



# *Explorations in Trans\*<sup>1</sup> Subjectivity*

---

AUTHOR  
KYLE SAWYER

---

Kyle Sawyer is a Queer Studies graduate of Antioch University Los Angeles and co-founder of Building Allies Together, an organization providing experiential trans\* ally trainings to schools, organizations, and service providers throughout Southern California. He is currently bringing his passion and skills to his work with the Lambda Literary Foundation. To contact Kyle please visit [www.kylesawyer.weebly.com](http://www.kylesawyer.weebly.com) or email: [sawyer.kylej@gmail.com](mailto:sawyer.kylej@gmail.com)

This paper explores the enforcement of anti-trans\* subjectivity and the ways in which trans\* individuals are resisting, challenging, and creating new ways of being. Anti-trans\* subjectivity is informed, defined, and enforced by discursive power, coercive power, and repressive power. This paper uses theories from Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Julia Serrano, Dean Spade, Joan Roughgarden, and many more to define the different types of power and explore the possibilities of trans\* subjectivity as a place of knowing. This paper shows how trans\* individuals are resisting an anti-trans\* subjectivity by creating and introducing new and exciting possibilities of moving through and seeing the world in which we exist. For the unabridged version please visit: [www.kylesawyer.weebly.com](http://www.kylesawyer.weebly.com)

**Keywords:** *Transgender, Trans\*, Foucault, Butler, Feinberg, Serrano, Spade, Roughgarden, Halberstam, GID, Queer Theory, Cisgender, Cissexual*

*The important thing here, I believe, is that truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power: ... truth isn't the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1980, p. 131).*

For many individuals, their sex and gender are (T)ruths which are not deconstructed. This means, for many, their assigned sex at birth equates to their gender identity. The current accepted ideology, or dominant discourse, in sex and gender, is that a sexed designation (female/male) innately leads to and determines a congruent gender (feminine/masculine) with essential qualities, desires, and roles. All individuals are inundated with information which guides, demands and threatens in an attempt to influence behaviour and identity based on their assigned sex. When a person does not maintain or reinforce the hegemonic belief, they are at risk of subjugation.

I was born with an 'unproblematic vagina' which, without any thought or discussion, determined I was unproblematically female, which then led to the expectation and enforcement of 'girl', then 'woman', as my gender identity. Leslie Feinberg (1996), in *Transgender Warriors*, writes:

*When I was born in 1949, the doctor confidently declared, 'It's a girl'. That might have been the last time anyone was so sure. I grew up a very masculine girl. It's a simple statement to write, but it was a terrifying reality to live. (p.3)*

Expectations of gender, linked to the idea of an 'essential' nature, result in particular requirements for trans\* individuals to become aware of their body and the expectations of inhabiting that body. At a very young age, I detached from my body as best as I could. I desired no relationship to it, nor did I believe anyone else could possibly desire relationship for it. This internalised message was forced upon me before I was able to articulate any form of acceptance or resistance to the 'rules' of my assigned sex. Beyond that, even as a child and for the first twenty-two years of life, I had no access to language to express what it was I felt or what I was experiencing.

Because of the risk of subjugation, trans\* is experienced as something to hide, mask, or invisibilise; trans\* is not experienced as something to be, it is experienced as something to *not be*. This invisibilising experience is constructed and enforced through complex systems of power and in defense of our strict gender binary. Power is not experienced in single separate instances; power is exercised through and by many techniques. For trans\* individuals, this experience leads to the expectation and acceptance of 'passing' as a gender within the binary. Passing means meeting the standards of the currently accepted 'norm' of the gender binary, which is connected to the constructed genders given to us upon birth, and 'iterated' through our rejection, acceptance and existence of and within gender. This 'norm' is dependent on the current accepted gendered signifiers; signifiers such as breasts, facial hair, body movement, and gestures.

