

Institutionalizing Trans* Studies at the University of Arizona

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Abstract This article reports on the successes and challenges of institutionalizing trans* studies at the University of Arizona. It describes the Transgender Studies Faculty Cluster Hire Initiative of 2013–18, efforts to establish a curricular program of some sort in trans studies, barriers to achieving some of the the initiative’s early goals, and future prospects for the field’s institutionalization at the University of Arizona and elsewhere.

Keywords transgender studies, institutionalization, field formation, women’s and gender studies

August 30, 2013, the day I hit “send” on the following announcement, was one of the most satisfying days of my working life:

Transgender Studies Faculty Cluster Hire at University of Arizona

The University of Arizona is pleased to announce a cluster hire of 4 tenure-track faculty positions in transgender studies over the next two years. Two positions are being offered this year in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS), with a start date of fall 2014. Two positions to be based elsewhere in the university will be advertised next year, with a start date of fall 2015. This cluster hire is one element of the University of Arizona’s unprecedented investment in the field of transgender studies. Other elements include support for a new peer-reviewed journal, *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, which will be published by Duke University Press starting in 2014, with the editorial office housed at the University of Arizona’s Institute for LGBT Studies; a new interdisciplinary Center for Critical Studies of the Body; and an anticipated graduate degree program in transgender studies.

Transgender Studies concerns itself with the variability and contingency of gender, sexuality, identity, and embodiment across time, space, languages, and cultures. It pays particular attention to the sociopolitical, legal, and economic consequences of noncompliance with gender norms; to the histories and social

organization of minoritized transgender lives and communities; to forms of cultural production that represent or express gender variance; to the medicalization of identity and the depathologization of bodily difference; and to the emergence of novel forms of embodied subjectivity within contemporary technocultural environments. Because we seek to hire the most innovative scholars in this rapidly evolving field, we are open to considering any area of specialization, research agenda, and inter/disciplinary training compatible with faculty service in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

We invite applications for two assistant professor positions, one of which will be based in the Department of Gender and Women's Studies, and the other of which will be based in another suitable department within SBS (see sbs.arizona.edu). In addition to possessing requisite expertise in transgender studies, applicants must be qualified to teach core courses in their home department, and ideally will fulfill strategic priorities set by SBS in the following areas, broadly defined: health, the environment, technology, and global impact/regional roots. Our goal is to hire interdisciplinary scholars who can contribute to a new program in transgender studies while also meeting the needs of their home department.

I knew even then that faculty job searches were difficult and often fail; that the candidates who successfully navigate the hiring process do so on the basis of matching some institutional priority as much as, or more than, on the basis of their scholarship and pedagogy; and that the promotion, tenuring, and retention over the long haul of any faculty actually hired was far from guaranteed. Program building is hard work. Still, my sense was that in the very act of hitting "send" to announce this hiring and field-building initiative to the world, the nebulous undertaking called "transgender studies," which had been "arriving" for more than two decades, had arrived once again, in a whole new way, in the seemingly unlikely location of Arizona. That sense proved largely correct. Over the past half-decade, perhaps in response to the announcement of its arrival at the University of Arizona, jobs in transgender studies subsequently began to arrive in an accelerating number of other places. Whatever might happen at Arizona, that in itself has been success enough.

How It All Went Down

Between joining the precariat with my PhD in 1992 and being appointed with tenure as associate professor of gender studies at Indiana University in 2009, I earned my money largely outside the academy, working as a sales clerk, cab driver, telemarketer, pro-dom, door-to-door canvasser for a rape crisis center, freelance writer, researcher, nonprofit sector employee, public speaker, post-doc, filmmaker, dabbler in the arts, adjunct instructor, and visiting scholar, all of which

eventually cohered into a teachable body of text and film that constituted a marketable “brand” for me that made me legible to the academy. Over these same years, I had done the largely uncompensated labor of writing academic articles that did not contribute to the tenure and promotion file I didn’t have, prowling professional meetings to help network an ever-growing number of trans and trans-friendly scholars who all had better jobs than me, finding parasitical ways to organize conferences and symposia at institutions that hadn’t hired me, and coediting anthologies and special issues of journals on trans studies to help seed a core literature for a field that didn’t quite exist. But by doing the intellectual work along with the work of building a network of friends, colleagues, mentors, mentees, and conspirators who helped open the academic employment door from the inside, I eventually landed a job.

