

Natasha Curson
University of East Anglia, UK

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In her introduction Sally Hines cites Whittle's (2006) call for a re-statement of materiality in analyses of transgender. The need to connect more directly with the experienced lives of trans people is a preoccupation in several chapters, as authors observe shifts in trans identities (both individual and within communities) and an increasing resistance by trans people to being defined by others.

'Emerging Identities' (and constraints upon them) is a preoccupation of the book and one of four organizing themes, along with 'Trans Governance', 'Transforming Identities' and 'Transforming Theory'. Although the book will be of interest to those working in gender studies, transgender studies and related fields – Hines sketches thoughts towards a sociology of transgender – there is a wealth of material of interest to the trans community and

other minority communities.

Hines lectures in Sociology and Gender Studies at the University of Leeds. She has written extensively and influentially on trans, identity, sexuality and gender and is researching the impact of the UK Gender Recognition Act, as discussed in her own chapter. Co-editor Tam Sanger is a teaching fellow at Queen's University Belfast with an interest in trans, asexuality, polyamory and society's regulation of gender and sexual 'difference'. Other authors come from a variety of backgrounds. As well as (primarily UK and USA) academics there are contributions from a psycho-therapist and a research scientist. The book contains thirteen chapters clustered around the four organising themes.

There is significant focus on UK experience, where much has changed in recent years. Several

authors explore the limitations of established theoretical frameworks and the power of language to liberate or to constrain, signposting some important developments. Paradoxically though there are some examples of poor or outdated language, and some issues seem poorly understood and/or described in ways which could be construed as judgmental. Terms such as 'passing', which are seen as increasingly problematic by trans people themselves, are used without the benefit of critical scrutiny. Zowie Davy ('Transsexual Agents') argues that trans people 'foster relationships with medicine in order to negotiate *aesthetic* interventions' (106, my italics). Later in that chapter a trans woman is quoted describing facial feminization surgery (FFS) as 'cosmetic', a view Davy leaves unchallenged. While FFS is not uncontroversial within the trans community, surgeries aimed at allowing people to function better as individuals within society (including genital surgeries) are perhaps not best described primarily as 'aesthetic'.

For the most part these problems arise in otherwise useful chapters, with the exception of Richard Ekins and Dave King's 'The Emergence of New Transgendering Identities in the Age of the Internet', as discussed later. This may be indicative of a struggle to keep up with the pace of change. Recent signs of a trans and intersex political emergence, resembling those within the

gay and lesbian communities in the sixties and seventies, are not adequately explored in the text. As is pointed out on several occasions, terminology in this area is also shifting and contested. In reviewing the book I am sensitive to terminology, but for reasons of simplicity I restrict myself to the umbrella term trans.

A key and recurring theme is the tension between trans people's understanding of themselves and others' understanding of them. Laurel Westbrook raises this in her analysis of mainstream and alternative press conceptions of trans ('Becoming Knowably Gendered'), arguing that the explosion of writing from the community between 1990 and 2005 may have 'reinforced the idea of gender (as) both real and desirable' (49). In my view a more sophisticated picture may now be emerging. The explosion of new ways of understanding gender, and being gendered, has led some who consider gender fluid and contingent to challenge trans people who identify towards one end of the spectrum, depicting them as less 'liberated' or 'medically defined'. This perspective is linked to the use of terms such as 'passing' and 'stealth', which are increasingly (and rightly) contested within the community. Em Rundall and Vincent Vecchietti's chapter on workplace experiences ('InVisibility in the Workplace') includes a quote from a trans woman who talks about 'going in' after transition rather than coming out, emphasizing the pres-

sure to blend in and disappear.

I would argue that comparing trans people with a defined sense of gender to those whose self-perception is more fluid, on dubious grounds of 'modernity' or 'authenticity', is a false dichotomy grounded in external perceptions and treatment of trans people. This is partly the fault of the medical establishment, which holds onto particular definitions to provide (or withhold/ration) particular treatments. But gender studies' adherence, at least until recently, to gender as entirely culturally created has maintained unhelpful distinctions between people whose identities may be very different (but more overlapping than has previously been thought), but who have in common, at minimum, Western society's desire to place them in an abject state. Laurel Westbrook, in the conclusion of her chapter, reflects on the (possibly unhelpful) influence of Judith Butler here.