Currently, 'to pass' means to have enough signifiers of the gender you are presenting to ensure a perceived identity as cis. Cis, in relation to gender, means one's gender identity matches their assigned sex at birth. For example, a person assigned female at birth identifies with a feminine/woman/female identity:<sup>2</sup>

*It is hard to overstate how dramatically sex/gender congruence, legibility, and consistency within a binary gender system buy a privileged pass to social existence, particularly when accompanied by the appearance of normative race, class, ability, and nationality. The term 'cisgender' was to name that privileged pass. (Enke, 2012, p. 64)*

I will use the concept of 'passing' to explore the expectation, desirability and maintainability of the gender binary in order to demonstrate how discursive power, coercive power and repressive power are exercised in the construction of, what I will call, anti-trans\* subjectivity. Serrano (2007) clarifies the understanding of 'passing':

*It should be mentioned that this view of 'passing' is further supported by the use of the word with regards to other social class issues. For instance, a gay man can 'pass' for straight, or a fair-skinned person of color can 'pass' for white. Sometimes people work hard to 'pass', and other times they don't try at all. (p. 177).*

We live in a culture that demands a designation and an explanation when gender is not easily perceived. These demands are determined upon the perception of the person identifying the other: I did not experience a *single* moment in which I was explicitly told I could not be 'how' I existed, appeared, or emerged. Rather, I received a series of constant and consistent messages prior to becoming a fully conscious being:

The question, 'Is that a boy or a girl?' hounded me throughout my childhood. The answer didn't matter much. The very fact that strangers had to ask the question already marked me as a gender outlaw.' (Feinberg, 1996, p. 4)

When one inadvertently forces another to question his<sup>3</sup> own understanding of his essential truth to gender, there is an understanding through the exercising of power that gives the viewer a right to demand an explanation.

This question, and the constructs of our language through which we are told individuals can inhabit only one of two gendered subjectivities, are avenues in which power is exercised. Anti-trans\* subjectivity is directly related and constructed by the ideology of our gender binary. One form in which this ideology is enforced is through *discourse*, or discursive power. Discourse, or discursive power, permeates all aspects of our culture. It is not simply the conversations occurring but the avenues in which our (T)ruths are given. Such that 'discourses' like psychology, sociology, medicine, anthropology, and the like, purport (T)ruth to human nature, to gender. Through language, through discourse, we are expected to internalise the policing of our individual gender identity and to police the identities of those around us. This happens on an intrapersonal level as well as a cultural level:

*The culture may not simply be creating roles for naturally-gendered people, the culture may be creating the gendered people. In other words, the culture may be creating gender. (Bornstein, 1994, p.12)*

The articulation and visual representations defining the parameters of gender are everywhere, in everything we do. Many of us willfully, through knowing or unknowing, play this game and perpetuate the ideology of gender. When an individual does not fit within the boundaries and constraints of that ideology, they have then entered the realm of the 'abject'. Julia Kristeva (1941) in *Powers of horror: An essay on abjection*, describes abjection as that which '... disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite' (p. 4). The 'abject' defined by current discourse, in relation to gender, is the language of 'transsexualism' or 'Gender Identity Disorder.'

The fourth edition of the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (4<sup>th</sup> ed., text ev.; DSM-IV-TR; American Psychiatric Association, 2000) defines Gender Identity Disorder (GID) as a person who has or feels consistent incongruence with 'his or her' sexed designation and that the incongruence 'causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning' (p. 581).<sup>4</sup> This diagnosis unapologetically determines that the existence of trans\* individuals is a problem within that individual which must be fixed. GID maintains, perpetuates and encourages anti-trans\* subjectivity. Dean Spade (2006) in *The Transgender studies reader*, comments:

*... containing gender distress with 'transsexualism' functions to naturalize and make 'healthy' dichotomized, birth-assigned gender performance. It casts the critical eye on the gender performance of those transgressing gender boundaries, and produces a norm that need not be criticized. (p. 319)*

Because we live in a society in which a gendered existence predetermines all else, defined through language, trans\* individuals are systematically denied existence within the dominant mainframe. Riki Wilchins (2004), in *Queer theory, gender theory*, states, 'Discursive power produces specific kinds of individuals, with specific bodies, pleasures, and sexes' (p. 78). When a trans\* individual 'passes', or appears to be cis, zi is then allowed to move through the world without fear of retribution, violence, or institutionalisation.

The moment my body and voice began to change because of hormone replacement therapy, I began existing in the world as part of the 'club'. Being accepted as cis-male creates a cushion of safety and strength, also known as, 'cis-privilege' or 'passing privilege'. Being read as *white, educated, straight* and cis-male allows me to enter worlds from which I was once excluded (worlds from which many remain excluded). Such that I was able to find a job, move through the world without challenge, my voice was heard, and I rarely have to fear the police or presence of the police.

