

CHAPTER 4

*Transgender Studies, or How
to Do Things with Trans**

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Refuse closure, insist on situation, seek multiplicity.

n. – Sandy Stone in response to the question, “How do we do trans* studies?” at the first International Trans* Studies Conference, September 7, 2016.

In 2014, the inaugural issue of *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* marked the scholarly formalization of what has alternatively been referred to as “transgender studies,” “trans studies,” “trans-studies,” and “trans* studies.” Titled “Postposttranssexual: Keywords for a 21st Century Transgender Studies,” the issue presents readers with a new vocabulary staking out the parameters of the field’s inquiry, defining eighty-six terms core to its history and animating questions. Curiously, however, “trans” is not among them. Instead of offering a definition for this central referent, the journal provocatively excludes “trans” from its lexicon – an omission that calls for specific attention to the practice in the field. As editors Paisley Currah and Susan Stryker write in their introduction to the issue, “although we retain *transgender* in the full, formal title of this journal, we invite you to imagine the *T* in *TSQ* as standing in for whatever version of *trans-* best suits you.”¹ The editors thus entrust “trans” to practitioners of the field as an open question, even though the journal’s title claims it as an operative and defining term. The first issue of *TSQ*, therefore, enacts a method specific to transgender studies in which the journal’s authoritative stance is placed in immediate tension with the key referent’s slippery and open nature. Such paradoxical maneuvers are primary to transgender studies, which grows out of the strategies of resistance and self-fashioning by which trans people have existed both within and against the systems that have classified us.

What, then, is the permutation transgender, trans, trans-, and/or trans* studies? Currah and Stryker are clear that the field itself is oriented against definitive answers to such questions. Yet, transgender studies *does* possess a history and an emergent set of critical methods, both similar to

and yet divergent from the more institutionally embraced field of queer studies. Arising together from the political and cultural conditions of the early 1990s, the two fields share an interrelated and yet vexed relationship. Generally, transgender studies is understood to focus on the examination and theorization of nonnormative *genders*, and queer studies assesses and analyzes nonnormative *sexualities*. Both fields are concerned with the social construction of identity and are often blended in the humanities, but transgender studies also possesses a broader interdisciplinary history in the social and medical sciences.² Despite this wider scope, however, transgender studies has struggled along with queer studies to account for its implicitly white and western lens. Both fields share a general theoretical investment in poststructuralism (primarily the works of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler), and both are fundamentally concerned with the construction and enforcement of normative sex and gender systems. But while early queer studies assessed the binary of “modern homo/heterosexual definition”³ as a major form of disciplinary power, foundational work in transgender studies investigated the deeper cultural and scientific constructions of man/woman and male/female on which sexual orientation depends for its recognition. This distinction in original focus is coincident with changes in sexology and psychology late in the twentieth century that separated sexual desire from gender identity,⁴ supporting the concatenation of “transgender” as an identificatory category based on sex assignment and gender expression.⁵ However, transgender and queer studies also problematize the neat separation of gender *from* sexuality – because sexual desire is often routed through gender recognition, and because sexual orientation as well as sex itself are primarily socially constructed through gender performance.⁶ The two fields are thus locked in a “critical relation”⁷ about the politics of sex, gender, and sexuality, in which each discourse problematizes and yet enlivens the other’s claims.

As interdisciplines rooted in critical theory, transgender and queer studies both share a foundational critique of disciplinary power that undergirds their resistance to fixed methods and proper objects. Both also present postmodern challenges to earlier, more positivist fields of study: Much like queer studies enacts a poststructuralist break from the older field of gay and lesbian studies, transgender studies confronts previous “objective” medical and psychological accounts of transgender pathology. However, unlike queer studies’ more deconstructionist stance toward identity, transgender studies places high value on the embodied, speaking transgender subject as the producer of constative self-knowledge. Moving beyond nominal examination of the transgender *object*, transgender studies is

an interdisciplinary critical project that takes up the *subjectivities* of transgender people to theorize a host of relations among gender, culture, science, knowledge production, and power. At its broadest, the field could arguably include any analysis that “disrupts, denaturalizes, rearticulates, and makes visible the normative linkages we generally assume to exist between the biological specificity of the sexually differentiated body, the social roles and statuses that a particular form of body is expected to occupy, the subjectively experienced relationship between a gendered sense of self and social expectations of gender-role performance, and the cultural mechanisms that work to sustain or thwart specific configurations of gendered personhood.”⁸