Wanting to do my part to help cultivate a field in which I and others in the same precarious boat could be hired was self-serving and altruistic in equal measure. It’s low-hanging fruit to critique the institutionalization of minority forms of expert knowledge production within the interdisciplines as merely contributing to the university’s profitable management of difference, in service to state and capital. For those of us who do the work, or want to, we also know that the kinds of labor we perform, intellectual and otherwise, in and around the university, can be part of liberatory, abolitionist, and transformational social justice practice, and not just a paycheck job—particularly when steady academic jobs with tenure are vanishingly rare. Who does the knowledge work, for whom and with whom, under what conditions and for which purposes, both “upstairs” and in the undercommons, is precisely where the struggle lies. I’d managed to make a life for myself and do work that found an audience outside the academy, but it was the prospect of working from the inside to open new possibilities for trans scholars and scholarship within the university that enticed me into the professoriat. I have no qualms whatsoever about undertaking the overarching project of working to change the conditions of knowledge production regarding trans issues, in ways that can contribute to more livable lives for people marginalized by their gender identities and expression, whether that’s through teaching, researching, publishing, editing, training, hiring, or organizing. There are many ways to work toward the world we want to live in, and doing field-building work has been one of mine for most of my adult life.

Changes in departmental leadership at Indiana University’s Gender Studies department early in my time there made the kind of work I understood myself to have been hired to do infeasible. I was pleased when another opportunity presented itself at the University of Arizona (UA), where I was recruited in 2011 as director of the Institute for LGBT Studies—a free-standing, university-wide unit reporting to the vice president for research, with a mission to facilitate

interdisciplinary research collaboration among faculty and students. I was hired full-time as associate professor in gender and women's studies and given a 50 percent reduction in my other responsibilities to serve as the institute director for five years, 2011–16. I was hired with the understanding that, while I would have responsibilities at the institute for all the letters in the LGBTQ rainbow alphabet, I intended to give special attention to the relatively underserved *T*, which would also constitute the principal area of my own research and teaching. That the trans community in Tucson had organized a grassroots campaign on my behalf while I was interviewing for the job, packing the room for my talks and writing letters in support for my hiring, gave me an additional sense of responsibility for following through on those commitments.

Paisley Currah and I had been laying the groundwork for launching *TSQ* ever since 2009, and when Duke ultimately agreed in 2013 to publish the journal, UA provided generous financial support to help launch it as part of its earlier commitment to the agenda they had hired me to pursue—including support for a graduate student assistant, Abraham Weil, to serve as managing editor. Later that same year, Aren Aizura and I coedited *The Transgender Studies Reader 2*. The field seem poised for a new burst of growth, and UA was entirely supportive. In the midst of this quickening activity, however, I was invited to apply for another job at a more prestigious university. Although I was actually quite content with my work at UA, the other job would offer some intangible quality-of-life benefits that were simply too good not to consider. I applied; I was short-listed, and my campus visit went well. Although members of the search committee assured me off the record that the job had my name on it, I suspected that the committee chair was actually stacking the process to favor one of their own colleagues. Rather than risk losing out and forfeiting either the job itself or its offer as a potential bargaining chip for other uses, I decided to pursue preemptive retention at UA. I figured the worst that could happen would be to get neither the prospective job nor a retention offer, leaving me in a position that was already enabling me to march steadily toward some major career goals. And the best that could happen . . . ?

I asked for a brief meeting with UA's provost, who by sheer coincidence was the former associate vice president for research who had hired me to run the institute two years earlier, to whom I had reported for a year before his promotion to provost, and with whom I had a good personal rapport. He suspected why I wanted to talk and gave me fifteen minutes at 7:45 the following morning. He told me to make my pitch quickly. I said I was being courted by a university capable of offering me a salary, level of prestige, and quality of life he couldn't compete with, but I wanted to know if he was open to a creative opportunity to retain me. He asked what that might be. I said that at the other university, despite all its upsides, I'd be just another associate professor working on my next book and trying to go

up for full; if I had an opportunity to do something at UA that would better serve my aspirations, why would I go anywhere else? He said, "What do you want?" I said, "To establish a program in transgender studies." He said, "I'll give you four faculty lines." Just like that.