We exist in a society that denies trans\* discourse, denies our lived experience. Trans\* individuals are told to lie, to hide and to deny any existence of being trans\*. We tell each other the best ways to 'pass', tips for existing as a certain gender. We reason that safety is more important than truth. We are force-fed our (T)ruth in the form of the trope, 'born in the wrong body'. This 'truth' is meant for the cis world before it is meant for the trans\* world. What is maintained by this belief is the understanding that, above all else, you must want to pass. You must want to fit within the predetermined categories of gender. Through passing, a person is no longer trans\*. We become an either/or. Once we accept 'born in the wrong body' as our (T)ruth, we enter anti-trans\*

subjectivity. When a trans\* individual successfully passes, or performs, their existence as trans\* is nullified in that moment. 'Passing' is not only connected to clothing or style, but to the successful inhabitation of a gendered identity or, at the very least, the perception of a successful gendered identity. This can be clarified by Judith Butler's (1993) theory on performativity in relation to Louis Althusser's (1971) notion of interpellation. According to Althusser, 'individuals are always-already subjects' (p. 176). Such that, prior to our existence, subjectivity is already in place for us to maintain. Butler's theory of performativity expresses further that we are all already gendered subjects and, as such, are expected to maintain the expected gender derived from our sexed designation at birth. Althusser (1971), in *Ideology and the State Apparatuses*, writes:

*... ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals, or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing. (p. 174)*

We are only a gender when 'hailed' as such. We can only be hailed as gendered when we successfully 'perform' the assumed gender: 'Performativity focuses on the ways in which identity comes to life through discourse. Performative acts are types of authoritative speech, speech that isn't merely representative but that *does something*' (Tilsen, 2013, p. 17). This 'speech' is not a simple teaching of a language but is that which exists as a hegemonic belief and practice:

*Before its birth, the child is therefore always-already a subject, appointed as a subject in and by the specific familial ideological configuration in which it is 'expected' once it has been conceived (Althusser, 1971, p. 176).*

We do not enter language simply because it is an innate quality of being human. We enter language based on the meanings given to that language. The 'speech', the language of nullification, is expressed through the expected gendered roles, gendered public spaces, gendered names and pronouns.

According to Michel Foucault (1978), in *History of sexuality: Volume one*, power-over sex is 'nothing more than a law of prohibition' (p. 84). The gender expectations, roles and identities everyone is forced to engage with/in, deal with a 'law of prohibition'. This unspoken law and the power exercised through the expectations of passing begin before we exit the womb. The sexed binary is maintained and supported by the acceptance and expectation that a child born with 'ambiguous genitalia' will be forced, through coercion, to repress and 'fix' that which is abject. This process of forcing infants into 'normative' sex categories is *only* meant to maintain the hegemonic, cissexist paradigm:

*This passing-centrism allows cissexuals to ignore their own cissexual privilege, and also serves to privilege the transsexuals's assigned sex over their identified and lived sex, thereby reinforcing the idea that transsexual genders are illegitimate. (Serrano, 2007, p. 178)*

Trans\* subjectivity is first denied through discourse when individuals must consciously choose, not which, but *how* to present a designated gender according to the 'rules' of the binary. It is through this binary expectation of discursive power that trans\* individuals are repressed and coerced to inhabit an anti-trans\* subjectivity:

*Cissexuals (not transsexuals) are the ones who create, foster, and enforce 'passing' by their tendency to treat transsexuals in dramatically different ways based solely on the superficial criteria of our appearance. (Serrano, 2007, pp. 178-79)*

The iterability of gender is ensconced in (T)ruth in such a way that individuals inhabit what Kate Bornstein (1994) has defined as the 'Gender Defender'. In *Gender outlaw*, Bornstein states, 'the Gender Defender is someone who actively, or by knowing inaction, defends the status quo of the existing gender system' (p. 74). When one does not correctly perform the assigned and expected gender well enough, there is cause and acceptance of the Gender Defender exercising power through both coercive and repressive power. It is through discourse that coercive power is legitimated and defined. Coercive power works through violence and the threat of violence, through constraints and the threat of constraints. Butler (1993) states, 'constraint is not necessarily that which sets a limit to performativity; constraint is, rather, that which impels and sustains performativity' (p. 59). Trans\* identity is not only denied through passing, the denial or the 'nullification' is also seen in the violent ways gender is enforced.

