Edited by Alicia Spencer-Hall and Blake Gutt

Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography

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in Medieval Hagiography

Hagiography beyond Tradition

The study of sanctity in medieval Europe is starting to elicit cutting-edge, innovative and genuinely interdisciplinary scholarship that destabilizes what people have conventionally considered to be hagiography. This is demonstrated in the topic range of panels sponsored by the Hagiography Society at recent landmark medievalist conferences. While hagiography has traditionally been understood only in religious terms, recent scholarship moves beyond such frameworks to consider alternate ways of identifying and representing exemplary people. So doing, such research emphasises modern cultural analogies and resonances with medieval figures.

It is not enough, however, to approach saints' lives with a "sexy" modern framework. The best scholarship is rooted in analytical rigour, close attention to context(s), and a keen awareness of the potential pitfalls of anachronism, all the while accepting that anachronism can often be productive. This series provides a home for the kind of work that negotiates that border between the traditional and the contemporary and encourages scholarship enhanced by interventions drawn from celebrity studies, trans studies, crip theory, animal and monster studies, the history of senses and the emotions, media studies, and beyond. Rather than considering hagiography as a single genre, the series is open to expanding the ways in which we imagine how people come to be offered for veneration, as well as the media and genres in which they are fashioned, represented, and celebrated.

Trans and Genderqueer Subjects
in Medieval Hagiography

Edited by
Alicia Spencer-Hall
and Blake Gutt

Amsterdam University Press

Cover illustration: "We have always been here", by Jonah Coman

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden
Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

Amsterdam
University
Press

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Introduction

Alicia Spencer-Hall and Blake Gutt

Abstract

The Introduction sets out the rationale for the collection, and the significance and scope of trans studies, in the Middle Ages and beyond. It includes concise coverage of key scholarship in the field, contextualizing the volume and its chapters accordingly. It concludes with a chapter-by-chapter snapshot of the collection as a whole, explaining the thematic structures underpinning the volume's analytical work.

Keywords: medieval studies, gender studies, gender theory, trans studies

In hir pioneering study, *Transgender Warriors*, Leslie Feinberg writes: 'I couldn't find *myself* in history. No-one like me seemed to have ever existed'.[1] Working for transgender rights entails striving towards the visibility and acceptance of transgender lives. Yet something more than tolerance of trans people's physical existence in the present is required. That something is full ideological existence – the ability to imagine a transgender past, and a transgender future. In this volume, 'transgender' is employed as a broad umbrella, including genderqueer, genderfluid, and non-binary identities, and is also used as a rubric for discussing ways of being that disrupt normative notions of binary gender/sex.[2] We reference both transgender and genderqueer subjects in the title of the volume precisely to indicate

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1   Feinberg, *Transgender Liberation*, p. 11. See also Bychowski in this volume: pp. 245-65; 'Ze/Hir' in the Appendix (p. 325).
2   The syntax of phrases such as 'trans and non-binary identities' may suggest that 'non-binary' and 'trans' are parallel but mutually exclusive terms. Our usage, however, is intended to convey that non-binary identities *are* trans (that is, to avoid the assumption that trans identities must be binary), which may be the unintended impression when trans identities are discussed without the explicit mention of non-binary identities. See 'Trans(gender)' (pp. 316-17) and 'Non-Binary' (p. 306) in the Appendix.

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that both formations operate against – and through – the same normative socio-cultural structures. 'Transgender', as a category, is a subset of 'queer', understood as defiant and often explicitly political non-normativity. Queerness encompasses sexualities and gender identities deemed 'atypical' in their cultural setting, as well as a mode of being in the world that questions dominant norms. Trans theories and readings emerge from the framework of queer theory, and owe much to its innovations. Yet 'trans' cannot be fully contained within the borders of 'queer'. If queer was the call, trans is one of many responses. Trans scholarship brings its insights to bear through specific ways of feeling, knowing, and attending to sources that explore resonances between trans, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming lives across history. The term 'subjects' does double duty in the collection's title, referring to individuals *and* to topics, traces, and resonances which destabilize modern impositions of fixed binary gender on premodern culture(s).

Feinberg begins hir history with St Joan of Arc (d. 1431), whose claims of holy visions, and successful military leadership, resulted in a heresy trial that culminated in execution, based in considerable part on the charge of cross-dressing. Joan has served as a rallying point for trans identity, and exemplifies the ways that religion intersects with medieval trans and genderqueer lives.[3] Joan wore masculine clothing, and fulfilled a role socially understood as masculine, in response to (perceived) divine contact. The chapters in this volume demonstrate that non-normative gender expressions, identities, and embodiments were, in the medieval period, very often imbricated with religion. This could sometimes, as in the case of Joan, leave individuals in a double bind, caught between sanctity and heresy. Since medieval theorizations of gender often drew on religion to explain non-normativity, religion – broadly defined – is a logical starting point and a highly productive source. This material impels the response of modern researchers, both trans and cis, from the sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld (d. 1935), to Feinberg, to the contributors to this volume. Medieval artefacts call out to us for recognition just as we call out to them for representation.

M.W. Bychowski's work demonstrates that, whether or not Joan was transmasculine, Joan's life was constrained by socio-cultural norms that were not only gendered, but virulently transphobic.[4] Joan's death was the direct result of medieval transphobia. Joan is thus a productive figure for exploring the link between trans lives and sanctity. Yet in France, white supremacists,

3   Feinberg, *Transgender Liberation*, pp. 12-14; Bychowski, 'Patron Saint'.
4   'Patron Saint'.

whose racist ideology is intertwined with trans- and queerphobia, now claim the saint as their own.[5] Essentialized as the 'Maid of Orléans' and scrubbed of queerness, Joan has become a potent white nationalist symbol. Trans history is an ongoing project of reclamation; the hegemony will not easily loosen its grip. The continuing discussion around Joan's life and death indicates the complex intersections of identity-based oppressions. The far-right's Joan, emblematic of whiteness, cannot be queer; the queer Joan can never be a white supremacist icon. Dismantling cis-heteronormativity entails the dismantling of co-relative and compounding discriminatory structures, including white supremacy.[6]

'Transgender' is not just an identity, or a form of embodiment, but a way of disrupting normative and essentializing frameworks. Transphobia is the stigmatization of ways of being that do not conform (or are *perceived as not conforming*) to socio-culturally normate, binarized delineations of 'gender-appropriate' roles, appearances, affects, embodiments, and identities. Transphobia may target individuals who do not consider themselves to be transgender because it is a practice that functions to enforce normativity, and lacks nuanced understanding of the structures it seeks to eradicate, or the lives made possible by and within them. Examinations of culture that draw on transgender viewpoints, affects, and theorizations are not only valuable for trans individuals, who may encounter new ways of recognizing and understanding their own experiences, but also for cisgender individuals, for whom trans readings may catalyse the interrogation of previously unquestioned socio-cultural norms.

This volume employs a transgender lens to undertake a cross-temporal investigation of medieval literature, philosophy and religion: each chapter employs the insights of twentieth- and twenty-first-century trans theory to read medieval texts. With two exceptions – Felix Szabo discusses a Byzantine eunuch saint, and Lee Colwill analyses burials in Late Iron Age Scandinavia linked to the magico-religious practice of *seiðr* – the chapters focus on Catholicism, the dominant religion in medieval Western Europe. As the contributions to this volume amply demonstrate, the co-incidence of medieval representations of non-normative gender with representations of holiness is no coincidence. There is a deep structural connection between these categories of exceptional life, not only in medieval Catholicism. Further comparative study is warranted to tease out the imbrications of religiosity and gender variance. Hagiography as addressed by this volume

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5   Lichfield, 'Struggle'; News Wires, 'French Far-Right'.
6   young shaq realness, Twitter thread.

is interdisciplinary: not only textual, but visual, material, cultural. Not only saints are holy. Beyond its role in institutional canonization, hagiography is the broader practice of memorializing, and reanimating, spiritually significant lives. Audiences turn to these lost lives, seeking the emotional and haptic traces of existences that illuminate their own experiences.[7] Hagiographies are narratives of becoming, possibility, and immanence.[8] They are not how-to manuals for becoming a saint, examples for the reader to rigidly emulate, but guides to recognizing and honouring the sanctity within oneself, offering moments of communion. The isolated trans and/or genderqueer reader finds that they are no longer alone; communities of readers assemble around saints, though separated by space and time. Modern trans memoirs function as autohagiography: these records of exceptional lives affirm the presence of trans individuals, serving as beacons whose light reveals the possibilities suppressed by normative culture.[9] From members of the trans community lost to violence or suicide, to iconic leaders and activists such as Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, modern-day trans saints abound.[10] Once again, their hagiographies are not instruction manuals, but texts that offer companionship as readers unravel what it means to live authentically, as themselves.[11] Transness is not merely compatible with holiness; transness itself is holy. Trans sanctity, as a mode of radical authenticity, creates a spiritual kinship that is not necessarily religious. For example, Feinberg, with whose words we began this Introduction, was a secular Jewish thinker. Similarly, the study of medieval hagiography, with its intrinsically Catholic worldview, owes much to the contributions of non-Christians.

We do not argue that 'transgender' is somehow an ahistorical or historically transcendent framework, but rather that the patterns of thought enabled by trans theory resonate with the content of the texts under consideration, animating the development of productive new readings. Medieval and modern conceptions of gender – what it is, how it is produced, why it matters – differ. Yet in both periods, there are gender norms, and transgressions thereof. By challenging assumptions that persist among modern scholars of the medieval period, this collection sheds revealing light on medieval understandings and experiences of gender. Simultaneously,

7   On emotional and haptic engagement, see Spencer-Hall, *Medieval Saints,* pp. 107-45.
8   On becoming, see Light, 'Trans/Mystical', pp. 9-14. Also see the 'FTM' (pp. 294-95) and 'MTF' (pp. 303-04) in the Appendix.
9   On autohagiography, see: Spencer-Hall, *Medieval Saints*, pp. 147-92; 193-242.
10   Bychowski, 'Rest in Power'; Ellison and Hoffman, 'Afterward'.
11   See: Bornstein, *Danger*; Mock, *Redefining Realness*; Sullivan, *Laughed in Pleasure*.

these analyses challenge us to think more critically about 'common-sense' understandings of how gender works today.

The trans past is not a playground. It is unethical to cleave historical trans subjects from the lived realities of their modern descendants, mobilizing trans life as an abstract concept. It is inherently transphobic for cis scholars to instrumentalize trans history for the purposes of building an academic career without explicitly making the connection to, and advocating for, trans lives today.[12] Nor can contemporary trans studies fully comprehend the current situation without understanding and acknowledging the complex history/ies of trans existence. Trans lives have never been monolithic. Traces of non-normative gender in the past reveal productive, affirmative possibilities; medieval imbrications of transness and sanctity are a case in point.

Transgender identity is too often defined in the negative, becoming legible for the cis majority primarily through the pain and dysphoria often associated with the incongruence of an individual's identified gender with their assigned gender, and with the governing gender 'regime'. We therefore hold space in this volume for gender euphoria: for all the moments, short and long, subtle and transcendent, in which the realization and enactment of one's identified gender produces a powerful and specific joy.[13] Being trans is not only about what feels wrong; it is about what feels right. Transgender euphoria resonates with mystical ravishment – both entail, as Ellis Light writes, 'fully embodied comfort and joy in oneself and one's orientation towards creation'.[14] In this way, 'trans modes of reading allow us to connect with medieval mysticism on its own terms'.[15] As a critical tool, transgender readings are about feeling otherwise; to 'sense transgender', following Cáel M. Keegan, is to experience 'a desiring feeling for what might otherwise go unrealized'.[16] In this Introduction, we set the stage for the transgender readings that follow by briefly summarizing the current state of trans rights, and the current state of the fields in which this volume intervenes. We work back from the present to the medieval period, demonstrating the ways in which trans pasts are emerging through the current theoretical and activist landscape, and why these pasts are so significant in the present.

12   See: Bychowski and Kim, 'Introduction', pp. 33-34.
13   See Light, 'Trans/Mystical'.
14   Ibid., p. 32.
15   Ibid., p. 21.
16   Keegan, *Lana and Lilly Wachowski*, p. 6.

Trans lives and trans rights in 2020: A (very) brief overview

In May 2019, the World Health Organization officially de-pathologized trans identities, one of the most significant advances in recent decades in acknowledging the validity of trans and genderqueer existence.[17] Other legal landmarks include the availability of neutral (X) gender markers for non-binary people on identification documents in more than fifteen US states, as well as in countries including Australia, Canada, and Iceland. Similar recognition of non-binary or 'third gender' identities occurs in countries such as Argentina, India, Nepal, and Pakistan.[18] In 2017, Danica Roem became the first openly transgender candidate to be elected to the state legislature in Virginia (USA). In 2020, Pakistan's Aisha Mughal attended the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, becoming the first openly trans person to participate in the Convention's forty-year tenure.

Transgender people are increasingly visible in Western anglophone (primarily American) culture. Notable figures include actress Laverne Cox, writer and activist Janet Mock, and former Olympic athlete Caitlyn Jenner. In 2014, Cox was the first openly trans person to appear on the cover of *Time* magazine, in the June 'Transgender Tipping Point' issue.[19] The same year, she became the first openly trans person to be nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award in an acting category, for her role as trans woman Sophia Burset in the Netflix show *Orange is the New Black*. Cox once more made Emmy history in 2015, winning a Daytime Creative Arts Emmy Award in the Outstanding Special Class as executive producer for the documentary *Laverne Cox Presents: The T Word*.