Although transgender studies possesses a wider interdisciplinary range, it is especially intertwined with queer studies in their shared attention to literary and cultural analysis: Textual interpretation has been central to each field, and key works in literary and cultural studies established both of their initial critical frames. Although transgender studies is undergirded by research in the social and medical sciences, it was work by literary and cultural theorists that produced the field’s constitutive interventions: Prompted by the militancy of the AIDS era, new praxes of trans self-narration erupted out of the medical discourse that had previously overdetermined transsexuality, shifting the transgender body from the position of a medically created *thing* to that of self-author. Two works crystallize this break and define the formal emergence of the field: Sandy Stone’s “The *Empire* Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto” and Susan Stryker’s “My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix.” Published only three years apart, these pieces form a call-and-response structure in which Stone’s demand that transgender people harness postmodernity to explode the medical concept of “transsexual” and shatter gender into dissonant “spectra of desire”⁹ is taken up by Stryker, who assumes the metaphoric role of Frankenstein’s monster to tear apart the discursive structure of her own essay, articulating the previously inexpressible rage of transgender experience. Both pieces formally reinvent the genre of transgender autobiography, establishing attention to literary form and discursive location as central critical strategies in the field. Both texts also break from the sexological model of transsexual pathology to enact a new vocabulary around transgender difference, redefining it as a radically disruptive cultural and political force.

Stone’s and Stryker’s essays inaugurated the “posttranssexual” period of transgender studies, during which trans scholars seized self-authorship in language, critiqued the systems that had produced transsexuality as

a condition, and evaluated possible alliances with queer studies, which had begun a parallel project of deconstructing both heterosexual and gay and lesbian identities. Despite calls for its expansion by both queer and trans scholars,¹⁰ however, queer studies early in the twenty-first century remained primarily wedded to the investigation of sexuality, a schema in which transgender phenomena were often misapprehended through the field's implicit privileging of sexual orientation.¹¹ Although the fields theoretically overlapped, it was queer studies that was more centrally taken up in the academy, with transgender studies generally treated as a subfield and often relegated to the role of a fractious "special guest" within queer studies' purview.¹² The subsequent launch of *TSQ* (a title echoing *GLQ*) as the journal of record for transgender studies has released the field from its solicitation of queer studies – moving it from the discussion of what transgender *is* (not transsexual and, perhaps, not queer after all) to the question of what transgender *does* or *might do*. The emerging wildcard formations *trans-* and *trans** perform the referential opening transgender studies has long desired from queer studies: No longer nominally attached to gender, *trans-/** is now an "explicitly relational"¹³ and "prepositional force"¹⁴ that expresses an infinite number of unfolding causal connections between forms. This new wave of *trans** theory, oriented toward "all manner of unexpected becomings,"¹⁵ now marks a "postposttranssexual"¹⁶ era in which *trans** studies finds itself positioned to offer queer studies its own terms of alliance. With its long-practiced attentions to the sensible, the material, and the futural, *trans** studies now presents the recent phenomenological, critical race, and utopian turns in queer studies a host of theoretical resources.

The Things between Us

For all their similarities, transgender and queer studies nonetheless differ in crucial ways that place their key concerns and methods in critical tension. Contention between the fields is most apparent in literary and cultural studies, in which early disagreements over queer studies' theorizations of the transgender body and the relative value of social construction as a central concept have not been fully resolved. Although most assessments of the two fields emphasize their inextricability, Janet Halley's *Split Decisions* contains a singularly useful mapping of their early bodies as distinct lines of inquiry. Halley, a legal scholar, employs the conventions of courtroom procedure to demonstrate how in *Second Skins*, transgender literary theorist Jay Prosser conducts a cross-examination of Judith Butler's queer feminism

that places the investments of queer theory and transgender studies into paradoxical relation. The result is a distillation of the intervention transgender studies initially presented to queer theory: In privileging discursivity and performativity over interiority and materiality, queer studies overwrites the felt reality of transgender identification as a form of false consciousness.¹⁷ Prosser's rhetorical move to defend the constative field of transgender desire – the wish to simply *be* a gender, rather than to perform one – asks us to “see the critical relation between all the oppositions that divide feminist queer theory's desiderata from transsexuality's.”¹⁸