Coercive power is not only legitimated through discourse but also through forms of repression, or repressive power, which discourse has currently defined. Repressive power can and does work through laws & policies, psychology/psychiatry, medicine, and popular media. Each of these is informed by our current discourse around trans\* identified individuals. Wilchins (2004) defines repressive power as, 'the power to silence, wound, and punish. We fear this repressive power and the potential of the state to abuse the individual' (p. 78). There were instances as a child when I resisted inhabiting the gendered designation of girl, then woman; those instances were the moments I was coerced through the threat of punishment and humiliation to dress, behave, and exist as a 'girl'.

*Humiliation is sanctioned at virtually every level of the culture ... but when there's no fear of being humiliated ... there's less opportunity for the culture to exert control ... we are taught to pay attention to the humiliation, because it can be enforced by violence' (Bornstein, 1994, p. 88).*

It is only when trans\* individuals successfully 'pass' that they are then deemed worthy of a human existence, a human reality. As long as an individual exists without attachment to the binary, without clearly identifiable signifiers, zi risks retribution; zi risks facing coercive power through physical violence, isolation, and threats of institutionalization. 'We need the exact right combination of *visible* 'difference,' passability, *and* nonvisibility (a combination assisted by whiteness, abledness, legal citizenship, employment, and noncriminal status) to hope to be granted authenticity, transparency, and belonging within a chosen gender' (Enke, 2012, p. 64).

Even in places where trans\* individuals seek refuge, we face humiliation, hate, and often, a denial of services<sup>5</sup>. Repressive power is exercised in such a way that trans\* individuals are coerced to internalize the ideology of the gender binary and to *deny* their existence as trans\*. It is through this fear that trans\* individuals find solace in passing.

---

## WHAT IF TRANS\* SUBJECTIVITY WERE ALLOWED ARTICULATION?

---

If trans\* subjectivity were allowed articulation, the possibilities of *being*, the 'how's' of gender, could become endless. These possibilities then, would create new and different ways to approach the world by challenging the current discourse and the ways in which power is exercised and resisted. '[Trans\* subjectivity] better helps us see that the body is an instrument for involvement with others ... the body is a site for the play of language, a generator of symbolic exchange.' (Sandy Stone as cited in Stryker, 2008, p. 127)

Part of inhabiting a trans\* subjectivity is the point at which gender *must* be considered malleable. I began to think about my gender when I was not allowed to *be* my gender; when I was not privy to language, or any representation, visual or otherwise, to *define* my gender. The possibility of a different way of viewing the world, maybe one without gender, one with multiple genders, one in which gender did not define every aspect of relational experience, could create a space of endless possibilities of gendered expressions.

*The self-determination of trans\* people in crafting our gender expression is compromised by the rigidity of the diagnostic and treatment criteria. At the same time, this criteria and the version of transsexuality that it posits produce and reify a fiction of normal, healthy gender that works as a regulatory measure for the gender expression of all people. (Spade, 2006, p. 329)*

Trans\* individuals, especially those who are visibly trans\*, are forcing a new discourse simply by existing, by speaking, by demanding acknowledgement free of violence. Trans\* individuals are resisting the power of the perceiver and the power of our gender binary. As Foucault (1978) states, 'thou shalt not exist, except in darkness and secrecy' (p. 84). When trans\* individuals step into the world, into the light, they are defying that law, they are demanding witness, and they are resisting the power exercised through performativity, exercised through the expectation to pass. We face challenges to our very existence when we do not pass or when we resist the 'passing' game, and as we face these challenges we force new discourse. As new ideas enter the social consciousness, this language changes and shifts. It evolves.

---

## THE BEAUTIES OF TRANS\* SUBJECTIVITIES

---

One of the most beautiful aspects of trans\* subjectivity is the audacious way in which it is constantly changing and challenging itself. When existing in our culture from the margins, from the position of abject, there lies an astounding possibility of *being* that has yet to be materialised. New language is introduced as a challenge and resistance to the suffocating paradigm – language such as 'cis', gender neutral pronouns, and using the asterisk after trans. All of which were introduced to our culture by trans\* identified individuals. Not only is new language introduced, but also alternate ways of *using* our language. Micha Cardenas (2011), in *Transreal*, states,

To say that I am transreal is a strategy for embracing a gender that exceeds daily reality on Planet Earth and that says back to all the people who have tried to make me choose between man or woman that I choose to be a shape-shifter, a dragon and a light wave. (p. 30).