We haggled for a few minutes about some additional bells and whistles and strategized about when, where, and how to place the lines, before he schooled me in my talking points for navigating this newly hatched initiative through the shoals of a neoliberal public university, in what was still at that time an unequivocally conservative state. Because this was the first such program in the world, it was the best such program in the world, and being first and best at something drives brand and profile and therefore market share of an untapped resource called "transgender studies"; it would help "change the narrative" in an expansive way about what was possible in Arizona and at UA; it would be good for recruiting and retaining diverse faculty and graduate students; and it opened up new external funding opportunities, notably those created by Obamacare for addressing disparities in LGBT health care. There would still be endless rounds of wordsmithing, internal approvals, and sign-offs that went all the way to the president, who on the provost's recommendation shepherded the initiative past the hostile attention of conservative members of the board of regents, but by 8:00 of the morning I made my quick pitch, the UA transgender studies cluster hire was pretty much a thing.

The faculty lines were not, as I was instructed to say, "commitments of new resources" for faculty hiring but rather a "reallocation of existing resources" drawn from the fund set aside for strategic hires, which would allow UA to better exploit a recently identified preexisting body of research expertise among its current faculty. That is, Francisco Galarte and I were already tenured and tenure-track faculty within Gender and Women's Studies, and the Institute for LGBT Studies was already slated to host the editorial office of *TSQ*. Departments were not being promised full new lines but rather incrementally decreasing bridge funding, in which the Office of the Provost paid 100 percent of salary the first year, 75 percent the next, 50 percent the third, and 25 percent the fourth, with the department needing to carry the full cost of the line after that. This meant that the trans studies positions needed to align with a given department's strategic hiring plan, with ongoing salary costs eventually being covered by retirements, resignations, increased enrollments, endowment funding, or some other source. This in turn meant that there were strong candidates for departments that had no interest in a trans hire, as well as departments that were interested in particular candidates but couldn't fund the line, besides the departments that were both interested and able. To be a true university-wide cluster hire, the lines would need to be distributed to at least three different colleges; as noted in the job

announcement, the decision was taken to offer the first two lines in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS), with one being dedicated to Gender and Women's Studies (GWS), and the other being available to another SBS department. The Institute for LGBT Studies, where the initiative was to be administratively housed, served as the hub for the entire process. Two search committees were constituted—one SBS-wide, the other GWS-specific. I chaired both; Francisco Galarte served on both, along with trans graduate students and queer faculty and faculty of color from throughout SBS.

We received roughly two hundred applications. Fewer than twenty were from trans women—a stark testament to the disproportionate barriers and challenges that transfeminine people face at every step along the educational pipeline. The SBS-wide committee vetted the applicant pool for those who met the minimum criteria (PhD in hand by start date, in a field within SBS, with a research agenda commensurable with tenure-track employment at an R1 university) and also actually did work in trans studies. That left us with one hundred viable potential candidates, only one of whom was a trans woman. We then divided up those candidates based on their training and specialization, and forwarded those lists to all department heads in the college, including GWS, to see if they were interested in any of the candidates. At the end of the departmental sorting process, there were twelve strong “long short-list” candidates sought by five departments for the two positions. The college-wide committee, in coordination with the GWS committee, then narrowed that list to the top seven candidates invited for on-campus interviews, based in part on our assessment of their relative strengths as trans studies scholars, and in part on the relative strengths and advantages of the departments that sought them for the purpose of building an intracampus trans studies program.

Departments initially interested in two candidates (who have since been hired and tenured at other comparable universities) declined to pursue their candidacies further after their campus visits. Another candidate had a more competitive offer and withdrew from consideration (and is now also tenured at that institution). The four remaining candidates were extremely competitive for the two positions available. Although we had announced only the two lines in SBS, I worked with the deans of other colleges to place the other two candidates elsewhere as target-of-opportunity hires, to try to complete the cluster hire in one fell swoop. We ultimately managed to place three lines in the first round, with the fourth declining our offer to take a position elsewhere. The successful candidates were Eric Plemons in Anthropology, Max Strassfeld in Religious Studies, and Eva Hayward in Gender and Women's Studies. By 2014, UA had a total of five tenured or tenure-track faculty members in trans studies, including Francisco Galarte and me.