This increase in visibility, however, does not generally extend to trans men or non-binary people. Trans women bear the brunt of the public gaze: they are rendered emblematic of what it is to be trans, and are thus disproportionately vulnerable to transphobic abuse, up to and including murderous violence, with trans women of colour doubly marginalized.[20] Trans men are often rendered invisible – deliberately so, in the case of certain anti-trans campaigners, who depict trans women as conniving, perverted, and potentially violent men, while infantilizing trans men as vulnerable

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17   World Health Organization, 'Gender Incongruence'; Transgender Europe, 'World Health Organisation'.
18   Movement Advancement Project, 'Identity Document'; Wikipedia, 'Legal Recognition'.
19   Steinmetz, 'Tipping Point'.
20   GLAAD, 'Transgender Day of Remembrance'.

young lesbians suffering the effects of internalized misogyny, who have been confused or tricked into 'abandoning' their womanhood. In this way, transphobic rhetoric seeks to present transmasculine and transfeminine identities as fundamentally different phenomena. Non-binary identities are typically least understood, often derided as fabricated or attention-seeking.

In June 2019 – Pride month – the Vatican's Congregation for Catholic Education published a pamphlet denying the validity of LGBTQ+ identities. According to this text, queer identities are 'founded on nothing more than a confused concept of freedom in the realm of feelings and wants, [...] as opposed to anything based on the truths of existence'.[21] Gender theories which affirm LBGTQ+ identities are declared to 'annihilate the concept of "nature"', and threaten the 'anthropological fact' of the nuclear family.[22] Whilst exposure to religion is typically protective against suicide for cis-heterosexual individuals, a recent study concluded that it was 'positively associated with suicidal thoughts and behaviours' for LGB individuals.[23] On the evidence of this study, as well as the Vatican's overtly transphobic pamphlet, the same is likely to be true of trans and genderqueer individuals. However, religion can also be a powerfully affirming facet of a trans person's life.[24] In the medieval period, trans and gender non-conforming identities were often understood as indicating proximity to, rather than distance from, the divine. This volume is part of the ongoing work to affirm holiness as entirely compatible with trans identities, and to offer historically grounded refutation of theological transphobia. Jonah Coman offered a fulsome rebuttal of the Vatican's pamphlet on Twitter, demonstrating that the text's assertions contradict the Catholic tradition and history it claims to protect.[25]

In 2018, the British government opened a public consultation on proposed reforms to the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) (2004), aimed at simplifying the process of obtaining legal recognition of one's identified gender. The initial report noted that the GRA 'perpetuate[d] the outdated and false assumption that being trans is a mental illness', whilst being 'overly intrusive, humiliating and administratively burdensome'.[26] However, the consultation unleashed a so-called 'debate' on the validity of trans existence. Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists (TERFs) have gained prominence in

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21   Congregation for Catholic Education, 'Towards a Path', p. 11.

22   Ibid., p. 14; pp. 20-21 (p. 20).

23   Lytle et al, 'Association of Religiosity'.

24   See, for example, Pulitano, 'Ceremonies'.

25   Coman, Twitter. Coman revisits themes of transness and sanctity in the cover image he created for the present volume.

26   Minister for Women and Equalities, *Reform*, p. 21.

the UK, spreading transmisogynistic rhetoric popularized by academics including Janice Raymond in the 1970s and 1980s, and gathering momentum through support from well-known figures such as J.K. Rowling.[27] Reportedly, submitted responses to the consultation were overwhelmingly in favour of reform.[28] And yet, in June 2020, newspapers announced that the Conservative Government does not intend to implement any changes.[29] Alarmingly, there were indications instead that long-established trans rights may be rolled back. At the time of writing (July 2020), the trans community is redoubling their fight, whilst preparing for the worst.

In the USA, the Trump administration has enacted legislative changes ranging from removing requirements for agencies receiving government funding to treat trans people equally, to banning transgender individuals from serving in the military.[30] In 2018, a memo revealed that the administration was considering implementing a legal definition of 'sex' as 'either male or female, unchangeable, and determined by the genitals that a person is born with'.[31] This attempt to define trans people out of existence would also, of course, be devastating for intersex people. Trans people responded on social media with the hashtag #WontBeErased. In spite of all the hostility, in spite of its very material, very deadly effect on trans lives, trans life continues to flourish. The internet allows trans people to talk, rather than merely being talked about. The open structures of the web challenge hierarchical distributions of power. Therefore, we cite Twitter and Wikipedia proudly: these are communal tools that allow disenfranchised populations to document their experiences. More than ever, trans voices are being heard. In June 2020, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) offers protection from workplace discrimination to LGBT+ employees.[32] This is a landmark victory – but the struggle continues. In May 2020, for instance, the Hungarian parliament ended recognition for trans and intersex people, 'replac[ing] the category of "sex" on the civil registry with […] "sex assigned at birth"'.[33]

27   Raymond, *Empire*; Lewis, 'British Feminism'. Although the term 'TERF' was coined as a descriptor, it is now claimed to be a slur by many anti-trans feminists. Trans-exclusionary voices now describe themselves as 'gender-critical'. See 'TERF' and 'Gender-Critical' in the Appendix: p. 314 and p. 297 respectively. On Rowling, see: Montgomerie, 'Addressing'.
28   Stonewall, 'Statement'.
29   Cowburn, 'Groups'.
30   National Center for Transgender Equality, 'Administration'.
31   Green, Benner, and Pear, 'Defined Out of Existence'.
32   Supreme Court of the United States, Bostock v. Clayton County.
33   ILGA-Europe, 'Hungary Rolls Back Legal Protections'.

Visibility and history

The greater visibility of trans identities in contemporary culture has led some to turn to a faulty version of history in order to justify transphobia. Were there transgender people in the Middle Ages? The question itself is, as M.W. Bychowski points out, 'a bit absurd'.[34] For one, it is rooted in the conceptualization of trans identity as an aberrant product of twenty-first century culture. How quaint, that 2000-something predilection for transgender lives! That is how future historians – how we – will remember trans identities, so the transphobic logic goes. And yet, history does not remember faithfully, nor are historians necessarily the most efficient messengers of past insights. Marginalized identities are often written out of the historical record by those with the privilege of formulating 'historical truth'. The Middle Ages is frequently viewed as a time 'where men were men, women were women, everyone was the same race and practiced the same faith, and no one was corrupted by technology, sexuality or democracy'.[35] This is not how any medievalist worth their salt would put it.

Disingenuous interrogation of the presence of trans people in history is rarely about the factual specifics of the past alone. If talking about medieval trans lives is 'anachronistic', then 'trans-ness [is] not an inextricable part of humanity or gender diversity'.[36] The transphobes' dream is an imaginary medieval past in which everyone knows their (gendered) place. Similar themes emerge in the usage of the Middle Ages by the alt-right and beyond: those who fantasize a past in which everyone who mattered was straight, cisgender, white, and Christian.[37] White supremacists and fascists weaponize the Middle Ages to justify their hatred; as a discipline, medieval studies itself is the product and progenitor of structural racism and intersectional oppressions.[38]

'If the medieval past (globally) is being weaponized for the aims of extreme, violent supremacist groups, what are you doing, medievalists, in your classrooms?', asked Dorothy Kim in 2017.[39] The question remains as urgent as ever. We must uplift the voices of medievalists of colour, of queer medievalists, of trans medievalists, of disabled medievalists, of women

34   Bychowski, 'Transgender People?'.
35   Amy Kaufman, interviewed in Porterfield, 'Medieval Mindset'.
36   Bychowski, 'Transgender People?'.
37   Kim, 'Charlottesville', 'Teaching'; Rambaran-Olm, 'Misnaming'.
38   Medievalists of Color, 'On Race'; Medievalists of Color, 'Race in the Profession'; Miyashiro, 'Decolonizing'; Rambaran-Olm, 'Misnaming'; 'White Supremacy'.
39   Kim, 'Teaching'.

medievalists, of non-Christian medievalists: of the modern representatives of all the groups that some seek to erase by weaponizing the Middle Ages. We must affirm the value of avowedly situated and embodied scholarship, because all scholarship is situated and embodied. Hegemonic, unmarked situations and bodies have for too long been allowed to masquerade as 'normality' and 'neutrality'. Hundreds of years separate us from medieval subjects, but time can be queered.[40] The past can be felt, and is often closer than we think.

State of the field (1): Academic trans studies

Trans studies is too broad, too deep, and too well-established to be summarized efficiently in the space available here – this in itself is a wonderful thing.[41] The field's major theoretical propositions can be traced from its inception to the present along the following trajectory. Sandy Stone's 'The Empire Strikes Back' and Susan Stryker's 'My Words to Victor Frankenstein' are foundational 1990s texts that position trans studies as a vibrant – and very necessary – opposition to gender essentialism, giving trans people a voice within academic discourse. Stryker and Paisley Currah revisited the fundamentals of trans theory in 'Postposttranssexual', the inaugural keywords edition of *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2014).[42] Trans theory has been situated as the ungrateful evil twin of queer theory; a contention that can be variously dismissive and productive, as demonstrated by Stryker and V. Varun Chaudhry.[43] Writing in 2019, Andrea Long Chu is more fatalistic: 'Trans studies is the twin that queer studies ate in the womb.' 'Trans studies is over', she proclaims, and '[i]f it isn't, it should be.'[44] We disagree, though the provocation is welcome. There is much work left to do.

Academic trans studies is disproportionately white, for which it is undoubtedly the poorer. White-centric frameworks from the global North are not the only ways to think and understand trans identities and bodies. The insistent focus on trans-ness and/as whiteness erases trans people of

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40   On queer temporalities see: Edelman, *No Future*; Love, *Feeling Backward*; Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*; *How Soon?*. On trans time(s), see: DeVun and Tortorici, 'Trans*historicities'; Mills, *Seeing Sodomy*, pp. 81-132.

41   Stryker and Aizura, *Reader 2*; Stryker and Whittle, *Reader*.

42   Whittington's entry for 'Medieval' demonstrates the significance of medieval contexts for trans identities.

43   Stryker, 'Evil Twin'; Chaudhry, 'Centering'.

44   Chu and Drager, 'After Trans Studies', p. 103.

colour and their experiences, reproducing racialized normativity within the trans community itself.[45] To avoid reinscribing the violence of colonial and white-supremacist regimes of gender, it is essential to foreground intersectionality, especially the role of racialization, bringing the lived histories of multiply marginalized individuals centre stage. The term 'transgender' itself can erase or overwrite indigenous frameworks of gender.[46] In the past few years, long-standing efforts to decolonize trans studies have begun to gain (more) traction within academic publications. In 2014, a special issue of *TSQ*, edited by Aren Z. Aizura et al., was devoted to 'decolonizing the transgender imaginary'. C. Riley Snorton's book, *Black on Both Sides* (2017), was a landmark in Black trans studies, analysing the parallel structures subtending the production of gender and race, and the ways that chattel slavery (re)shaped paradigms of gender.[47] Snorton's book is, to date, the most visible example of the ascendency of Black trans studies.[48] Much of the most cutting-edge work in trans studies is online only, often written in non-academic jargon and from outside the academic community. Gatekeeping of what counts as theorization, who gets to speak about trans identities, and which forms of discourse are valid, is an obstacle both to the production and dissemination of work by marginalized scholars, and to the progress of the entire field.

Trans studies features on more curricula than ever. The rise of trans studies – and recognition of trans identities – in the Academy has, however, provoked considerable backlash. In 2018, *The Guardian* published an open letter from a network of academics employed in the UK, first signed by Kathleen Stock, a prominent anti-trans philosopher.[49] The network contends that trans-inclusive policies stifle 'academic freedom'. Yet debating the validity of trans lives is no mere academic exercise; it has real-world impact within and beyond the classroom. Numerous junior scholars have testified to the ways in which transphobic – and 'gender-critical' – discourse excludes and harms.[50] The *Confronting Trans Antagonism* digital toolkit, first made available online in 2018, is an invaluable resource for trans-affirming

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45   Aizura et al., 'Transgender Imaginary'; Bey, 'Trans*-ness of Blackness'; binoahan, *decolonizing*; Camminga, 'Umbrella?'; Dutta and Roy, 'Decolonizing'; Ellison et al, 'Issue of Blackness'; Paramo, 'Transphobia'; Snorton, *Black on Both Sides*.
46   binaohan, *decolonizing*, pp. 25-36.
47   Snorton, *Black on Both Sides*.
48   See also: Bey, 'Trans*-ness of Blackness'; Ellison et al., 'Issue of Blackness'.
49   Stock (and signatories), 'Academics'.
50   See: Spicer, 'Stuck in Between'; t philosopher, 'Leaving'.

pedagogy.[51] That such a toolkit is even necessary testifies to the routine nature of transphobia in the classroom. Transphobia must be addressed not only in pedagogy, but also in the profession of academia.

State of the field (2): medieval trans studies

Trans medievalism, as a field, has flourished in recent years. Arguably the most prominent and innovative scholar is M.W. Bychowski, whose website, *Transliterature: Things Transform* is a crucial resource for researchers. Bychowski is a pioneer in medieval trans studies, establishing the discipline through her extensive publications and her commitment to increasing the visibility of medieval trans scholars and scholarship at international conferences.[52] In 2019, Bychowski co-edited and co-wrote the Introduction for a special edition of *Medieval Feminist Forum*, 'Visions of Medieval Trans Feminism', with Dorothy Kim.[53] This Introduction charts the scholarly work accomplished and the changing political landscape since 2016. The piece is an outstanding primer on the stakes and trajectory of premodern trans studies. Bychowski and Kim map the intersections of medieval feminist studies and medieval trans studies, and discuss the experience of being a trans woman scholar in the Academy. As we write, there is only one out trans scholar of medieval studies in a permanent academic position, worldwide. Cis scholars working in trans studies must centre the voices of their trans colleagues.