Split Decisions interprets this paradox as Prosser's intentional strategy, one in which queer studies is presented with the impossible task of confronting the material grounds of its own construction – a move similar to Stryker's monstrous warning in “My Words to Victor Frankenstein” to “heed my words, and you may well discover the seams and sutures in yourself.”¹⁹ Halley's mapping of the major investments of each “side” of this stand-off in separate columns is perhaps the most definitive tracing of the two fields as opposed rather than complementary discourses.²⁰ *Split Decisions* is filled with such confrontations, but *Butler v. Prosser* is the only instance in which Halley employs these typographical columns – a perhaps unconscious replication of the “mirror scene” Prosser analyzes in *Second Skins*. A foundational trope of transgender autobiography, the mirror scene is *also* a paradoxical form, in which the mirror reflects the improperly gendered image of “me/not me” to the transgender subject. Halley's columns in *Split Decisions* thus crystallize Prosser's use of the mirror scene to stage an inverted relation to queer theory, revealing *paradox* as a foundational method in transgender studies. Like other methods emerging from within the field, this critical use of paradox is drawn directly from transgender experience: the impossible possibility of living one life in two genders or the illogical project of seeking to be recognized as a gender one already is.

Paradox thus emerges as an early structural relation between queer and transgender studies, one that points to other lines of inversion. Perhaps the most politicized disagreement between the fields surfaces around the use of textual analysis as a shared technique: In its zeal to theorize sex and gender antinormativity, queer studies has often taken up transgender and intersex bodies as textual “signs or allegories” of its theories.²¹ Transgender scholars have presented vociferous opposition to queer studies' reading of such bodies as case studies for its claims. For example, Jacob Hale's “Suggested Rules for Non-transsexuals Writing about Transsexuals, Transsexuality, Transsexualism, or Trans” cautions theorists to avoid the “species of rehabilitation”²² by which transgender subjects

have been analytically conscripted into queer theory's deconstructivist project. The ethics of interpretive practice – the question of “how to read”²³ – is another primary point on which transgender and queer studies invert: Queer studies' privileging of language over materiality has meant that it often interprets bodies as if they were texts, whereas transgender studies' attention to corporeality means that it often treats texts *as if they were bodies* – applying heuristic methods extracted from transgender phenomenology to textual objects themselves.

If trans* is *not* like queer, then what (other) things can it do? In 2004, Stryker published a short article in *GLQ* titled “Transgender Studies: Queer Theory's Evil Twin” in which she lamented queer theory's inability to welcome transsexuality into its critical framework.²⁴ Here again, we see paradox invoked in Stryker's description of the fields as *identical-yet-not* in the correlation of twin to “evil twin.” However, an evil twin is not necessarily a flat negation of an opposing body. Rather, it is a physical copy produced by a parallel reality in which morality or natural law is radically scrambled. An evil twin is, thus, not subtractive, but supplemental, offering tools that a more normative discourse may render impossible to perceive. Stryker's evil-twin metaphor illustrates how the fields operate in tandem – inversely and yet supplementally arrayed against the processes that would attach coercive or regulatory force to either of their value systems. Although any move to neatly separate the fields is largely rhetorical, a survey of their bodies might map their parallel investments as such:

| Transgender studies values: | Queer studies values: |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Recovery | Failure |
| Self-revelation | World making |
| Ecstasies | Desire |
| Transitivity | Refusal |
| Paradox | Promiscuity |
| Mutual constitution | Assemblage |
| Reconstruction | Deconstruction |
| Materiality | Discourse |
| Situatedness | Interpretation |
| Interiority | Style |
| Integration | Shattering, loss |
| Concatenation/paratactics | Disorientation, backwardness |