The next round of hiring did not go smoothly. Although there had been candidates of color on the short list to whom offers were made, none of those who ultimately accepted the positions were people of color; in light of this, the initiative faculty sought to pursue the targeted hiring of a particular trans-of-color scholar deemed to be a good fit with the other faculty but who wound up taking another job elsewhere. We next sought to place the remaining line in a medical or health field, with no success, and similarly struck out with Fine Arts and Law. The College of Education expressed interest, and the line was eventually awarded to them, resulting in the hire of Z Nicolazzo in 2018. In the intervening years, unrelated to the trans studies cluster hire, the Norton School of Family and Consumer Sciences in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences had hired Russell Toomey as assistant professor in Family Studies and Human Development, and he was folded into the initiative. We lobbied for Tucson poet laureate TC Tolbert, who taught as an adjunct at UA, to be hired tenure-track in the English Department, but we were unsuccessful. Still, at the end of a four-year process, UA had seven tenured or tenure-track trans faculty working in trans studies, in four different colleges. The Institute for LGBT Studies hosted the editorial office of *TSQ* and coordinated the trans studies initiative in addition to its other activities. We secured a six-figure grant from an outside source to support individual faculty research projects, began attracting graduate students and postdocs to our respective departments, placed a new trans studies undergraduate course on the books, hosted a large international transgender studies conference and several smaller symposia, entertained visitors from other institutions eager to emulate our success, and bandied about ideas for launching a curriculum-based credential, minor, or degree program of some sort. It felt that trans studies had indeed arrived in a new way—not only at Arizona but as a field.

What's Happened Since

In practice, it has proven very difficult to advance the elements originally announced in the trans studies faculty cluster hire beyond this promising beginning. The first casualty was the proposed “Center for Critical Studies of the Body” (CCSB), to be administered as a subsidiary unit of the Institute for LGBT Studies. It was proposed based on conversations I had with an administrator who had an interest in creating a hub for disability studies, trauma studies, and feminist science and technology studies, in addition to trans studies, and who thought the name might provide a bit of camouflage against transphobic or otherwise hostile opponents. We used it as a place to host the mailing list of the preexisting Somatechnics Research Network, which I had helped organize in the early 2000s, and as a point of contact for “Open Embodiments,” the biennial international somatechnics conference we organized in Tucson in 2015. But the

administrator moved on to other strategies for pursuing their interests, the Somatechnics Research Network found a new administrative home, and it turned out the trans studies initiative didn't particularly need cover, so the "CCSB" quietly withered away.

Arizona is a demographically shifting state that has become far more politically heterogeneous than it was in the early 2010s, but it is still a poor state with an entrenched conservative power structure that does not particularly value or invest in higher education, which makes for a very unstable state university. There has been constant churn at the highest levels of the UA administration: in a little less than a decade, I've worked under three presidents and one acting president, and three provosts and two acting provosts, and I've seen a steady parade of senior vice presidents play musical chairs with their ever-shuffling portfolios of expanding and contracting administrative domains. Three years into being institute director, I had more time in my position than anybody to whom I reported or who reported to me, from the president down to the part-time office assistant. My academic department has had eight heads or acting heads over the past ten years. With that level of turnover, it's difficult to carry out multiyear planning. With the state providing only about 15 percent of UA's budget, high-level administrators speak openly about the land-grant university being "a historically public institution" that needs to pursue its mission through whatever tuition the market will bear, lucrative high-end real estate developments geared toward providing posh apartments for well-heeled student-consumers, corporate partnerships, private philanthropy, technology and patent transfers, and federal funding—all while tightening its belt with regard to salaries, services, and benefits for students and employees in ways that don't necessarily inspire faculty loyalty, trust, security, or satisfaction.

Most significantly, the State of Arizona health plan does not cover transition-related health-care benefits for trans employees or the trans dependents of other employees. (Students are covered statewide under a different health plan through which transition-related care is provided, but access has proven difficult in practice.) This has posed a serious recruitment barrier and retention challenge that the university has failed to address effectively. With remarkably few exceptions, and despite professed good intentions, high-level administrators who otherwise have been supportive of the hiring and field-building initiative have tended to pass the buck and say that it's a problem with the state and therefore above their pay grade. This is true, but they have also been unwilling to pursue solutions such as buying a supplemental policy (as was the case when the state did not cover domestic or same-sex marriage partners), or establishing a set-aside fund through which the university could reimburse otherwise uncovered transition-related health-care costs for trans people on the state plan. After years

of kicking the can down the road, the university eventually suggested that a trans employee simply sue for health care. This had the benefit for them, in a politically conservative state, of potentially being compelled to do something that would have cost the university political capital had it voluntarily offered some trans-affirming solution. Russell Toomey ultimately obliged, and as of this writing is the plaintiff in a suit against the State of Arizona, the Arizona Board of Regents, and the University of Arizona.