Whilst trans scholars remain, by and large, in precarious academic positions, work in medieval trans studies is increasingly visible, and increasingly embraced by the institutional 'mainstream'. Robert Mills' monograph, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages*, which offers numerous transgender readings of medieval French and English literature and art, was awarded the Society for French Studies' R. Gapper Book Prize in 2015.[54] Jessica A. Boon won the Society for Medievalist Feminist Scholarship's 2019 'Best Article' award, for her essay on trans saint Juana de la Cruz.[55] If the floodgates are not exactly opening, there is a noticeable efflorescence of premodern trans scholarship receiving the imprimatur of 'respectable' academic presses – including

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51   Buchanan et al., *Toolkit*. See also Coman, 'Ally'.
52   Bychowski, *Transliterature: Things Transform*; 'Isle'; 'Reconstructing'; 'Trans Textuality'.
53   Bychowski and Kim, 'Visions'; 'Introduction'.
54   See also Mills, 'Visibly Trans?'
55   On Juana, see also Elphick in this volume: pp. 87-107.

the present volume. The 2019 special issue of the *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* on Early Modern trans studies, edited by Simone Chess, Colby Gordon, and Will Fisher is another landmark, soon to be joined by the collection *Trans Historical: Gender Plurality Before the Modern*, edited by Masha Raskolnikov, Greta LaFleur, and Anna Kłosowska (forthcoming, Cornell University Press). Such scholarship has been largely anglocentric thus far, at least in terms of works reaching wider academic audiences. Nevertheless, things are changing on this front too, with medieval trans studies gaining currency beyond anglophone contexts. Here, we think particularly of Clovis Maillet's 2020 French-language study, *Les genres fluides : de Jeanne d'Arc aux saintes trans* (*Fluid Genders: From Joan of Arc to Trans Saints*).

The vibrancy of premodern trans studies is further evidenced by the urgent, revelatory work being done by doctoral candidates. Blake Gutt's 2018 article 'Transgender Genealogy in *Tristan de Nanteuil*', written during his PhD, included a manifesto for future work in the field, insisting upon the validity and value of trans theory in and for medieval studies. In 2020, Ellis Light was awarded Fordham University's Department of English Graduate Essay Prize for their chapter 'Trans/Mystical: The Euphoria of Blood, Milk, and Sweat in Julian of Norwich's *Revelation*'. This work was explicitly inspired by Bychowski and Kim's special issue of *Medieval Feminist Forum*; clearly medieval trans scholarship is responding to a keenly felt need.[56]

Some of the most important work in medieval trans studies is being done by the most precariously situated scholars: graduate students, early career researchers, those without permanent positions.[57] Securely employed scholars – who are almost always cis – must use their status to support marginalized trans colleagues, practically and intellectually. Cis privilege also means that trans studies is more readily accepted as valuable when it is undertaken by non-trans researchers. Medieval trans studies undoubtedly benefits from the sensitive and thoughtful engagement of cis scholars. Indeed, the field owes a significant debt to the queer and feminist work that paved the way for the emergence of the discipline, as outlined below. However, cis scholars should be mindful not to let their presence crowd out trans voices, and should actively create space for their trans colleagues to flourish. The current volume uplifts the work of early career trans and genderqueer scholars, and offers a model of ethical and engaged cis-authored scholarship.

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56   Light, 'Trans/Mystical', p. 1.
57   Medievalists of Color, 'Youngest'.

Terms of engagement (1)

Queer and feminist scholars have been instrumental in highlighting the ways in which hagiography routinely confounds essentialist, binaristic expectations of sex and gender. We must acknowledge, however, that these fields have largely excluded academics of colour, and continue to do so to this day. Feminism in medieval studies has almost always meant white feminism, with very little engagement with global or transnational feminism, womanism, or, more recently, critical race studies. Similarly, queer medieval studies has centred whiteness, ignoring theoretical strands such as queer of colour critique. Since the 1980s, (white) feminist medievalists have worked to redress the stark gender imbalance in the canon. Women, let alone female saints, were largely absent. Through the publication of paradigm-exploding criticism, scholars including Caroline Walker Bynum and Barbara New-man have made the lives of female saints both accessible and relevant.[58] Central to the feminist recovery of neglected sources is close attention to the particularities of female saints' lives, as a distinct corpus and in terms of individual women. Whilst traditional(ist) scholarship held that holy women were passive and submissive, feminist criticism foregrounds the gender dynamics at play. Saints negotiate with patriarchal-ecclesiastical authorities to claim power for themselves. They collaborate with male confessors and hagiographers to co-create their textual identities and to formulate new kinds of theology, directly inspired by their gendered subject position. Feminist criticism thus interrogates how sanctity alters the rules of the gender 'game'.

Bynum's hugely influential *Jesus as Mother*, for instance, demonstrates that Jesus was routinely portrayed as a maternal figure in the Middle Ages. Born of the Virgin Mary alone, his body is fundamentally female. As such, women are not simply sinners, but fully capable of divinity. Bynum re-conceptualizes 'extreme' female asceticism as an affirmative act for holy women.[59] Saints mortify their flesh not to destroy or to negate their bodies to reach God, but instead to find transcendence by inhabiting their bodies as fully, as intensely, as possible. To embrace the (female) body is to embrace divinity. Jesus' gender fluidity is an archetype of a broader pattern in medieval spiritual texts. Whereas monks might position themselves as brides of Christ, following the example of the erotically charged Song of

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58   Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*; *Holy Feast*; *Fragmentation*; B. Newman, *Virile Woman*; *Sister of Wis-dom*. On feminist hagiographical studies see, for a start, Hollywood, *Soul*; Lochrie, *Translations*.
59   *Holy Feast*; *Fragmentation*.

Songs, pious women were often considered to become more virile.[60] Whilst underscoring that transgression of gender boundaries was commonplace in medieval religion, 'pre-trans studies' feminist analyses tended to emphasise a limited fluidity, a movement between fixed male and female polarities, subverting but not surpassing the binary itself. A more recent strand of critique conceptualizes saints as transcending the gender binary entirely, inhabiting a 'third' gender.[61]

Queer and feminist scholarship highlights the sexualization of saints: the ways that holy women and men become subject to the consuming gaze of desiring worshippers, alongside their own highly eroticized mystical encounters with Christ. Worship can be an intimate act between queer subjects. Gender is not necessarily the operative factor, what matters is the transcendent trajectory of pious desire: worshipper to saint, saint to God. Depictions of saintly nudity and vulnerability during torture closely resemble modern pornography, as noted by scholars including Robert Mills, Bill Burgwinkle, and Cary Howie.[62] Critics' juxtaposition of queerness and sanctity articulates the evident, yet heretofore unspeakable, truth: not only did queer medieval people exist, but medieval religion was fundamentally queer.[63] The religious gaze was never (merely) heterosexual. The uncritical assumption that 'heterosexuality' was the norm – or even existed as such – in the Middle Ages radically limits comprehension of sources from the period.[64]

Trans studies is additive, not derivative. The objective is not to replace feminist and queer readings, but rather to expand upon the possibilities that these readings offer. At the same time, trans studies indicates where such readings have overwritten or erased trans potentialities, while continuing to insist on the paramount importance of the availability and co-existence of multiple interpretations. While productively nuancing other readings, medieval trans studies must also be receptive to critique, and must collaborate with related fields. For example, there exists a large corpus of work on medieval 'hermaphrodites', much of it flawed by the simplistic equation of mythical hermaphrodites with historical intersex bodies and

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60 For an example, see Elphick in this volume, pp. 90-94.
61 McDaniel, *Third Gender*; Murray, 'One Flesh'; Spencer-Hall, *Medieval Saints*, pp. 55-59.
62 Mills, *Suspended Animation*, pp. 106-44 (p. 109); Burgwinkle and Howie, *Sanctity and Pornography*.
63 See also: Burrus, *Sex Lives*; Boswell, *Same-Sex Unions*, pp. 108-61; *Christianity*; Campbell, *Gift*; 'Translating'; Gaunt, 'Straight Minds'; Mills, 'Delight'; Hollywood, 'Queering'; *Sensible Ecstasy*; Lees and Watt, 'Age and Desire'; Lochrie, 'Mystical Acts'.
64 Schultz, 'Heterosexuality'.

lives. Recent scholarship in medieval intersex studies has reassessed and revised these harmful assumptions.[65] Karl Whittington, for instance, asks whether individuals identified as trans in medievalist work would better be understood as intersex at times.[66]

Terms of engagement (2)

A commitment to rigorous attention to historical sources is a hallmark of trans medievalist work. In order to counter transphobic, misogynist, and/or queerphobic arguments that rely on interpretations of the Bible, biblical paratexts, and Christian traditions, we return to these sources to see what the texts actually say.[67] This allows us to challenge marginalizing biblical interpretation by contextualizing it within a fluid tradition of Christian inquiry into the nature of being human.[68] Another essential tool is commitment to a non-teleological, non-linear historicism, capable of exploring how the past offers new ways of being in the present and future. The past is present in the now; seeing trans lives in medieval sources is affirming in meaningful ways, including politically.[69] Anti-theoretical approaches contend that objectivity about the past is not only possible, but the benchmark for the work of professional historians. This is an untenable position, which reinscribes the hegemonic status of the very subject positions that currently pass for objective. Ways of seeing, thinking and being that are produced by marginalization are not simply of 'special interest' to those directly impacted by oppressions; they are essential, challenging the notion of any 'singular', 'objective' history, and revealing the seeds of resistance that were always already there.

Before trans studies, medieval studies was already home to a considerable body of work on 'transvestite' saints.[70] Disguise is a recurrent motif, casting gender expressions that might also be read as trans identities as forms of deception. This pernicious trope – often a product of the critic rather than the

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65 Notable work on medieval intersex identities includes the 2018 special edition of *postmedieval* edited by Ruth Evans, comprising an Introduction (Evans, 'Gender') that summarizes the latest scholarship.
66 'Medieval Intersex', p. 240.
67 Bychowski, 'On Genesis'; DeVun, 'Heavenly Hermaphrodites'.
68 Strassfeld and Henderson-Espinoza, 'Trans*/Religion'.
69 Gutt, 'Anamorphosis'; Evans, 'Gender', pp. 120-22.
70 For bibliography, see: Whittington, 'Medieval Intersex', p. 240 n.11.

text itself – forecloses the affirmative interpretation of trans identities.[71] This is not to say that characters in medieval texts do not cross-dress. Rather, the reflexive assumption that non-normative gender expressions can *only* ever indicate cross-dressing is reductive. Trans studies offers multiple, nuanced ways of reading and interpreting texts. Historical sources come with their own problems. They are imperfect or unavailable; we don't have access to medieval trans lives described by medieval trans individuals. However, we do have evidence that medieval individuals thought about gender in complex ways. Hagiography is not biography, but these texts showcase what medieval people were told to believe, the ways that gender was being considered and discussed, and the questions that were being asked that these texts tried to answer: trans lives could be envisioned and, therefore, trans lives could be lived.

Research is not just about flipping binaries but also about reading, discovering, different *kinds* of gender. Christ, for example, may be read as genderqueer, trans, or beyond gender.[72] Kathryn M. Ringrose proposes that medieval eunuchs inhabited a third gender, a proposition equally forwarded by several scholars of hagiography, in response to the ways that saints' lives negotiate, and at times explode, simplistic gender binaries.[73] Leah DeVun draws from medical, alchemical, and theological texts to reveal 'Christ him/herself as a hermaphrodite, the perfect combination of contraries – masculine and feminine, human and divine – in one body'.[74] Gutt's study of St Fanuel foregrounds the ways in which, in some hagiographic contexts at least, gender transgressions do not foreclose secure gendered identities.[75]

The fact that senior scholars see value in revisiting their own past interpretations clearly indicates the significance of transgender as an optic.[76] In the present volume, Martha G. Newman transports us into her own scholarly history, revisiting arguments from her 2003 article about a monk named Joseph, and re-visioning the monastic not as 'a woman in disguise', but as a trans man.[77] Newman offers a blueprint for ethical scholarship: the

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71   Davis, 'Crossed Texts'; Anson, 'Female Transvestite'; Grayson, 'Disruptive Disguises'. In this volume, see also Wright (pp. 155-76) and Bychowski (pp. 245-65); 'Transvestite' in the Appendix: p. 322.
72   DeVun, 'Heavenly Hermaphrodites', pp. 137-39.
73   Ringrose, 'Shadows'. On eunuchs, see also: Ringrose, *Perfect Servant*; Tougher, *Eunuch*; 'Holy Eunuchs!'; Szabo in this volume: pp. 109-29.
74   'The Jesus Hermaphrodite', p. 195.
75   'Anamorphosis'.
76   See, e.g.: Karras and Linkinen, 'Revisited', revising arguments in Karras and Boyd, 'Interrogation' and '"Ut cum muliere"'.
77   M.G. Newman, 'Real Men'.

ways that scholars, particularly cis-heterosexual scholars, can and should return to earlier work rooted in trans-exclusionary (or trans-minimizing) paradigms. Such reassessment is also necessary on the macro-level, as disciplinary norms, standard methodologies, and default assumptions are revisited, and thereby improved. The necessity – and fruitfulness – of this work is demonstrated in Colwill's chapter in this volume, which shows what is to gain when the gendered biases that permeate archaeology as a field are challenged.[78] The assumption of gender binarism skews findings, in archaeology as elsewhere.

The scope of the present volume is relatively narrow; we focus on a subset of cultural artefacts, using a particular theoretical approach. We therefore recognize that there are significant intersections of identity that are not substantively addressed in this collection. These include queer sexualities; racial and geographic diversity (almost all of the sources addressed are western European, and all assume whiteness as default); disability; and class. Colwill and Szabo's chapters examine Late Iron Age Scandinavia and the Byzantine Empire respectively, while Gutt's chapter considers the intersection of trans and crip embodiments. Regarding the question of class, the subjects discussed in this collection are all extraordinary in some way, belonging to an elite class of holiness.