Trans\* subjectivity offers us an opportunity to experience genders in vastly different modes. Judith Halberstam (2005), in *In a queer time & place*, writes, '... the queer "way of life" will encompass subcultural practices, alternative methods of alliance, forms of transgender embodiment, and those forms of representation dedicated to capturing these willfully eccentric modes of being' (p. 1). Trans\* subjectivity also offers an opportunity to see current practices from a different angle. Julia Serrano (2007) offers a challenge to the GID diagnosis, she states, '... rather than simply removing the gender identity disorder diagnosis from the DSM, we should perhaps consider replacing it with transsexual etiology disorder; to describe the unhealthy obsession many cissexuals have with explaining the origins of transsexuality' (p. 188). This is one way in which the subject/object power dynamic or the cis/trans\* power dynamic is flipped. Serrano's suggestion offers a place from which trans\* individuals are privileged; and the behaviour of sensationalising that which is abject the subject of inquiry. This mode of viewing gender and challenging the paradigm works at multiple intersections of being and destabilises the ways in which the dominant class is viewed as 'normal'.

Trans\* individuals are also challenging accepted theories of existence and offering new insights that allow for multiple ways of being and moving through our world. Joan Roughgarden, for instance, challenges the long-standing ideology of Charles Darwin's sexual selection theory with her theory of social selection. Roughgarden (2009), in *The genial gene*, writes, 'social selection emphasizes the role of sexual reproduction in continually rebalancing a species' portfolio of genetic variation to meet continually changing circumstances' (p. 63). Social selection challenges the way in which we *expect* gendered behaviors. It argues that the ideological belief of 'aggressive males' and 'coy females' proposed by Darwin are in fact only an iteration of our socially constructed parameters that maintain and 'prove' the current accepted paradigm. Roughgarden (2004), in *Evolution's rainbow*, shows through myriad examples that sexual selection does not have the strength in empirical evidence as it has claimed.

The truth of gender is that there are genders that have yet to be defined. There are individuals who exist in a world that does not include the categories of female/male. We are subject to the denial of our existence through the exercising of coercive and repressive power defined and substantiated through discourse. Many of us resist the passing game; and many of us have no choice but to resist the game with only a desire to live as we are. As such, we deconstruct the hegemonic gender binary by simply *being* each day. Trans\* subjectivity is a place of willful and knowing resistance. It is through this resistance that possibilities emerge; of multiple ways of being.

Trans\* subjectivity offers us a beautiful path to move and exist in the world. A path that can open avenues that may or may not be visible; one that can offer challenges to the gender binary to which we continuously and unquestionably capitulate. We were not 'born in the wrong body'. We were born in our bodies. Our bodies, our truths, are deemed 'abject' by the society and culture in which we exist. Trans\* shows us that abject is beautiful. Trans\* bodies are beautiful.

---

## NOTES

---

1. The asterisk is used in text to denote an acknowledgement of myriad identities. Trans without the designation of a specified gender (i.e. transfemale, transmale) and without a specification of gender or sex (i.e. transgender, transsexual) is to express a disjunction with the binary and to begin the conversation of trans\* as a way of being and seeing the world.
2. Julia Serrano (2007), in *Whipping Girl*, identifies and defines two separate understandings of cis: cissexual and cisgender. She defines cissexual as: 'people who are not transsexual and who have only ever experienced their subconscious and physical sexes as being aligned', and cisgender as, simply: '... people who are not transgender' (pp. 12 & 33). The distinction between cissexual and cisgender is important as there are individuals whose 'sex' may feel congruent but their 'gender' may not. For example, a feminine identified man may feel comfortable with the sexed designation of 'male' but may feel incongruence with the societal and cultural expectations of the gendered designation 'man'.
3. Gender neutral pronouns entered our language as a challenge to the current accepted gendered pronouns. Hir (pronounced *here*) used as her/him, and zi (pronounced *zee*) used as she/he, offer options for individuals who do not identify with the dominant discourse and those who choose to challenge the accepted understandings of gender *through* language.
4. The newest edition of the DSM-5 (2012) has redefined GID as Gender Dysphoria. The fact sheet available online at [dsm5.org](http://dsm5.org) states, '... people whose gender at birth is contrary to the one they identify with will be diagnosed with gender dysphoria'.
5. 'We could use film clips or stories—exemplaries include *Southern Comfort*, a documentary that follows a trans man who dies of ovarian cancer after doctors refuse to treat him; Leslie Feinberg's personal account of a frightening medical encounter published in the *American Journal of Public Health*; and the case of Tyra Hunter, who died as a result of injuries sustained in a car accident when paramedics withdrew treatment after learning she was trans, is another brutal cautionary tale'. (Hanssmann, 2012, p. 113)