It has likewise proven challenging to coordinate a curricular program of any sort with so few administrative resources, across so many institutional silos. Should it be at the graduate or undergraduate level, or both? Should it admit new students for a stand-alone certificate or degree, or concentrate on developing a minor aimed at students already admitted to some major or graduate program? Should it have a core curriculum, or be entirely free form? What is “trans studies” anyway, and how do we teach it? Given that the Institute for LGBT Studies is not an instructional unit, any such program would need to be based in a department, or as an interdisciplinary program in the Graduate College—but which one? Faculty in the non-degree-granting departments would need to be cross-appointed as faculty in the degree-granting one, new courses created and cross-listed, and teaching schedules coordinated across departments and colleges. All of which is utterly possible in theory but virtually impossible in actual practice without administrative support staff or course releases for faculty administrators. Further support of that sort has not been forthcoming from the university, after the initial investment in the hiring initiative.

It is also the case that the trans studies faculty members who were hired, while certainly collegial with one another, do not all see eye to eye, have competing agendas and different visions for their careers, and experience a wide range of conflicting demands on their time. There are divisions between people in quantitative and behavioral studies and those in cultural studies, those in social sciences rather than humanities. There are disagreements about whether trans studies is about studying trans people or whether it’s about looking at the world through a trans lens. There are people who just want to be left alone to do their own research, and people who have enthusiastically jumped into positions of responsibility in their home departments that have nothing to do with trans studies. There are people who want to build a curricular program, and people who don’t. All of these routine sorts of challenges in building an interdisciplinary program are capable of being solved but currently require faculty to solve them on their own time, in ways that may not count as recognized university service activities.

The most dispiriting challenges have to do with direct and indirect forms of interpersonal, ideological, and institutional transphobia, sometimes coupled

with racism. For instance, a trans faculty member experienced anonymous death threats from a student or students in a large lecture class, resulting in the class being reassigned to another instructor (while leaving in place trans and gender-nonconforming graduate teaching assistants who led the discussion sections). A trans faculty member was physically assaulted at an off-campus social event by the friend of another faculty member, without consequence. A trans faculty member who felt sexually harassed was told to take it as a compliment regarding their passability. Pronominal misgenderings, even after years of opportunity to practice addressing people as they ask to be addressed, are inexcusably frequent—including in a department head’s solicitation of an external reviewer for a trans professor’s tenure and promotion file. This has been a problem, too, for the grad students who have come to work with us, and for the undergrads in our classes, particularly if they are nonbinary or gender nonconforming and use gender-neutral pronouns. It should be stressed that, overall, the respective departments that have hired a majority of the trans faculty have been enthusiastically supportive of them. There are no out-and-out trans-exclusionary radical feminists or “gender-critical” feminists to contend with, no explicitly fundamentalist or ethno-nationalist bigots in our day-to-day working lives, no bathroom wars, and no great difficulty changing names and gender markers in administrative systems. Nevertheless, all of the trans faculty have experienced ambient, unevenly distributed, microaggressive forms of transphobia, even in ostensibly collegial relationships. These acts seem rooted in unconscious motives that are not recognized, acknowledged, or understood as such by people who do them, and are thus nearly impossible to address in a rational, problem-solving way.

The deepest problems with institutionalizing trans studies at Arizona are harbored within the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies (GWS), where three of us have had our faculty appointments. While I’ve encountered a few departments of women’s, gender, and sexuality studies that are truly supportive of trans scholars and scholarship, a cynical quip circulates among many of us who work in trans studies within them that such programs often constitute “structural violence against trans people.” It is easy for us to be positioned as a threat to the political unity of “woman,” as “queer theory’s evil twin,” as embodying a neoliberal identity politics, as white and therefore racist, as a distraction from “real issues,” as poststructuralism pushed to the point of absurdity, as trigger-warning-happy snowflakes, or as bad objects who incite the wrong kinds of desire. We are positioned as the problems who become bigger problems when we talk about our problems. All of this is par for the course in the workaday world of the trans studies academic, but GWS at UA has a deeper dysfunction, given the particular ways that vocal and powerful minority factions within the department’s faculty have construed feminism, queer theory, leftist politics, and race and mapped

these ideological positions onto particular personalities and interpersonal dynamics. A department that has prided itself on its radicalism, theoretical acumen, attention to intersections of race/gender/sexuality, and specialization in borderlands feminisms and migration studies literally flung itself apart, to a significant degree, over its inability to deal with having the greatest concentration of trans faculty in a single department in all of academe. We simply could not be accommodated. It's not possible at this time to air everything that has happened with regard to trans studies, trans faculty, and trans students in the GWS Department, given that doing so could have legal consequences, as well as negative practical ramifications for those with ongoing employment or study at the university. Suffice it to say that what has transpired there motivated all of us in the department to leave.