The decolonization of trans studies is imperative.[79] From the Indian subcontinent to North America, European colonization is responsible for the stigmatization and eradication of indigenous gender identities that colonizers viewed as 'unnatural'.[80] The link between transphobia and white supremacy is well attested.[81] The racial(ized) histories of trans identities is a critical area of research, and far-reaching analyses of the connection between racialization and trans embodiment(s) have been published in the last few years.[82] Such projects are especially urgent since trans women of colour are the focus of the most deadly form of transphobia: transmisogynoir.[83] In terms of this collection, productive future work might examine Western Christian notions of trans identity, exceptionality and sanctity alongside non-Western models of 'exceptional' and/or holy trans identities, for example

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78   Pp. 177-97, especially 179-82, 186-87, 191-93.
79   Aizura et al, 'Transgender Imaginary'; binaohan, *decolonizing*.
80   Picq, 'Decolonizing'.
81   Paramo, 'Transphobia'; also 'White Supremacy' in the Appendix, pp. 324-25.
82   Bey, 'Trans*-ness of Blackness'; Camminga, 'Umbrella?'; Dutta and Roy, 'Decolonizing'; Ellison et al, 'Issue of Blackness'; Snorton, *Black on Both Sides*.
83   See 'Transmisogynoir' in the Appendix: p. 320.

the hijras of the Indian subcontinent, and indigenous North American Two-Spirit individuals.[84]

Overview of the collection

The first section of the volume focuses on the traces of queer medieval lives, and reinscribing trans and genderqueer realities by critiquing assumptions that reproduce the status quo. Martha G. Newman's chapter examines an equivocal narrative told about a twelfth-century German monk named Joseph, offering its readers by turns an essentialist portrayal of gendered disguise and a portrait of a self-actualized trans man. Caitlyn McLoughlin analyses John Capgrave's fifteenth-century *Life of St Katherine* within a queer genealogical framework, whilst addressing the saint's relative privilege through the lens of homonormativity. Kevin C.A. Elphick's examination of gender fluidity and liminality in the *Life* and sermons of Juana de la Cruz demonstrates that her use of imagery that transcends gender is contiguous, and compatible, with earlier hagiographic sources and with her Franciscan heritage. Through the case study of Patriarch Ignatios, Felix Szabo explores the sacred masculinity available to eunuch saints: were eunuchs really capable of saintly behaviour?

The second section of the collection addresses objects, images and identities – and trans and genderqueer ways of looking at them. Sophie Sexon examines imagery of Christ's wounds in Books of Hours and prayer rolls, reading this sacred body as non-binary. Vanessa Wright explores corporeal, sartorial, and gestural signifiers of gender and identity in illuminations of the *Vie de sainte Eufrosine* in three fourteenth-century Parisian manuscripts. Lee Colwill's chapter investigates four remarkable burials in Late Iron Age Scandinavia, exploring the evidence for connecting the magico-religious practice of *seiðr* with transgressive gender performances.

The final section considers imbrications of gender and genre. Reflecting on the Old French *Vie de sainte Eufrosine*, Amy V. Ogden considers the role of gender transgression in the poet's pedagogical techniques. Blake Gutt combines trans and crip theory to read the character of Blanchandin·e in a fourteenth-century French text, *Tristan de Nanteuil*, in which impairment, cure, and gender transformation function as tools of a hagiographic narrative. Analysing an extract from Magnus Hirschfeld's *Transvestites* on St Marinos,

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84   See 'Hijra' (p. 301) and 'Two-Spirit' (p. 324) in the Appendix.

M.W. Bychowski repurposes Hirschfeld's theories to read medieval trans saints through the frame of authenticity.

In her Epilogue, Mathilde van Dijk situates the essays in this collection as descendants of a feminist tradition which insists upon the complexity of gender identity. Van Dijk maintains that medieval texts are particularly useful in the fight for trans and genderqueer rights today: they testify to the inherent instability of the gender binary, whilst proffering different models of conceptualizing gender.

The chapters are presented in thematic units; however, many other fruitful combinations are possible. For example, St Eufrosine unites Ogden and Wright's chapters, and each can be productively juxtaposed with Bychowski's chapter on St Marinos, and Newman's chapter on brother Joseph, two other AFAB monks. The authenticity of the trans soul, foregrounded by Bychowski, resonates with Sexon's assessment of a genderqueer Christ who offers potent representation of genders beyond the binary, and Elphick's study of Mother Juana's divine prenatal regendering. Sexon's analyses demonstrate that the perfect divinity of Christ's body depends upon its 'imperfection' – his wounds. Gutt's chapter centres a disabled body, and examines the structures that bind sacred, physically impaired, and transgender embodiment(s) together. This exploration complements Colwill's discussion of skeletal remains, which lays bare the complex physical means by which trans embodiments are constituted, interpreted, or denied. Queer lineages and non-normative genealogies link Ogden, McLoughlin and Gutt's contributions. Szabo's treatment of the Byzantine eunuch saint Patriarch Ignatios adds context to St Eufrosine's self-presentation as a eunuch, explored by Ogden and Wright.

The chapters in this collection represent the cutting-edge of medieval(ist) trans studies and theoretically inflected hagiographical scholarship. This volume is a call to arms. On the one hand, this is a corpus of contextually rigorous, politically engaged scholarship which offers a model for similar progressive research. On the other hand, the collection levies a challenge to scholars across disciplines: how might we reflect upon the past, rethink the past and our role, as academics, in producing it? How can we do justice to our sources, and ourselves? How might we support those with skin in the nominally historical game, professionally and personally? In this spirit, we offer the Appendix to the volume, the 'Trans and Genderqueer Studies Terminology, Language, and Usage Guide'. Historical representation matters, linguistic representation too. Chapters in this volume demonstrate the productivity – the necessity – of trans and genderqueer historical scholarship.

As a complement, the Guide offers practical support for doing such work without perpetuating historical anti-trans and anti-queer injustices.

'History hurts, but not only,' observes Lauren Berlant.[85] No matter how traumatic, history has the potential to inspire 'optimism in response to the oppressive presence of what dominates or is taken for granted. Political emotions are responses to prospects for change: fidelity to those responses is optimistic, even if the affects are dark.'[86] This collection sits at that very crossroad, of joyful optimism constituted by the realization that things must change, that history must do more, must do better, than the status quo of trans-exclusionary work.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix

Trans and Genderqueer Studies Terminology, Language, and Usage Guide

Abstract

The Language Guide is a resource offering succinct suggestions as to the usage of respectful, inclusive, and non-violent terminology when talking about the trans, genderqueer, and intersex communities, on a personal or group level. Designed as a reference guide for a target audience of medievalist scholars engaged in cross-temporal analyses, it offers an overview of modern terminology for use in research outputs. The Guide was conceived and assembled by trans and genderqueer medievalists and their allies.

Keywords: trans studies, gender studies, gender theory, genderqueer, glossary, terminology, usage guide

Introduction

Language matters, both in terms of what we say and how we say it. Our words can do real violence to those about whom we speak. This violence reflects the broader socio-cultural oppressions which marginalized communities face as a daily reality. Simultaneously, hateful language supports such oppressions, as a vehicle by which bigoted ideologies re-circulate and gain ever more traction in the public imagination. A considerable amount of violence has been done, and is being done, to the trans, genderqueer, and intersex communities by disrespectful, othering, and offensive language. This violence is routinely perpetuated at a group level (comments about the community in general) and at an individual level (comments about specific individuals).

Some wield discriminatory language knowingly, using their words as dog whistles for transphobia and queerphobia. Others, however, use disrespectful language unknowingly – due to ignorance of the offensive nature of certain terminology. Nevertheless, language is always political, and linguistic choices serve to reinscribe, consciously or not, certain paradigms. The gender binary is a cultural construct, supported by normalized language which serves simultaneously to obscure alternative possibilities whilst reinforcing existing hegemonies. We provide this language guide as a resource, offering succinct suggestions as to the usage of respectful, inclusive, and non-violent terminology when talking about the trans, genderqueer, and intersex communities, be that on a personal or group level.

This document is absolutely not intended to operate as lexical doctrine. Our guidance can be only that: *guidance*. What constitutes respectful language shifts and evolves over time, dependant on myriad intersectional factors. Slurs are reclaimed, for instance, and new – better, or at least more expressive – coinage gains traction, reframing previously affirmative terminology in problematic lights. Language is both political *and* personal, and context is key. This guide has been produced by members of the medievalist trans and genderqueer community and their allies. It thus reflects the consensus of a group of engaged scholars. However, we, quite obviously, do not speak for all trans, genderqueer, and intersex individuals. Preferences will vary for the usage, or avoidance, of certain terms – words which may even appear in this guide as acceptable vocabulary. Above all else, listen to individuals, learn their preferences, and defer to them.

Allies can never speak for, or speak as, the community itself. Trans, genderqueer, and intersex scholars, those with lived experience of the material which we study, may formulate different kinds of analyses than allies, drawing different conclusions. The job of allyship is to amplify the voices of those whose contributions may otherwise be suppressed from the record, to trust in our colleagues who may know more – and know differently – from us.

When compiling this guide, we have been particularly concerned to make evident the granularity of language and identities. By 'granularity', we mean in particular the ways in which identity categories can be endlessly subdivided, into more and more personal(ized) descriptors: zooming in on any given label reveals the multiplicity of nuance within all group-level categories. For example, 'trans' can be subdivided into binary and non-binary identities; non-binary identities may include 'agender', and some agender identities may be more minutely described by a term such as 'gendervoid'. Gender identity is intensely personal. Thus, the same terminology can be

understood and applied differently by different people, and the unfolding of categories can only end when a description precisely encompasses a single individual's identity. Language is slippery here, answering imperfectly to the desire to name and communicate lived experiences which operate outside certain assumptions which govern cis-heterosexual culture. Crucially, gender and its systems are inextricable from racialization. Awareness of this is essential for substantive engagement with the field/s of trans/gender studies. White supremacy imposes white Eurocentric gender norms, and refuses to acknowledge non-white identities on their own terms. Non-white bodies are policed more strictly, including in terms of gender (non)conformity. Within the broader community, for example, trans women of colour face the highest levels of often deadly systemic violence. The two principal architects of this guide are white and British, thus the guide is fundamentally structured by a white, Western (and, indeed, Eurocentric) viewpoint. We recognize this as a significant limitation, and encourage our readers to strive to decolonize their thinking, as we strive to ourselves.

It is important not to elide complex identifications on the supposed grounds that they are too complicated to be understood, expressed, or respected. Some trans and genderqueer people may use language in ways other than those suggested here – this is their prerogative. For example, certain adjectives which we would not recommend using as nouns may be used in this way by those who have direct lived experience(s) of trans and genderqueer identities. In this context, individuals assigned female at birth may describe themselves as 'AFABs', although this usage would be disrespectful if deployed by other individuals. If you do not have such lived experience(s), it is best to avoid potentially offensive usages and terminology with especially fraught histories. Furthermore, appropriate usage may differ when referring to real historical figures versus literary characters. We believe that literary representations of lives, particularly those marked by supernatural occurrences such as divine physical transformation, often function as a means for thinking about and through the complexities of gender and its significations. As such, it may be productive to analyse these metonymic portrayals in ways which would not be appropriate or respectful when referring to lived experiences, even if those lives now seem distant or inaccessible. It is vital to attend to textual evidence concerning the character or figure's relationship to their own gendered existence.

A note on shifting terminology is necessary. The vocabulary used to describe trans, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming identities changes relatively quickly. This terminological impermanence can result in an

unwillingness to employ a transgender optic in criticism. This may be due to concerns about stability and comprehensibility as regards the terms themselves, or to the suspicion that unsettled vocabulary implies a shifting frame of reference unconducive to the stable production of meaning. In establishing this guide, we therefore acknowledge that to write about a community whose terminology is in flux implies risks: future reception of the analysis may be affected by rejection of the vocabulary in which it is couched. Nevertheless, we do not believe that this is a valid reason to abandon fruitful inquiry which has the potential to increase comprehension of marginalized groups, in addition to introducing a source of productive comparative material for the analysis of literary texts.

Excessive emphasis on recent shifts in vocabulary also gives the inaccurate impression that non-normative gender is a new phenomenon which is yet to establish a consistent phraseology and thereby gain legitimacy. It also suggests that critics have only to wait until this is established, at which point non-normative gender will suddenly become a more easily accessible concept. This perspective dismisses the consistent presence of non-normative gender, which is attested throughout history and literature. Moreover, this compounds the problem that non-normatively gendered identities have always been rendered harder to see and to discuss as a result of inadequate or reductive descriptive terminology. Only engagement with these identities will allow the development of more apt vocabulary, and the disentangling of non-normative gender from the normative sex/gender system. If we wait for the opportune moment to do so, we may well wait forever. In this spirit, then, we anticipate – and welcome the fact – that this language guide will become outdated as affirmative cultural understanding of non-normative gender develops.

This guide is an artefact of work and thought undertaken between 2017 and 2019, necessarily influenced by our personal perspectives, subject positions, experiences, and scholarly backgrounds. Medievalist scholars have been at the forefront of developing queer critical frameworks for at least a quarter of a century. This guide, then, is grounded in the seminal work of scholars such as John Boswell, Bill Burgwinkle, Joan Cadden, Carolyn Dinshaw, Karma Lochrie, Robert Mills, to name only a few – that is, we write with a particularly medievalist approach to nuancing and critiquing modernist theories of gender and sex. Nevertheless, this guide does not address specifically medieval terminology and usage. Instead, it provides an overview of modern terminology and usage, which may be particularly useful to medievalist scholars – and our colleagues working on premodern materials more broadly – engaging in cross-temporal analysis. Finally, this guide is anglocentric and thus inherently limited in its cross-cultural

and cross-linguistic reach. As we write, Clovis Maillet and colleagues are preparing a French-language counterpart to this guide. We look forward to seeing similar work emerge across languages, with guides produced by native-language trans scholars and their allies.