---

## REFERENCES

---

- Althusser, L. (1971). Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. In L. Althusser (Ed.), *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*. New York, NY: Monthly Review Press.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* 4<sup>th</sup> ed., text rev.). Washington, DC: Author.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2012). Gender Dysphoria. In *DSM-5 Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.dsm5.org/Documents/Gender%20Dysphoria%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>
- Bornstein, K. (1994). *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies That Matter: On the discursive limits of 'sex'*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Cardenas, M. (2011). *The Transreal: Political aesthetics of crossing realities*. Mountain View, CA: Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License.
- Enke, A. (2012). The Education of little cis: Cisgender and the discipline of opposing bodies. In Enke, A. (Ed.), *Transfeminist perspectives: In and beyond transgender and gender studies* (pp. 60-77). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Feinberg, L. (1996). *Transgender warriors: Making history from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *History of sexuality: Volume one: An introduction*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge*. C. Gordon (Ed.). New York, NY: Random House Inc.
- Halberstam, J. (2005). *In a queer time & place: Transgender bodies, subcultural lives*. New York, NY and London: New York University Press.
- Hansmann, C. (2012). Training disservice: The productive potential and structural limitations of health as a terrain for trans activism. In Enke, A. (Ed.), *Transfeminist perspectives: in and beyond Transgender and Gender Studies* (pp. 60-77). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Kristeva, J. (1991). *Powers of horror: An essay on abjection*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press
- Roughgarden, J. (2004). *Evolution's rainbow: Diversity, gender, and sexuality in nature and people*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA and London, England: University of California Press.
- Roughgarden, J. (2009). *The genial gene: Deconstructing Darwinian selfishness*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA and London, England: University of California Press.
- Serrano, J. (2007). *Whipping girl: A transsexual woman on sexism and the scapegoating of femininity*. Emeryville, CA: Seal Press.
- Spade, D. (2006). Mutilating gender. In Stryker, S. & Whittle, S. (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 316-332). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Spade, D. (2011). *Normal: Administrative violence, critical trans politics, and the limits of law*. Brooklyn, NY: South End Press.
- Stryker, S. (2008). *Transgender history*. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press.
- Tilsen, J. (2013). *Therapeutic conversations with queer youth: Transcending homonormativity and constructing preferred identities*. Lanham, MD: Jason Aronson.
- Wilchins, R. (2004). *Queer theory, gender theory*. Los Angeles, CA: Alyson Publications.

---

## DEAR READER

---

This paper was originally published by Dulwich Centre Publications, a small independent publishing house based in Adelaide Australia. You can do us a big favour by respecting the copyright of this article and any article or publication of ours.

The article you have read is copyright © Dulwich Centre Publications Except as permitted under the Australian Copyright Act 1968, no part of this article may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, communicated, or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior permission.

All enquiries should be made to the copyright owner at:  
Dulwich Centre Publications, Hutt St PO Box 7192, Adelaide, SA, Australia, 5000  
Email: [dcp@dulwichcentre.com.au](mailto:dcp@dulwichcentre.com.au)

Thank you! We really appreciate it.

You can find out more about us at:  
[www.dulwichcentre.com.au](http://www.dulwichcentre.com.au)

You can find a range of on-line resources at:  
[www.narrativetherapyonline.com](http://www.narrativetherapyonline.com)

You can find more of our publications at:  
[www.narrativetherapylibrary.com](http://www.narrativetherapylibrary.com)