology, evolutionary biology, critical race studies, public policy, feminist studies, geography, francophone studies, media studies, science studies, and more, staging conversations that will enrich scholarship within and beyond the borders of the field. While it is overly optimistic to think that the dazzling work in these volumes heralds the “transing” of academia, their publication will certainly make it harder to ignore the field. While transgender studies has clearly established a place in the academy, contributors to these collections go beyond academic conversations to venture world-changing claims about the urgencies of our present moment. Excellent introductions by Enke in *TP* and by Stryker and Aizura in *TSR2* map the field and point to its exciting futures.

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Note

1. For work on the carceral state, incarcerated people, and transgender, see Stanley and Smith 2011, Spade 2011, and Kunzel 2008.

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