The guide is grounded in theories of sex and gender, especially the work of Judith Butler who remains a touchstone for entry into the critical field for many scholars, including the editors of this volume. Our approach is nuanced by the work of numerous trans scholars, including Susan Stryker, Julia Serano, and C. Riley Snorton, alongside the lived experiences and observations of the trans and genderqueer medievalist community. In order to grasp more fully the points set out in the guide, we strongly recommend consulting core texts in this area. These are the entries marked by an asterisk in the Bibliography below. What comes to the fore in reading such literature is the immense complexity, and contingent cultural determination, of the terms 'sex' and 'gender'. Broadly speaking, our usage of 'sex' refers to assigned sex, based on biological essentialism, whereas we use 'gender' to refer to an individual's innate sense of their own identity. We also recommend Alex Kapitan's 'Radical Copyeditor's Style Guide for Writing About Transgender People' which offers a thorough overview of best practice in writing about trans and genderqueer individuals, including suggestions for rewording. Another especially helpful resource is the online glossary created by M.W. Bychowski.

There will always be exceptions to the indications we set out below – prescriptivism can only go so far. However, if you are not trans or genderqueer yourself, be wary of potentially offensive usages; our aim in the guide below is to offer an accessible grounding in relevant terminology. The most important point we can make about these usages is that, above all, it is necessary to think carefully and critically about your word choices, and how your choices may integrally affect textual interpretations – and do real harm to readers. Aim for precision and transparency: tell your readers what choices you are making, and why.

This guide was immeasurably improved thanks to the unpaid labour of members of the trans and genderqueer medievalist community. We owe an enormous debt of thanks to folx for sharing their knowledge with us and spending their time and energy on this document. Any errors or omissions are absolutely and entirely our own.

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*AFAB (**adjective**)*
Assigned Female At Birth. Reference to birth assignment is a way to acknowledge the particular constellation of experiences which individuals may share due to gendered socio-cultural practices, without making assumptions about individuals' experiences of gender or gender identity. 'AFAB' is an adjective, not a noun.
*See also: **AMAB**, **Assigned Sex; Assigned Gender**, **CAFAB**, **CAMAB**, **Identified Gender***

*Agender (**adjective**)*
An agender individual has no gender. Some agender people consider their identity to fall under the genderqueer and/or the non-binary umbrellas. Others consider their identity to be distinct from genderqueer and/or non-binary identities, since genderqueer and non-binary people may experience a gender(ed) identity, although this identity is not recognized by the gender binary. By contrast, agender individuals experience a *lack* of gender (and thus, a lack of gender(ed) identity). Agender people may use any pronouns, and may present in feminine, masculine, or androgynous ways. Specific terms for agender identities may include: genderfree, genderless, gendervoid, *Neutrois*, and non-gendered.
*See also: **Androgynous; Androgyny, Genderqueer, Neutrois, Non-Binary, Pronouns***

*Androgynous; Androgyny (**adjective; noun**)*
The term 'androgynous' describes a person who appears neither female nor male. Its origins lie in a myth recounted by Aristophanes in Plato's *Symposium*, in which he posited three types of human beings: male, female, and androgynous. Originally a slur for a man perceived as feminine or a woman perceived as masculine, the word has taken on neutral or positive connotations since the mid-twentieth century. It is important to note, however, that androgyny (the state of being or appearing androgynous) is highly culturally contingent: what is read as androgynous is defined in relation to cultural norms of masculinity and femininity. Furthermore, androgynous appearance is a facet of gender expression, which, although it is an aspect of gender identity, does not predict or denote whether a person is transgender or cisgender.
*See also: **Gender, Gender Non-Conformity; Gender Non-Conforming***

AMAB (*adjective*)

Assigned Male At Birth. Reference to birth assignment is a way to acknowl-edge the particular constellation of experiences which individuals may share due to gendered socio-cultural practices, without making assumptions about individuals' experiences of gender or gender identity. 'AMAB' is an adjective, not a noun.

See also: AFAB, Assigned Sex; Assigned Gender, CAFAB, CAMAB, Eunuch, Identified Gender

Assigned Sex; Assigned Gender (*nouns*)

'Assigned sex' is the binary sex to which an individual is declared to belong at birth, typically with the declaration by a medical professional: 'It's a girl!' or 'it's a boy!'. 'Assigned gender' is the binary gender classification assumed to 'match' the assigned sex: those assigned boys are assumed to be male, and those assigned girls are assumed to be female. Everyone has both an assigned sex and gender, and an identified gender. Cisgender individuals' identified gender matches their assigned sex/gender, whereas transgender individuals' identified gender is different from their assigned sex/gender.

'Identified sex' is not a useful term, since awareness of the socially constructed nature of assigned sex/gender reveals the fact that sex itself is a gendered category. By this, we mean: a category produced through and by means of gender, rather than, as the cultural narrative often presents it, the ground and *cause* of gender. Gender, whether assigned or identified, is always the key signifier, and 'identified sex' is therefore meaningless. (For more on this see Butler, *Gender Trouble*.)

Intersex individuals are almost always assigned a binary sex at birth, although a few countries now allow an 'X' gender marker instead of the binary 'M' or 'F' categorizations. Note, however, that the 'X' gender marker may also designate an individual's gender as non-binary; practices vary between countries. Intersex individuals often undergo medically unneces-sary surgery to make their genitals and/or internal reproductive organs more closely resemble binary categories of sex.

Be aware that 'assigned' language always implies the presence of an assigning entity, be that a cultural authority or an individual. Therefore, be circumspect in describing literary characters, for example, as having been assigned female or male if it is you, the critic, who is in fact doing the assigning. Such usage effectively reduces assignment to concrete identity rather than social imposition.

See also: AFAB, AMAB, CAFAB, CAMAB, Intersex, Identified Gender

Asterisk (*)
See: Trans(gender)

Binary (adjective and noun)
There are several cultural binaries relating to sex, gender, and sexuality.

The notion of binary *sex* claims that people are either men or women, depending on narrow definitions of their genitals and/or reproductive organs. When cursory visual categorization fails, reference to hormone profile and chromosome configuration is presumed to stabilize the categories of 'man' and 'woman'. This binary erases intersex bodies, understanding them only as aberrant, and results in cultural inability to conceptualize transgender identities. The notion of binary *gender* claims that there are only two genders, male and female. Binary gender is usually already heterosexualized (conceived of in order to fit in with the norm of heterosexuality, or to make heterosexuality appear inevitable). Thus, the notion of binary gender is typically subordinate to the notion of binary sex, and claims that men are/should be masculine, and women are/should be feminine. This binary erases non-binary and agender gender identities.

The notion of binary *sexualities* dictates that there are two forms of sexuality, heterosexuality and homosexuality. This binary results in erasure of bisexual, asexual, and pansexual sexualities, which are construed as non-existent, or as a transitional phase between the heterosexual norm and coming out as homosexual.

See: Barker and Iantaffi, *Life Isn't Binary.*
See also: Assigned Sex; Assigned Gender, Cis(gender), Gender, Gender Non-Conformity; Gender Non-Conforming

Bind; Binding; Binder (verb; present participle; noun)
Some transmasculine, non-binary, or agender people flatten their chests by binding, in order to appear more normatively masculine and reduce dysphoria. Binding can be done with tape or bandages, but these methods are dangerous as they may restrict breathing or cause damage to the ribs. Commercially made binders are typically vest-like garments, made of nylon and spandex. People who bind may do so intermittently, or on certain occasions and not on others.

Note: 'bind', as used by the transgender community, is an intransitive verb. Do not use the older expression 'X binds her breasts': people who are dysphoric about their chests are likely also to be dysphoric about the use of gendered terms such as 'breasts'. Instead, use 'chest' as a gender-neutral alternative if you need to reference body parts. Similarly, a person who

binds may use pronouns other than 'she/her' – make sure you know what *Pronouns* a person uses. If referring to a literary character or historical figure who cannot be asked, the key is to be sensitive to the individual's intention, and the identity they are displaying. If in doubt, use singular *'They/Them'* pronouns.
See also: Gender Dysphoria; Gender Dysphoric, Pack; Packing; Packer, Pad; Padding, Pass; Passing, Tuck; Tucking

Butch (*noun; adjective*)

Butch is a gender non-conforming presentation and/or gender identity, most frequently associated with masculine *AFAB* individuals, and often with lesbian identity. Precise definitions of butchness are temporally and culturally contingent, but butch identity is typically contrasted to *Femme* identity. For *AMAB* individuals, butchness is a particular type of masculinity, often associated with gay men. Prevailing stereotypes within dominant cis-heterosexual culture associate butch women with masculine behaviour, activities, appearance, and so on, and assume the pairing of a butch lesbian with a femme partner.

   See: Bergman, *Butch is a Noun*; Halberstam, *Female Masculinity*. For a case study of butch and femme identities in the queer ballroom scene in Detroit (Michigan, USA), see: Marlon M. Bailey, *Butch Queens*, pp. 29-76.
See also: AFAB, AMAB, Femme, Gender Non-Conformity; Gender Non-Conforming

CAFAB (*adjective*)

Coercively Assigned Female At Birth. The term 'CAFAB' is used as an alternative to *AFAB* to emphasize the individual's lack of agency in their own sexing/gendering, which was externally imposed by society. CAFAB is particularly used by intersex individuals to reflect the violence of surgical interventions and/or enforced hormone treatments which are often used to 'normalize' intersex bodies by attempting to fit them into a binary sex category.
See also: AFAB, AMAB, Assigned Sex; Assigned Gender, CAMAB, Intersex

CAMAB (*adjective*)

Coercively Assigned Male At Birth. The term 'CAMAB' is used as an alternative to *AMAB* to emphasize the individual's lack of agency in their own sexing/gendering, which was externally imposed by society. CAFAB is particularly used by intersex individuals to reflect the violence of surgical interventions and/or enforced hormone treatments which are often used

to 'normalize' intersex bodies by attempting to fit them into a binary sex category.
See also: AFAB, AMAB, Assigned Sex; Assigned Gender, CAFAB, Intersex

Cis(gender) (adjective)
A cisgender, or simply cis (note: not CIS – it is not an acronym) individual is someone whose identified gender matches their assigned gender. It is a description of a state, rather than a process. For this reason, avoid the term 'cisgender*ed*'. 'Cisgender', or 'cis', is the neutral antonym of 'transgender' or 'trans'. The Latin prefixes 'trans' and 'cis' mean, respectively: 'across, over' (i.e. crossing from one gender (the gender assigned at birth) to another (the identified gender)); and 'on this side of' (i.e. not crossing over, but remaining in the gender assigned at birth).

Terms such as 'biological', 'natal', 'natural-born', or 'real' are offensive, suggesting that trans people are deceitful, disguised, constructed, and/or 'really' the gender/sex they were assigned at birth. On this, see: *Trap*. Use 'cis' or 'cisgender' instead of these problematic descriptors.

'*Cissexism*' (adjective: 'cissexist') is a form of essentialist bigotry which assumes all individuals are defined by their assigned sex/gender. '*Cisgender-ism*' (adjective: 'cisgenderist') is sometimes used as a synonym for 'cissexism', though can also carry a nuanced meaning, relating to gender as opposed to sex.
See also: Cis-het(erosexual), Trans(gender)

Cisgenderism; Cisgenderist (noun; adjective)
See: Cis(gender)

Cis-het(erosexual) (adjective)
'Cis-het' refers to individuals who are both cisgender and heterosexual. Cis-het individuals do not face oppression on either of the axes which, combined, constitute the category of 'queer'. In this way, cis-het individuals occupy a place of cultural normativity. Obviously a cisgender, heterosexual individual may nevertheless face oppression on other axes: sexism, racism, ableism, classism, and so on.
See also: Cis(gender), Trans(gender)

Cisnormativity; Cisnormative (noun; adjective)
Cisnormativity is the cultural discourse which presents and promotes the 'congruence' of sex and gender as the primary and normative state of existence. In this context, cis is the default, and any non-cis identity is aberrant and unnatural. The discourse of cisnormativity is supported and maintained

by transphobia and cissexism. Cisnormativity is reinforced by the use of binaristic and cisnormative language which assumes that trans, genderqueer, and intersex individuals do not exist. This is the case, for example, in supposedly neutral assertions such as 'women have periods' or 'men should attend prostate cancer screenings', which reinforce biological essentialism and ignore the diversity of human experience. Some trans women have a prostate, whereas some cis men do not. Similarly, some cis women do not have periods, whereas some trans men do. Thus, in order to preserve the cultural regime of cisnormativity, cisnormative assumptions work to disguise the fact that neither prostates nor periods, nor the lack thereof, are indicative of gender.
*See also: **Binary**; **Cis**(**gender**)*

***Cissexism; Cissexist** (**noun; adjective**)*
See: ***Cis**(**gender**)*

***Closet** (**In The**); **Closeted** (**noun; adjective and past participle**)*
As with non-straight sexualities, a non-cis individual who has not revealed this fact, and who presents as their assigned gender, is referred to as being 'closeted' or 'in the closet'. A non-cis individual who presents as their identified gender, but who does not disclose their trans-ness, may describe themself, and be described within their community, as being ***'Stealth'***.
*See also: **Out; Outing, Pass; Passing, Transition; Transitioning, Trap***

***Come Out; Coming Out** (**verb; present participle**)*
*See: **Out; Outing***

***Cross-Dress; Cross-Dressing; Cross-Dresser** (**verb; present participle; noun**)*
The term 'cross-dressing' carries a complex history. Whilst it has long been used derogatorily and inaccurately to refer to trans individuals, it also has a precise, useful meaning when deployed in other contexts.