What we find is not a confrontation in which one side *must* prevail but, rather, two variant strains of making meaning that contest but also inform and enrich one another. Much like gender transition itself, transgender studies is revealed here to have “more” body than is presumed by the epistemic frame of Halley’s narrower model. To (re)cite Halley here with a transgender studies gloss, “There is something thrilling about seeing these new objects of desire come into view.”²⁵ We might thrill to the revelation of transgender studies’ larger body because it presents to us expressions of affect and vitality that queer studies – despite all its attention to normativity – has so far failed to put within productive reach. Or, we might thrill to see how transgender studies offers both a limit and a threshold to many of queer studies’ core interpretive methods, marking the transitive point where our sight wavers and new objects materialize on the horizon.

Trans*, Representation, and the Reading of Things

Both queer and transgender studies have been fundamentally concerned with *representation* – the textual figuration of the desiring and gendered body – but this issue has been perhaps more fraught for trans identities, which exceed many of the formal representational frames of western culture. Since the mid-nineteenth century, transgender phenomena have generally been represented as *things* – indefinable and monstrous objects that threaten the taxonomies of the western scientific episteme. However, the twenty-first century has seen an explosion of self-authored and nonstigmatizing transgender representations: As millennial transgender communities and politics diverged from gay and lesbian models, transgender activists and scholars developed a rich range of strategies for expressing trans identities and excavating transgender histories. A host of resulting “border wars” broke out as transgender activists and scholars contested queer interpretations of specific cultural texts and historical figures.²⁶ Similarly, the history of gay rights was reshaped when historian Stryker discovered that a trans-led riot had taken place in San Francisco in 1966 – three years before Stonewall. This disclosure was its own form of trans cultural production, desubjugating the material history of transgender resistance from within a more privileged account of the gay rights movement. Such revelatory incursions have been a primary method by which transgender has established a space for itself inside the context of queer representation.

However, trans has never been limited to the shape of queer figuration: By the second decade of the twenty-first century, transgender creators had produced signature work in nearly all avenues of cultural production.

Although autobiography, portraiture, and documentary cinema have been the primary genres of transgender expression,²⁷ these forms have radically evolved as creators have formally explored the diverse modes of trans identification that have proliferated since the turn of the century. The result is an era saturated with transgender visibility – a “transgender tipping point”²⁸ that would seem to signal improved conditions for transgender life. However, violence against transgender people, especially trans women of color, has increased in the face of this representational wave – suggesting that media visibility may drive certain forms of raced and classed anti-trans violence. Transgender creators and scholars have recently raised this paradox, pointing to the limits of representation as a unifying political strategy.²⁹ The rising critique of visibility politics signals a shift in transgender studies from representational analysis toward the question of what might make a practice or work *thematically or formally* trans.* Such inquiries release the field from a focus on transgender authorship alone, opening it toward interpretive methods that draw from the material experience of trans embodiment to reveal new meaning within and between forms.

What previously unseen things might trans* studies recover? A brief reading of John Carpenter’s *The Thing* (1982)³⁰ demonstrates the field’s core commitments to “refuse closure, insist on situation, seek multiplicity,” returning to the film’s body to reveal the mutual constitution of transphobic and AIDS-related panics during the early 1980s. Shortening the title of Howard Hawks’s *The Thing from Another World* (1951), Carpenter’s *The Thing* activates a twin etymological history of the term “thing”: Often used to indicate an inanimate or unnamed object, the word *thing* also indicates “a meeting” or “a matter of concern” – a trans* point of encounter where meaning is in transition. Revealing connections between the seemingly unrelated blood logics of HIV infection and sex assignment, *The Thing* illustrates how the paranoid fantasies of the early AIDS crisis were linked with emerging discourses of medicalized transphobia. Although it contains no representations of persons with AIDS (PWAs) or transgender identities, *The Thing* nonetheless *formally* animates the sexual politics of the early Reagan era through a morphological aesthetic that connects the AIDS panic and transphobia as culturally subtending phenomena: The film’s original tagline, “Man is the warmest place to hide,” eerily points to the shared logics of infiltration and passing that would define the transphobic and AIDS-phobic imaginary of the Reagan era.