Currently some identities lead to the benefits of full citizenship and necessary medical treatment more readily than others. In her own chapter 'Recognizing Diversity?', Hines argues persuasively that the UK's Gender Recognition Act (2004) 'embodies on-going tensions between very different ways of understanding (trans) gender' (87). The focus of this legislation is those who clearly wish to transition socially from one gender to the other on a permanent basis. Those for whom change is less permanent, or who oscillate,

or have a more fluid self-definition are not supported, a situation possibly improved (minutely) under the recent single Equality Act. To problematize things further, I would argue that some trans identities which seem fixed have in fact been formed under repressive cultural and medical circumstances. There are numerous instances of individuals who identify as crossdressers for example, only to then transition later in life and develop different, and more nuanced understandings of gender.

Transition later in life, rather than earlier, may be a result in part of this repression. This idea is given weight by Alison Rooke's chapter 'Telling Trans Stories', which profiles part of the Wellcome Trust's Sci:identity project, an artistic endeavour involving 'academics, arts practitioners, medical professionals and ... young (trans) people' (65). Rooke writes powerfully of identities formed relationally as the young people interacted with each other, leading to new understandings and self-understandings. In some cases participants knew no other trans people before the project, and it is perhaps understandable that this kind of interaction can more readily generate possibilities and exploratory thinking by comparison with the more typical experiences of trans youth, often characterized by feelings of fear, isolation and stigmatization.

The inter-relation between trans and other spaces - the dominant heterosexual culture, conceptions of

gender flowing from gender studies and queer studies, the relationship to gay and lesbian communities and the particular strand of feminism that has denied trans women legitimacy as women, as exemplified by Raymond (1980), Bindel (2004) and others - is another recurring theme of the book. Angie Fee, in her chapter 'Who Put the 'Hetero' in Sexuality?', criticizes much gender scholarship for underplaying 'the dominance of the heterosexual matrix ... as the source of sex and gender categorization' (207). She points to ways in which feminist psychoanalysts are challenging this dominant paradigm which considers that only a single gender identity is healthy, and argues for 'multiple meanings, shifting identifications and (accommodating) contradictions which cannot be understood within the gendered, binary language of psychotherapy (while resisting) the temptation of assuming a gender-free space' (217).

There are (sometimes enabling) perspectives from a diverse range of communities. Eve Shapiro contributes a fascinating chapter 'The Impact of Race on Gender Transformation in a Drag Troupe', beginning with a shocking description of a blackface drag king performance before unearthing hidden, though clearly unintentional racist practice in a radical performance troupe. Corrie J Hammer ('Corporeal Silences and Bodies that Speak') writes about attempts at two Canadian bathhouses

to become more inclusive which paradoxically resulted in some trans men feeling excluded, perhaps because they were regarded through the lens of more traditional understandings of what constitutes masculinity. Sara Davidmann ('Beyond Borders') touches on how the diversity of gender expression increasingly resists heteronormative definitions, and perspectives are widened still further by Katherine Gregory's chapter 'Transgendering in an Urban Dutch Streetwalking Zone'.

These are telling examples of how an approach intended to be liberational can unintentionally reinforce the dominant culture. There are occasions when this occurs within the book itself. Alison Rooke's otherwise excellent chapter misses an opportunity to problematize 'passing', for example. Some authors appear ambivalent about surgical elements of transition, suggesting that the lived experience of trans people is slightly 'out of reach' of the book. By contrast some thinking and writing on the nature of gender by trans individuals, often in non-academic contexts, goes beyond the current level of sophistication of thinking within transgender studies itself. Sass Rogando Sasot's 'On the men who fancy us' (2010) is one such recent example. I was also surprised to find no mention of the work of Julia Serano (2007), one of the most influential trans thinkers of recent years. The most disappointing chapter is the first, by Ekins and

King. Diligent explorers and recorders of emerging gender identities over the years, they contribute a curiously old-fashioned piece which seems intended to provoke, with its talk of 'dominant transgender narratives' (26) which seek 'to expunge sexuality (eroticism)' (31). Their argument lacks currency and seeks to impose authoritative views from above. It feels similar in tone, in that regard, to the strand of feminist argument against the authenticity of trans women. By beginning with this chapter, the editors create an unsettling and uncomfortable tone. Happily this is quickly expunged by the range of views and useful insights to be found in the pages which follow.

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