Using the term 'cross-dressing' (or 'cross-dresser', etc.) in relation to trans individuals demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of trans identity. This misunderstanding is founded upon the perception that trans individuals wear clothing associated with the 'opposite' ***Assigned Sex/Gender***, when they are in fact wearing clothing associated with their ***Identified Gender***. Describing a transgender individual as a cross-dresser reduces their identity to an 'incorrect' application of cultural norms regarding clothing, and implies that they are 'really' their assigned sex/gender, but masquerading as the 'opposite' sex/gender.

However, individuals who identify as cisgender may engage in cross-dressing (wearing clothes of another gender) for a variety of reasons ranging

from personal preference, performance, sexual role-play, or participation in community events. Cross-dressing may be seen to uphold the **Binary**, or to fracture it. This partly depends upon context, as well as the intention of the cross-dresser. A cis man who wears a dress for a Halloween fancy-dress party may intend to parody femininity, whereas a cis man who wears a dress to express his gender identity is more readily visible as challenging binary gender norms.

Drag is a particular iteration of cross-dressing, though the two terms are not interchangeable.
See also: Assigned Sex; Assigned Gender, Cis(gender), Drag, Trans(gender)

Dead Name; Dead-Naming; Dead Name (*verb; present participle; noun*)
See: Names

DFAB (*adjective*)
Designated Female at Birth.
See: AFAB

DMAB (*adjective*)
Designated Male at Birth.
See: AMAB

Drag (*noun and adjective*)
Drag is a culturally specific form of cross-dressing for purposes of entertainment. Individuals whose drag persona is female are referred to as drag queens, whereas individuals whose drag persona is male are referred to as drag kings. Drag performers may use a different name and pronouns when in character. Drag performers may be cis or trans.

For more on this, see in particular: Rupp, Taylor, and Shapiro, 'Drag Queens and Drag Kings'; Taylor and Rupp, 'Chicks with Dicks, Men in Dresses'.
See also: Cross-Dress; Cross-Dressing; Cross-Dresser

Dysphoria; Dysphoric (*noun; adjective*)
See: Gender Dysphoria; Gender Dysphoric

Essentialism; Essentializing; Essentialist (*noun; present participle; adjective*)
Essentialism is the socio-cultural, often pseudo-scientific, framework which claims that certain 'essential', typically biological, characteristics – such as genital configuration at birth; hormone profile; chromosomal configuration – reflect a definitive and unalterable truth. In this essentialist context,

'biological' *Sex* 'is' *Gender*, full stop. Essentialist beliefs lead people to dismiss or reject trans and genderqueer people's lived experience, as well as their accounts of their own identity, as impossible, deluded or the result of mental illness. *Intersex* individuals are relegated to the status of 'rare' instances of aberrance, of deviance from the binaristic, essentialist 'norm'. In this worldview, intersex individuals are 'really' and 'essentially' men or women. Thus, for essentialist thinkers, the sex/gender binary (i.e. gender's origin in sex, and the deterministic relation between the two) remains primordial and all-encompassing.

Other types of essentialism include those relating to hierarchical gender roles (men and women are innately different, and naturally suited to different work, activities, levels of responsibility, etc) and to race (racialization is not a socio-cultural phenomenon, but reflects real and unalterable biological characteristics; racial groups have specific and unalterable natures, resulting in differing levels of aggression, intelligence, libido, etc.).
See also: Binary, Cisnormativity; Cisnormative, Gender, Intersex, Sex

Eunuch (*noun*)

A historical term for an *AMAB* individual who has undergone surgical and social transitions (often against their will) from one form of masculinity to another. The surgery involved took on many forms but traditionally involved the removal of the testes, although not necessarily the penis. These surgeries and transitions were often enacted on slaves and/or criminals but were not always levied against lower-class individuals or as a form of punishment. Cases of self-castration and becoming-eunuch are reported. Eunuchs tended to have distinct social/religious roles and legal status in societies, marking them as a non-binary gender in addition to men and women but existing within the spectrum of masculinity.

For relevant analyses, see: Szabo, 'Non-Standard Masculinity'; Tougher, 'Holy Eunuchs!'.
See also: AMAB, Transition; Transitioning

Ey/Em (*pronouns*)

An example of gender neutral or non-binary pronouns, to replace 'he/him' and 'she/her'. This pronoun set, formed by removing the 'th' from 'they', 'them', and so on, seems to have been invented several times, with slight variations, by a number of different individuals. This pronoun set is often referred to as Spivak pronouns, after mathematician Michael Spivak, who used these pronouns in an AMS-TeX manual, *The Joy of TeX*, in 1983. The subject pronoun 'ey' is sometimes seen as 'e', and all Spivak pronouns may be capitalized.
See also: Pronouns

Femme (**adjective and noun**)

Femme is often seen as a counterpart to, or the opposite of, **Butch**. Femme *AFAB* individuals are generally considered to be gender-conforming, which erases the fact that being femme is as much a specific presentation and/or gender identity as being butch is. Femme identity is significantly associated with lesbian and bisexual identity. For *AMAB* individuals, being femme is a gender non-conforming presentation and/or gender identity, and is often associated with being gay. Precise definitions of femme-ness are temporally and culturally contingent. The prevailing stereotype of the femme woman within dominant cis-heterosexual culture is the 'lipstick lesbian'.

On this, see: Burke, *Visible*; Harris and Crocker, *Femme*. For a case study of butch and femme identities in the queer ballroom scene in Detroit (Michigan, USA), see: Marlon M. Bailey, *Butch Queens*, pp. 29-76.

*See also: **AFAB**, **AMAB**, **Butch**, **Gender Non-Conformity; Gender Non-Conforming***

FTM (**adjective and noun**)

The acronym 'FTM' stands for 'Female to Male'. The term is used by many trans men to describe themselves affirmatively. Other trans men find 'FTM' problematic for a number of reasons, chiefly because the term foregrounds transition over identity, which many feel is inaccurate both practically and conceptually.

The practical issue is the following: a trans man may transition, then live for decades in his identified gender. Fifty years after the process of transitioning is over, the term 'FTM' may seem to define him by a stage in his life which is long past and of little relative importance. For many trans men, *Transition* is a finite process, a ring-fenced, relatively brief period compared to the rest of an individual's life, marking a 'before' and an 'after'. In contrast, many other individuals (both trans and cis) feel that their identity is more accurately represented by a process of constant becoming. As a rule, transition is a personal process which is both irrelevant and inaccessible to external parties. Thus, identifications made on the basis of an individual's transition status are based on invasive assumptions and should be avoided.

The conceptual issue is that the term 'FTM' presents both female and male gender identities as valid and important parts of the trans man's identity. Yet many trans people experience recognizing and coming to understand their identified gender as a process of realizing that they have always been this gender, although they may not have been able to understand their gender in this way previously due to social conditioning and the effects

of *Essentialist* assumptions in the cultural climate. Thus, *Transition* is experienced as a process of understanding and expressing their innate gender. By transitioning, they are moving to live and present in ways which are (socially coded as, or innately felt to be) congruent with that identity, rather than (as the term 'FTM' may be considered to suggest) undertaking a process which *produces* or *enacts* a new gender.

The foregrounding of 'F' in 'FTM', for some, suggests that trans men are 'really' or 'naturally' women, and that their male identity is either an 'unnatural' replacement for their innate femaleness or an accretion layered on top of it. This plays into dangerous stereotypes of trans identities as 'disguises' intended to *Trap* and deceive others. This perspective is not shared by all, however. Some consider the positioning of 'F' in 'FTM' to signify the way in which an individual has left the 'F' behind, and thus constitutes the full recognition of their gender identity, while others consider that they were never 'F' in the first place, but were incorrectly assigned this identity due to essentialist socio-cultural assumptions. These individuals may prefer the acronym 'MTM' ('Male to Male'), which acknowledges their trans identity and their transition, whilst affirming the fact that they were always men.

Whilst plenty of trans men still use the term 'FTM', it is a complicated and contested designation. For this reason, do not use unless you know that this is an individual's preferred term.
See also: Essentialism; Essentializing; Essentialist, FTN/FT*, MTF, MTN/MT*, TERF, Transition; Transitioning, Transphobia; Transphobic, Trap

FTN/FT* (*adjective and noun*)

The acronyms 'FTN' and 'FT*' signify 'Female to *Neutrois*' and 'Female to [other gender]'. 'FTX' is another variant of these acronyms, for 'Female to X-gender', with 'X-gender' referring, broadly speaking, to agender or *Non-Binary* identities. The terms follow the same logic as '*FTM*', whilst acknowledging that not every *AFAB* person who transitions is a binary trans man.
See also: AFAB, Essentialism; Essentializing; Essentialist, FTM, MTF, MTN/MT*, Neutrois, TERF, Transition; Transitioning. Transphobia; Transphobic, Trap

Gender (*noun and adjective*)

Gender is deeply important to many people's sense of their own identity, yet incredibly difficult to define. The most fundamental aspect of gender is identification: who one feels and understands oneself to be. This identification may be affected or influenced by cultural gender norms. The

dominant paradigm of gender connects binary genders to the binary sexes from which they supposedly derive. This amounts to a cultural system in which male or female gender is ascribed to an individual on the basis of the appearance of their body at birth. The assumption is that everyone has a fixed gender, which can be discerned through observation of their body. However, this assumption is faulty, or at best ineluctably culturally and temporally contingent. Throughout history, individuals have experienced and demonstrated non-normative gender, including trans (and thus non-binary), genderqueer, and gender non-conforming identities.

Although assigned gender is a cultural imposition, individuals have choices (circumscribed to a greater or lesser degree depending upon cultural and temporal context) as to how they inhabit their gender, including presentation and expression, and the social roles undertaken.

'Gender' is often used as an umbrella term covering a lot of ground, incorporating meanings such as 'gender identity' and 'socialized gender roles', amongst other things. This rhetorical manoeuvre suggests that all these gendered experiences can be assumed to be monolithic, that is, there is no room for variety or divergence within an individual's lived gender (which is already itself assumed to correlate to assigned gender).

As the multitude of lived experiences demonstrates, gender is a vast and variable array of possible identifications, which is not necessarily static. The phrase 'opposite gender' should be avoided, since it implies that gender is binary and oppositional: that is, the genders are two poles, defined by their separateness from each other. Thus, one is male *because one is not female*, and vice versa.

For more in-depth exploration of gender, see in particular: Bornstein, *Gender Workbook*; Butler, *Gender Trouble*; 'Imitation and Gender Insubordination'. *See also: **Assigned Sex; Assigned Gender, Identified Gender, Sex***

Gender-Affirming Surgery; Gender Confirmation Surgery (*noun*)
*See: **Transition; Transitioning***

Gender-Creative (*adjective*)
'Gender-creative' is a term popularized by Diane Ehrensaft to describe children who 'live outside gender boxes'. While some adult genderqueer and gender non-conforming individuals find the description affirming, others consider the term condescending. Use with caution.

On this, see: Ehrensaft, *Gender Creative Child*.
*See also: **Gender-Expansive, Gender Non-Conformity; Gender Non-Conforming, Genderfluid; Gender Fluidity, Genderqueer***

Gender-Critical (*adjective*)

'Gender-critical' is a term adopted by *TERF*s to indicate their distaste for current levels of acceptance of trans, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming identities. TERFs' criticism of gender is essentially that it does not exist as such; their argument is that sex is a real, biological attribute, with genuine real-world consequences, while gender is merely a social effect. Thus, what they consider excessive emphasis on gender undermines efforts to fight for equality for the sexes. Gender-critical thought is therefore biologically *Essentialist*.

According to a gender-critical viewpoint, trans men are 'copping out' on their lived experience of women's inequality, whereas trans women are asserting their male privilege to grotesquely usurp even the very state of oppression into which the patriarchy forces women. In this scenario, trans men are deluded by society's misogyny, which they have internalized, with the result that they turn this hatred of women against themselves and attempt to erase their 'intrinsic' female identity. At the same time, trans women are cast as dangerous and predatory figures, invading women's safe spaces and appropriating support meant for 'real' women. This plays into the insidious narrative of trans-ness as a deceitful disguise or *Trap*, leading to real-world violence against the trans community, especially trans women (*Transmisogyny*), and even more so trans women of colour (*Transmisogynoir*).
See also: Essentialism; Essentializing; Essentialist, Transphobia; Transphobic, Transmisogyny, Transmisogynoir, Trap

Gender Dysphoria; Gender Dysphoric (*noun; adjective*)

There are two broad categories of gender dysphoria: physical and social dysphoria. Not every trans person experiences dysphoria in the same way or to the same degree, or at all.

Physical dysphoria may be described as visceral feelings of discomfort arising from an individual's lack of identification with physical features which are not typically recognized as 'matching' their identified gender. For example: a trans man may feel dysphoric about the appearance and/or feeling of his chest, the way it looks, makes his clothes fit, and the way it influences people's assumptions about him. In addition, the appearance and/or feeling of his chest may influence his own assessment of his own identity, in a form of *Internalized Transphobia*.

Social dysphoria may be described as visceral feelings of discomfort arising not from the physical body, but from the way in which others perceive and react to that body, as well as from body language and behaviours deemed to 'belong' to a particular gender. For example, a non-binary person may

not experience dysphoria around their physical body, but find it extremely distressing to be referred to with gendered terms or pronouns.