A reimagining of Hawks’s earlier McCarthy-period film, *The Thing* follows an isolated band of US researchers who encounter an alien life

form in Antarctica. After a string of conflicts with the monster's wildly permutating body, the men realize that the creature possesses the ability to assimilate living flesh and imitate its forms. "A figure for pure becoming,"³¹ the *thing* has traveled all over the universe and can morph into an endless range of interspecies shapes. Paranoia strikes the men as they realize the thing has consumed and copied some of their bodies. Eventually, they develop a blood test to identify the imitations, but it is (of course) too late. They turn on each other, and the film ends as their installation burns down with the *thing* still on the loose and global infection all but certain. Although readings of this plot as a cautionary AIDS tale are often dismissed as too pat, Carpenter was highly aware of the first stages of the epidemic, which broke into the US news cycle only eight weeks before he began filming.³² While it is not a conscious comment on AIDS, *The Thing* is nonetheless a cultural mirror reflecting the nationalist horrors of its historical moment: Not that the US was being invaded from without, but that there had been "a hallucination in (our) midst from the start."³³

Although it remains highly undertheorized, *The Thing* is nonetheless an aesthetic masterpiece, featuring practical special effects that are "revolting at the most basic level"³⁴ – a reaction also invoked by defendants claiming "trans panic" as an excuse for murder. The film's "sense-defying amalgamations"³⁵ of flesh anticipate the retroviral qualities of HIV, while referencing the monstrously rearranged corporeality of the transsexual body. Predating Stone's demand that gender be shattered and Stryker's call to willful monstrosity, *The Thing* enacts a trans* body politics that "undoes the intelligibility of gender itself,"³⁶ virally infiltrating and destroying the integrity of sexed morphology, replacing it with radically plastic copies. The thing's ability to seamlessly mimic forms and identities updates Hawks's Red Scare context with new evocations of both the "passing" transsexual and the undetectably infected PWA. These resonances in the film aesthetically capture a rarely analyzed historical juncture: The formal beginning of the AIDS epidemic and the withdrawal of transsexuality from federal Medicare coverage, which both took place in 1981 – one year before the film's release.

These twin events were refinements of the sexual eugenics that had regulated access to US citizenship since the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act.³⁷ During the Reagan era, American PWAs and transsexuals would be abjected from within the body politic through a hygienic imaginary designed to purge them from social belonging and state investment. As it became clear that the genitals could be surgically

altered, opponents of transgender rights shifted their definitions of sex from anatomical to chromosomal, claiming that no amount of medical intervention could “change” a body’s sex. Simultaneously, the state would withhold AIDS prevention funding, arguing that infection was the result of individual moral failure. A poster that appears on the wall during *The Thing*’s blood test scene perfectly captures these dual objects of the era’s paranoia: Picturing the slogan “They Aren’t Labelled, Chum” above a white woman announcing “I have V.D.!” the image crystallizes the period’s co-constituted fears of the incorrectly labeled “passing” transsexual and the infected PWA. Revisiting *The Thing* through a formal trans* analysis thus makes the cultural unconscious of its historical period newly recoverable: Often unfavorably compared to the enchantments of *E.T.* (1982), *The Thing* is itself an “evil twin” that penetrates the Reagan era’s sunny facade, disclosing from within its guise the tightening blood logics that would organize US life and death late in the twentieth century.

Notes

- ¹ Susan Stryker and Paisley Currah, “Introduction,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 1, nos. 1–2 (2014): 1.
- ² See, for example, key works such as biologist Anne Fausto-Sterling’s *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000) and psychologists Suzanne J. Kessler and Wendy McKenna’s *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1978).
- ³ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 1.
- ⁴ David Valentine, *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 4.
- ⁵ Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1999), 5.
- ⁶ Judith Butler, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michèle Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993), 318.
- ⁷ Janet Halley, *Split Decisions: How and Why to Take a Break from Feminism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 272.
- ⁸ Susan Stryker, “(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies,” in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (New York: Routledge, 2006), 9.
- ⁹ Sandy Stone, “The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto,” in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (London: Routledge, 2006), 231.