After Trans Studies at Arizona

Despite the symbolic value of announcing the institutionalization of trans studies at UA, the initiative actually amounts to far less in practice than most imagine it to be from the outside. It is not nothing, and is perhaps as much as it can be, right now, given the institutional climate and the particular personalities involved. Eric, Russ, Eva, Francisco, and Z have all been tenured and promoted, and Max, who needed to pause his tenure clock, is on track for going up soon. I have been promoted to full. Russ has stepped back from active involvement in the Transgender Studies Research Cluster (TSRC) because of new professional responsibilities and a change in research focus, while continuing to pursue what could prove to be a landmark legal case for transgender employment rights and health-care access nationwide.

While the prospect of a curricular program in trans studies is not on the near-term horizon, trans studies classes are being offered in various departments and programs, at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. There are clusters of doctoral students working on trans studies dissertations with individual faculty members. Given the dysfunction in the GWS Department and the continuing affiliation there of faculty who have in the past acted with perceived hostility toward trans faculty and students, we do not recommend the department for students working in this area. Eva Hayward was seeking to move her line to another department when the COVID-19 crisis temporarily halted that plan, Francisco Galarte has taken a job at the University of New Mexico, and I have retired. The mess in GWS is a serious blow to the trans studies initiative, but one that the department, and the university, seem unwilling or unable to address.

The Institute for LGBT Studies still provides administrative and fiscal support for the TSRC, but the editorial office of *TSQ* has moved with coeditor Francisco Galarte to New Mexico. The TSRC, now co-led by Eric Plemons and Z

Nicolazzo, convenes a regular reading group and semesterly social gatherings for faculty and grad students, and it has had some success in winning internal university grants for program activities; collaborations on major external grants are in the pipeline. The first of what is hoped to be an annual trans studies symposium was held in Fall 2019, and there's a plan to launch an endowment campaign to fund an annual lecture. I currently expect to be hired back as an emerita professor at a fraction of my current full-time equivalency to continue contributing to the TSRC from outside GWS, without having any additional responsibilities, while working—once again, though far from precariously—in a series of short-term visiting gigs at various institutions over the next several years, which is exactly what I want.

My sense, after nearly a decade of work institutionalizing trans studies at UA, after more than a quarter century of effort in the broader field, is that perhaps the idea of a traditional academic program, certainly one concentrated to a significant degree in a women's, gender, or sexuality studies department at a large research university, is not actually viable for transgender studies right now, given the cross-currents and headwinds of identity politics, the instability of the higher education sector as a whole, the larger sociopolitical, economic, and ecological circumstances in which we live, and the reality of structural transphobia. Better, perhaps, would be a more distributed model, with scholars and students dispersed across any number of institutions or beyond them all together, working in any number of programs and disciplines or outside them all, finding opportunities to come together periodically, here and there, in tightly knotted groups or more expansive groupings, for more intensive bursts of conversation and collaboration, deeper levels of study and training, denser networking, and heightened interactions between peers, mentors, students, artists, activists, and friends. That is, better perhaps the field as it has actually come to exist in the past half decade, within which trans studies at Arizona is just one node among many, rather than being imagined as a “flagship program” or the “epicenter” of the field. The gathering of energies that planted trans studies at Arizona will give it a persistent presence in that place, even as that energy dissipates in a flow toward and circulation between new locations, along emergent paths. It's all good.

There are still a couple of things I think the field of trans studies could use, that I would like to see accomplished before I actually retire, or at least before I die: the creation of an international transgender studies association that holds regular annual or biannual meetings, with which *TSQ* might become affiliated, and the establishment of a summer program or institute for intensive study, at the faculty and graduate level, perhaps as part of a low-residency degree or certification program in trans studies. I see these as small pieces of infrastructure that can provide a resource for keeping trans people alive, for using transness to learn and

teach how we might better decenter human privilege in our cohabitation with the nonhuman world, extract all of our bodies from the coloniality of gender, untether ourselves from the racializing biopolitical assemblages that fasten on the flesh of us all in different ways, and heal from the wounded attachments to identity categories through which we live but that can thwart our collective work, in this moment of political, economic, and ecological crisis that demands our undivided attention. I would be delighted if somebody else decided to take the lead in working on those two infrastructural projects. Meanwhile I have a plan, to which I will turn my attention in the years ahead. So get busy, if you are so inclined, and stay tuned.

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