'Gender euphoria' is a term which originates in trans communities as a play on 'gender dysphoria'. It is used to draw attention to the way in which discussion of trans identities and existences, as well as conversations surrounding transition, tend to focus on trans people's discomfort in their assigned gender, without ever mentioning the sometimes exhilarating feeling of discovering and embodying the gender identity and presentation which is fitting, truthful, and right.
See also: Bind; Binding; Binder, Internalized Transphobia, Pack; Packing; Packer, Pass; Passing, Pronouns

Gender-Expansive (*adjective*)

'Gender-expansive' is a term sometimes used of and by genderqueer and/or gender non-conforming people, particularly children. The term works to counteract rigid views of the gender binary, and to combat *Cisnormativity*. Some consider the term condescending and/or infantilizing. The designation is sometimes used to skirt the issue of trans, genderqueer, and gender non-conforming identity, by offering a euphemistic, non-specific, and therefore more 'palatable' alternative to direct discussion of trans, genderqueer and gender non-conforming experiences. Avoid this usage. Use with caution if referring to individuals.
See also: Binary, Cisnormativity; Cisnormative, Gender-Creative, Gender Non-Conformity; Gender Non-Conforming, Genderfluid; Gender Fluidity, Genderqueer

Genderfluid (*or Gender-Fluid*); Gender Fluidity (*adjective; noun*)

Some individuals experience their identified gender as a stable form, whereas for others their gender identity varies. Gender fluidity is not the same as becoming aware that one's identified gender is at odds with one's assigned gender, but rather refers to an identified gender which inherently fluctuates. Genderfluid individuals are included under the trans umbrella. Some genderfluid individuals describe themselves as non-binary, whereas others do not feel the need for another identifier other than genderfluid. Some individuals alter their gender expression or presentation, or use different pronouns, depending on their current experience of their gender. Genderfluid individuals may use any pronouns, and may present in feminine, masculine, or androgynous ways. Genderfluid (no hyphen) and gender-fluid (hyphen) are used interchangeably.

*See also: **Agender, Non-Binary, Transition; Transitioning, Transfeminine, Transmasculine***

***Gender Non-Conformity; Gender Non-Conforming** (**noun and adjective**)*
Gender non-conforming individuals are individuals whose gender expression does not match what is culturally normative for their assigned (and/or identified) gender. Gender non-conforming individuals may not reject their assigned gender, but reject the conventional rules governing gendered behaviour, activities, appearance, and so on. Other gender non-conforming individuals may identify as non-cis and/or trans. Gender non-conformity may reflect an individual's rejection of the system of assigned binary gender. Gender non-conforming individuals are often included alongside trans individuals in discussion and activism, in phrases such as 'trans and gender non-conforming'. This is due to the fact that, although gender non-conforming individuals may not be trans, they are likely to face similar oppressions since both groups are perceived as flouting gender norms. 'Gender non-conforming' may be abbreviated to 'GNC'.
*See also: **Gender, Gender-Creative**, **Gender-Expansive**, **Genderfluid; Gender Fluidity**, **Genderqueer**, **Non-Binary**, **Non-Normative Gender***

***Genderqueer** (**adjective**)*
Genderqueer individuals experience their assigned gender as inadequate to encompass their gender identity. Genderqueer individuals may identify as trans, though this is not always the case. Genderqueer individuals may additionally identify as ***Non-Binary**, **Genderfluid**, **Gender Non-Conforming**, **Transfeminine*** or ***Transmasculine***. Genderqueer individuals may present in feminine, masculine, or androgynous ways, and may use feminine, masculine, or gender-neutral pronouns. As always, defer to individuals' preference.

For further reading, see in particular: Nestle, Howell, and Wilchins, *Genderqueer*.
*See also: **Assigned Sex; Assigned Gender, Genderfluid; Gender Fluidity, Gender Non-Conformity; Gender Non-Conforming, Non-Binary, Non-Normative Gender, Transfeminine, Transmasculine***

***He-She** (**noun and pronoun**)*
Avoid, for example, 'Ashley is a he-she'; 'he-she reads novels'. This is an offensive, derogatory term. It dismissively combines binary categories of gender whilst underscoring the rigidity of the binary itself, disallowing potential

subject positions beyond 'he' or 'she'. Do not use, unless an individual has explicitly told you that this is the pronoun they use.
*See also: **Pronouns***

He/She (*noun and pronoun*)

Avoid in noun form, as in ***He-She***. This is an offensive, derogatory term. Use with caution, if at all, as pronoun. 'He/she' is commonly used to denote, superficially at least, a generalized or inclusive reference – for example, if an author does not wish to stipulate 'he' or 'she'. However, when 'he/she' is used to refer to an individual, it may function to erase non-binary identities by constructing them as a failure of the binary, nevertheless comprehensible only on the binary's terms. In addition, this usage may denote the author's dismissive unwillingness to consider a more accurate and respectful pronoun set beyond the binary, such as '***They/Them'*** (***singular***).
*See also: **He-She, Pronouns, They/Them** (**singular**)*

Hermaphrodite (*noun*)

This is an antiquated term for individuals who would now be referred to as intersex. It is offensive in modern usage; do not use unless an individual explicitly tells you that this is the correct way to refer to them. For the most part, the intersex community has rejected the term as both pathologizing (because of its relation to medical abuse and authority) and socially stigmatizing. However, some reclaim the term.

The word 'hermaphrodite' references the Greek myth of Hermaphroditus. In a premodern context, the term could signify individuals other than those who would now be considered intersex, including individuals we would now describe as queer, trans, non-binary, or otherwise gender or sexually non-conforming. In addition, 'hermaphrodite' was used to refer to mythical beings who were half men and half women. Given this context, the term 'hermaphrodite' could also convey mythological connotations. As such, trans and intersex bodies become 'unnatural', 'unreal', or merely metaphorical.

When discussing premodern 'hermaphrodites', it is important to distinguish between intersex individuals and mythological beings. Avoid 'hermaphrodite' when it has othering implications. It is important to be clear when using the term that it is not a modern usage: use ***Intersex*** when referring in general to individuals whose biological characteristics do not fit neatly within binary cultural definitions of 'male' and 'female'. When using the term 'hermaphrodite', indicate that this is the term which would have been current in the premodern era, and clarify its meaning in context.
*See also: **Binary, Intersex, Sex***

Hijra (**noun and adjective**)

A trans-feminine, non-binary, or intersex gender identity in South Asia, historically occupying specific socio-religious function(s) in Hindu and Islamic cultures. The word 'hijra' is used in Hindustani and Bengali, whereas in Urdu 'hijra' is considered derogatory, and the respectful term 'khwaja sara' is used instead. Hijras are an officially recognized third gender in some countries in the Indian subcontinent, such as Bangladesh, and are recognized within a broader grouping of third-gender identities (encompassing intersex, trans, and hijra individuals) elsewhere, such as in Pakistan, and India. Hijras often live in 'structured communities' (Pamment, 'Performing Piety', p. 297), in which older members of the community mentor younger members. The imposition of normatively binaristic Western mores of sex and gender by British colonizers increased the stigmatization faced by the hijra community. Today, hijras routinely face poverty and experience significant social marginalization.

See: Hinchy, *Governing Gender*; Moorti, 'Queer Romance'; Pamment, 'Performing Piety'; Reddy, *With Respect to Sex.*
See also: **White Supremacy**

Identify (**As**); *Identifying* (**As**) (***verb; present participle***)
See: **Identified Gender**

Identified Gender (**noun**)

Everyone has both an assigned gender and an identified gender. An individual's identified gender is who they understand themself to be; it is their identity. Thus, both trans women and cis women *identify as* women because they *are* women.

Be precise in your usage of the verb forms '***Identify* (*As*); *Identifying* (*As*)**' to avoid delegitimizing trans people's identities. Do not, for example, state: '[Name] identifies as a woman', when you wouldn't use that formulation to refer to a cis woman. Instead, say: '[Name] is a woman'. Or, if it is relevant in the context – which is the case less often than many people assume – state: '[Name] is a trans woman'. 'Identify as' is relevant when distinguishing between assigned and identified gender; otherwise just use 'is'. The construction '[Name] identifies *themself* as' is unnecessary and incorrect; just use '[Name] identifies as'.
See also: **Assigned Sex; Assigned Gender, Pass; Passing, Read (Someone) As; Reading (Someone) As**

Internalized Transphobia (*noun*)
Internalized transphobia is transphobia absorbed by a trans person through exposure to cultural norms, and subsequently directed against themself, as well as other trans people, either consciously or unconsciously.
See also: Transphobia; Transphobic

Intersex (*adjective*)
The correct modern word for a person whose biological characteristics do not fit neatly within cultural *Binary* definitions of 'male' and 'female'. Intersex individuals are (almost) always assigned a binary gender at birth, and in most of the world are still subjected to non-consensual surgical or hormonal treatment. These medical interventions aim to align intersex bodies more closely with normative binary gender/sex definitions. This type of intervention is viewed by most intersex people as a violent and unnecessary medicalized imposition of cultural norms. Some intersex individuals identify as trans, some as cis, and some as neither.
See: Chase, 'Hermaphrodites with Attitude'
See also: AFAB, *AMAB*, *Assigned Sex; Assigned Gender*, *CAFAB*, *CAMAB*, *Cis*(*gender*), *Hermaphrodite*, *Sex, Trans*(*gender*)

It (*noun and pronoun*)
Some people use 'it' as their pronoun. Avoid unless an individual has specifically told you that it is correctly referred to as 'it'. The derogatory use of 'it' as a pronoun is very offensive. It can function as an exceptionally dismissive way of referring to trans and genderqueer people, focusing on and stigmatizing their non-conformity to cisgender/heterosexual constructs of gender.
See also: Preferred Pronouns, *Pronouns*

Medical Transition
See: Transition; Transitioning

Misgender; Misgendering (*verb; present participle*)
'Misgendering' is the act of using the wrong pronouns and/or gendered nouns to refer to an individual. Both trans and cis people may be misgendered, although the experience is likely to be more distressing to a transgender person. For a trans person, the gender incorrectly ascribed is likely to be the gender they were assigned at birth, and thus echoes the message which society as a whole has attempted to enforce, that the individual is 'really' the gender that they were assigned at birth, and that being trans is

'wrong', 'unnatural', or is not 'real'. As such, misgendering can be a form of micro-aggression.

Misgendering may be deliberate or accidental. Accidental misgendering may happen for a variety of reasons: it may be a mistake which occurs when an individual sees another individual and incorrectly identifies their gender based on socially accepted cues. This can happen to both cis and trans people. It may be a simple slip of the tongue – again, this happens to both cis and trans people. Or it may be an unthinking, habitual use of gendered language which references a trans person's assigned gender. This can be particularly hurtful, since it can feel like a rejection of the trans individual's expressed and identified gender. Misgendering is often a trigger for dysphoria. Deliberate misgendering is an act of violence.

In the context of literature or history, pay particular attention to context, and what is visible of the character's intentions and identification. If the character's identity is unclear, it can be useful to refer to them using singular *They/Them* pronouns, which are typically viewed as a respectful default. Be clear and precise about the choices you are making, and articulate these to the reader.

*See also: **Dead Name; Dead-Naming; Dead Name**, Gender Dysphoria; **Gender Dysphoric**, **Pronouns, Transphobia; Transphobic**, 'They/Them' (**singular**)*

*MTF (**adjective and noun**)*

The acronym 'MTF' stands for 'Male to Female'. The term is used by many trans women to describe themselves affirmatively. Other trans women find 'MTF' problematic for a number of reasons, chiefly because the term foregrounds transition over identity, which many feel is inaccurate both practically and conceptually.

The practical issue is the following: a trans woman may transition, then live for decades in her identified gender. Fifty years after the process of transitioning is over, the term 'MTF' may seem to define her by a stage in her life which is long past and of little relative importance. For many trans women, *Transition* is a finite process, a ring-fenced, relatively brief period compared to the rest of an individual's life, marking a 'before' and an 'after'. In contrast, many other individuals (both trans and cis) feel that their identity is more accurately represented by a process of constant becoming. As a rule, transition is a personal process which is both irrelevant and inaccessible to external parties. Thus, identifications made on the basis of an individual's transition status are based on invasive assumptions and should be avoided.

The conceptual issue is that the term 'MTF' presents both male and female gender identities as valid and important parts of the trans woman's identity. Yet many trans people experience recognizing and coming to understand their identified gender as a process of realizing that they have always been this gender, although they may not have been able to understand their gender in this way previously due to social conditioning and the effects of *Essentialist* assumptions in the cultural climate. Thus, *Transition* is experienced as a process of understanding and expressing their innate gender. By transitioning, they are moving to live and present in ways which are (socially coded as, or innately felt to be) congruent with that identity, rather than (as the term 'MTF' may be considered to suggest) undertaking a process which *produces* or *enacts* a new gender.

The foregrounding of 'M' in 'MTF', for some, suggests that trans women are 'really' or 'naturally' men, and that their female identity is either an 'unnatural' replacement for their innate maleness or an accretion layered on top of it. This plays into pernicious stereotypes of trans (and particularly *Transfeminine*) identities as 'disguises' intended to *Trap* and deceive others. This is a dangerous and pervasive cultural assumption, which leads to real and often deadly violence against trans women, especially trans women of colour (see *Transmisogyny, Transmisogynoir*).

By contrast, some consider the positioning of 'M' in 'MTF' to signify the way in which an individual has left the 'M' behind, and thus constitutes full recognition of their gender identity, while others consider that they were never 'M' in the first place, but were incorrectly assigned this identity due to essentialist socio-cultural assumptions. These individuals may prefer the acronym 'FTF' ('Female to Female'), which acknowledges their trans identity and their transition, whilst affirming the fact that they were always women.

Whilst plenty of trans women still use the term 'MTF', it is a complicated and contested designation. For this reason, do not use unless you know that this is an individual's preferred term.