- ¹⁰ David L. Eng, Judith Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz, “What’s Queer about Queer Studies Now?” *Social Text* 23, nos. 3–4 (2005): 1–17; Viviane Namaste, “Tragic Misreadings: Queer Theory’s Erasure of Transgender Subjectivity,” in *Invisible Lives: The Erasure of Transsexual and Transgendered People* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2000), 9–23.
- ¹¹ Susan Stryker, “Transgender Studies: Queer Theory’s Evil Twin,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 10, no. 2 (2004): 214.
- ¹² Hilary Malatino, “Pedagogies of Becoming: Trans Inclusivity and the Crafting of Being,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (2015): 399.
- ¹³ Susan Stryker, Paisley Currah, and Lisa Jean Moore, “Trans, Trans-, or Transgender?” *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 36, nos. 3–4 (2008): 11.
- ¹⁴ Eva Hayward and Jami Weinstein, “Introduction: Tranimalities in the Age of Trans* Life,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (2015): 196.
- ¹⁵ Stryker and Currah, “Introduction,” 9.
- ¹⁶ Stryker and Currah, “Introduction,” 3.
- ¹⁷ Jay Prosser, “Judith Butler: Queer Feminism, Transgender, and the Transubstantiation of Sex,” in *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 21–60.
- ¹⁸ Halley, *Split Decisions*, 273.
- ¹⁹ Susan Stryker, “My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage,” *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 1, no. 3 (1994): 241.
- ²⁰ Halley, *Split Decisions*, 273.
- ²¹ Heather Love, “Queer,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 1, nos. 1–2 (2014): 174.
- ²² Jacob Hale, “Suggested Rules for Non-transsexuals Writing about Transsexuals, Transsexuality, Transsexualism, or Trans” (1997), accessed July 23, 2018, www.sandystone.com/hale.rules.html.
- ²³ Alexander Eastwood, “How, then, Might the Transsexual Read? Notes toward a Trans Literary History,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (2014): 591–2.
- ²⁴ Stryker, “Transgender Studies,” 213.
- ²⁵ Halley, *Split Decisions*, 270.
- ²⁶ Particular critical flashpoints have emerged around the novels *The Well of Loneliness* (1920) and *Stone Butch Blues* (1993), the film *Boys Don’t Cry* (1999), and the historical lives of female-assigned people who lived as men – such as jazz musician Billy Tipton. A more recent controversy has erupted over white gay documentarian David France’s alleged theft of footage and ideas from black trans filmmaker Tourmaline (Reina Gossett).
- ²⁷ Julian B. Carter, David J. Getsy, and Trish Salah, “Introduction,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (2014): 470.
- ²⁸ Kathy Steinmetz. “The Transgender Tipping Point,” *Time*, May 28, 2014.

- ²⁹ Reina Gossett, Eric A. Stanley, and Johanna Burton, “Known Unknowns: An Introduction to *Trap Door*,” in *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017), xv–xvi; Eric A. Stanley, “Anti-Trans Optics: Recognition, Opacity, and the Image of Force,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 116, no. 3 (2017): 618.
- ³⁰ John Carpenter, dir. *The Thing*, 1982; Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 2005. DVD.
- ³¹ Eric White, “The Erotics of Becoming: Xenogenesis and *The Thing*,” *Science Fiction Studies* 20, no. 3 (1993): 401.
- ³² In the film’s 2004 DVD commentary track, Carpenter notes of the shoot, “At the same time, there was a little article in the paper I remember reading about some kind of new disease that was occurring. It was called AIDS, and people were dying. And it was a very, weirdly similar dynamic to what we were doing, because you couldn’t tell who had it.”
- ³³ Ric Gentry, “Interview: John Carpenter,” *Post Script* 34, no. 1 (2014): 7.
- ³⁴ Anne Bilson, *The Thing* (London: British Film Institute, 1997), 47.
- ³⁵ Ric Gentry, “Interview,” 3.
- ³⁶ White, “The Erotics,” 400.
- ³⁷ Siobhan B. Somerville, “Sexual Aliens and the Racialized State: A Queer Reading of the 1952 U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act,” in *Queer Migrations: Sexuality, U.S. Citizenship, and Border Crossings*, ed. Eithne Luibhéid and Lionel Cantú (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 76.

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