See also: Essentialism; Essentializing; Essentialist, FTM, FTN/FT*, MTN/ MT*, TERF, Transfemininity; Transfeminine, Transition; Transitioning, Transmisogyny, Transmisogynoir, Transphobia; Transphobic, Trap

MTN/MT* (*adjectives, nouns*)

The acronyms 'MTN' and 'MT*' signify 'Male to *Neutrois*' and 'Male to [other gender]'. 'MTX' is another variant of these acronyms, for 'Male to X-gender', with 'X-gender' referring, broadly speaking, to agender or non-binary identities. The terms follow the same logic as *MTF,* whilst acknowledging that not every *AMAB* person who transitions is a binary trans woman.

See also: AMAB, Essentialism; Essentializing; Essentialist, FTM, FTN/FT*, MTF, Neutrois, TERF, Transition; Transitioning. Transphobia; Transphobic, Trap

Names

When an individual permanently transitions to presenting as their identified gender, always use their post-transition name to refer to them, adding clarifications if necessary. For example, a text may introduce a character by stating: 'Marie entranced the court with her fine gown.' Later in the text, the character transitions and assumes a different name, David. Correct usage would thus be: 'David [i.e. post-transition name] is introduced to the reader before his [i.e. post-transition pronoun] transition, wearing a beautiful dress'. Avoid using gendered nouns which do not match an individual's identified gender, even when referring to the pre-transition phase (unless this is the preference of the individual in question): 'David was married to Peter', not 'David was Peter's wife'.

When an individual's transition is not presented as definitive or permanent, or if the pre- and post-transition identities are presented as equally valid, use the name and pronouns which reflect the period under discussion. In order to make these determinations in a sensitive manner, pay close attention to context, and to what is visible of the character's intentions and identification. Be clear and precise about the choices you are making, and articulate these to the reader.

A name which a trans person no longer uses – usually the name they were given at birth – is often referred to as their '***Dead Name***'. 'Dead-naming', or calling someone by their dead name, is taboo in the transgender community. Deliberate dead-naming is a violent act of interpellation, similar to the deliberate use of the wrong pronouns (see ***Misgender; Misgendering***). When citing an author who has transitioned, always refer to them by their new name, even when discussing works published before they transitioned. Where it is necessary to include the dead name to enable readers to find a previous publication (e.g. if John Smith previously published as Mary Smith), use formulations such as: 'John Smith's book *Medieval Mermen* (published as M. Smith)'. It is respectful to use initials in this way to avoid using forenames whose gender does not match the author's identified gender. There is no standard, or one-size-fits-all rule for bibliographies. Nevertheless, a respectful citation would be something like the following: 'Smith, John [publishing as Smith, M], *Medieval Mermen* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2014).'

On practices for citing trans scholars, see: Coman, 'Trans Citation Practices'; Thieme and Saunders, 'How Do You Wish To Be Cited?'.
*See also: **Identified Gender, Misgender; Misgendering**, **Pronouns***

Neutrois (*adjective*)

'Neutrois' is a gender identity which may fall within the agender and/or non-binary spectrum. The word 'neutrois' refers to a neutral gender. Neutrois individuals may use any pronoun set, and may present in masculine, feminine, or neutral/*Androgynous* ways.
See also: Agender, Non-Binary

Non-Binary (*adjective*)

Non-binary is an umbrella term for a range of identities which are neither wholly female nor wholly male. Individuals may simply describe their identity as 'non-binary', or may use additional descriptors for their identity. Non-binary people may or may not identify as trans, since they reject their assigned sex/gender in favour of their identified gender.

Some non-binary people use singular *They/Them* pronouns; some use *Ze/Hir* or other pronouns, or no pronouns; some use binary pronouns. This does not make people more or less non-binary. Some non-binary people present in a masculine way, some in a feminine way, and some in an androgynous way. Some non-binary people's presentation varies. This does not make people more or less non-binary.

'Non-binary' is sometimes abbreviated to 'NB' or 'enby'. Some non-binary people refer to themselves as enbies; don't use this term for someone without asking whether they are comfortable with it. Avoid writing, for example, 'David is gender non-binary', since 'gender' is redundant in this phrasing, just as 'gender' is redundant in the phrase 'David is gender male'.

Other non-binary genders include, but are not limited to: *Neutrois*, multigender, polygender, intergender. Note that trans people are not non-binary merely by virtue of being trans. Many non-binary individuals identify as trans, but there are also many *binary* trans people (trans women and trans men). Both binary and non-binary trans people are non-cis. Non-binary refers to a specific set of identities; it is not a synonym for non-cis.
See also: Androgynous; Androgyny, Assigned Sex; Assigned Gender, Gender, Genderfluid; Gender Fluidity, Genderqueer, Identified Gender, Pronouns, Trans(gender)

Non-Normative Gender (*noun*)

'Non-normative gender' can serve as a useful, neutral umbrella term when describing identities in the past which were not necessarily understood by the individuals in question in the same ways in which *Trans(gender)*, *Genderqueer* and *Gender Non-Conforming* identities are understood today. The term can also be used when linking identities in the past to identities

in the present. This term also reflects the fact that what is considered 'non-normative' will vary according to temporal and cultural location.

   'Non-normative gender' can also be used as an adjective in phrases such as 'non-normative gender identity' or 'non-normatively gendered behaviour'.
See also: Gender, Gender Non-Conformity; Gender Non-Conforming

Out; Outing (verb and adjective; present participle)
As with non-straight sexualities, a person who is 'out' as trans or genderqueer is someone who has disclosed this identity to (an)other individual(s). It is possible to be out to some people, or in some situations, but not to/in others. '*Coming out*' is often seen as a significant, dramatic, and potentially traumatic singular event; however, coming out is an ongoing process, since once an individual has come out (i.e. decided that particular information about their identity should be made public), they inevitably find themself repeatedly disclosing this information to different people, in different settings and at different times. 'Outing' someone without their permission is a violent act, with potentially lethal ramifications for the outed individual.
See also: Closet (In The); Closeted, Pass; Passing, Trap

Pack; Packing; Packer (verb; present participle; noun)
'Packing' refers to the practice of using a 'prosthetic' penis. Packers can be differentiated from dildos or strap-ons (worn dildos), which are 'erect' and carry stronger associations with sex acts, while packers are 'flaccid'. Their primary purpose is to give the look and feeling of a penis, usually under clothing. The term 'packer' encompasses anything (from a commercially manufactured packer, in the shape of a penis and testicles, to a piece of cloth or a balled-up pair of socks) which can be literally packed into underwear or other clothing covering the lower body in order to produce the desired effect. Like a dildo or a strap-on, however, packers may also be considered a part of the wider assemblage that makes up a person's gendered and sexual embodiment. For instance, the term 'packer' may be used to clarify the type or enactment of a trans man's penis; alternatively the term may be omitted, and the 'prosthetic' penis simply affirmed as a penis (i.e. some penises are made of flesh and others of cloth or silicone). People who may pack include *Trans Men* (although not all trans men pack); *Non-Binary* or *Agender* individuals; and cisgender female *Drag* kings. People who pack may do so intermittently, or on certain occasions and not on others.
See also: Bind; Binding; Binder, Gender Dysphoria; Gender Dysphoric, Pad; Padding, Pass; Passing, Tuck; Tucking

Pad; Padding (*verb; present participle*)
'Padding' refers to the practice of using materials and undergarments to create a preferred body silhouette, typically by adding volume and shape to the chest, hips, and buttocks. Padding in this way is used to produces a more stereotypically feminine appearance, which may improve the fit of female clothes, alongside reducing an individual's *Gender Dysphoria*. Padding may also be considered a part of the wider assemblage that makes up a person's gendered and sexual embodiment. People who may pad include trans women (although not all trans women pad); non-binary or agender individuals; and cisgender male *Drag* queens. People who pad may do so intermittently, or on certain occasions and not on others.
See also: Bind; Binding; Binder, Gender Dysphoria; Gender Dysphoric, Pack; Packing, Pass; Passing, Tuck; Tucking

Pass; Passing (*verb; present participle*)
The verb 'passing' refers to being 'read' socially (particularly by strangers) as one's identified gender. The verb may be transitive or intransitive; trans people talk about 'passing' or 'passing as cis'. The phrase 'passing as male/female' should be avoided since it plays into narratives of deception (see *Trap*). The notion of passing is problematic because it reinforces notions of trans people's identified genders a) being secondary to their assigned genders and b) amounting to a kind of disguise. However, the term is still used by transgender individuals because it is a convenient shorthand which also encapsulates the way in which, due to the pervasiveness of oppressive social gender norms, the individual feels pressure to *be readable* as their identified gender, and cannot expect others to make any effort to recognize them as who they are.

   The term '*Stealth*' may be used within trans communities to refer to a trans individual who is consistently read as their identified gender, and chooses not to make their trans-ness public. Like 'passing', this term is commonly used among trans individuals as a shorthand to describe the navigation of cisnormative society. However, this is another term which problematically reinscribes narratives of secrecy and disguise, with an individual's trans-ness situated as something to be hidden. Being 'stealth' can be contrasted to being '*Closeted*'. Whereas 'stealth' refers to an individual who is not *Out* as trans but is known as their identified gender, a closeted individual is not out as trans, and is known as their assigned gender. Being stealth and being closeted may both reflect shame, and/or safety concerns if the individual's trans identity were to be disclosed. 'Stealth' refers to a specifically trans form of outness, since a trans woman may be known to

all as ('out' as) her identified gender, while concealing her trans status. This distinction does not have an analogue for queer cis individuals.

Instead of 'passing', use: *Read* **(*Someone*) As**, as in: 'Before he cut his hair, he was often read as a woman'. The use of 'passing' as an adjective is problematic and offensive, since it unwarrantedly locates value in the 'ability' to be read as one's identified gender. 'Passable' (adjective) is an older iteration of 'passing' (adjective). It is now generally perceived as offensive. *See also:* **Cisnormativity; Cisnormative**, *Cissexism; Cissexist*, *Closet* (**In The**)*; Closeted*; *Out; Outing*, *Read* (**Someone**) As; Reading (**Someone**) As*, *Transition; Transitioning, Trap*

Preferred Pronouns (noun)

Avoid. The term 'preferred pronouns' is well-meaning, yet problematic. Intended to introduce the idea that people may prefer to be referred to using pronouns other than the ones which socialization may lead others to unthinkingly use for them, the term ultimately entrenches difference between trans and cis people. This implies that cis people simply have 'pronouns', whereas trans people have 'preferred pronouns'. This also suggests that trans individuals have 'normal', 'natural', or 'original' pronouns, which they simply 'prefer' not to use; this implication returns to the trope of trans identity as disguise.

In addition, the phrase 'preferred pronouns' suggests that others have a choice in how they address a trans person. Merely 'preferring' particular pronouns is not a very strong argument for their use, and leaves cis people to make their own judgement as to whether the trans individual's 'preference' trumps the potential discomfort which may be experienced by the cis person. This discomfort stems from the requirement for the cis individual to challenge social gender norms by ignoring 'cues' such as physical morphology or vocal pitch which are socially encoded, and internalized, as gender markers. Discomfort may also be generated by the fact that the cis individual is required to correct reflexive, socialized speech conventions with which they have conformed for their entire life, possibly for the first time.

In short: do not use this phrase. Trans people, like cis people, simply have pronouns.
See: Pronouns

Pronouns

Pronouns are vastly overdetermined, freighted with an enormous weight of cultural signification: they are used to label, but also to interpellate, and to reprimand. Thus, for trans people, usage of the correct pronouns is immensely meaningful both in terms of social perception and of self-image.

The most common pronoun sets are: 'she/her', 'he/him', and singular *They/Them*. Avoid referring to 'male' or 'female', 'masculine' or 'feminine' pronouns, as this implies a link between gender identity and pronoun use which is not necessarily accurate. Other neutral or non-binary pronoun sets include '*Ze/Hir*', '*Ze/Zir*', and '*Ey/Em*', among others. An individual's pronouns are often given in the form 'they [nominative]/them [dative]' as a compromise between brevity and giving the full inflected form which may be necessary for someone to understand how to use less familiar pronoun sets. Some individuals do not use pronouns; in this case, the individual's name is used instead, for instance, 'Ashley picked up Ashley's book'. Note also that some people use more than one pronoun set concurrently and flexibly, for example, 'Ashley's pronouns are "she/her" or "they/them"'.

When making pronoun determinations regarding a literary or historical character, pay particular attention to context, and what is visible of the character's intentions and identification. If the character's identity is unclear, it can be useful to refer to them using singular 'they/them' pronouns. Note, however, that 'they/them' is only a superficially neutral choice, and has some disadvantages. These are discussed in detail in the entry for *They/Them* (*singular*) below.

As a basic rule, avoid the following pronouns: '*It*', '*He-She*', '*She-He*', '*Shim*'. '*She/He*', '*He/She*' and '*S/He*' should be used with caution, if at all, as they can be problematic. These pronouns are offensive when used to refer to an intersex or non-binary person, or to someone of whose gender the speaker/writer is uncertain. This is because these pronouns deny the validity of these individuals' identities by reducing these identities to something meaningless, incomprehensible or not worth comprehending in the terms of the binary system. These identities are thus presented as 'wrong' according to the binary system, yet only imaginable in terms of the narrow confines of that system. However, these constructions may, at times, be used to represent identities which are both male/masculine and female/feminine.

For example, *She/He* might be used to refer to a literary character who is miraculously transformed from female to male, but is presented as first female, then male, in temporally distinct phases. Here, the use of *She/He* highlights that those identities form part of one overarching identity, and acknowledges the fact that the character never appears to be, or to understand her/himself as, non-binary. Once again, attention to context and the character's identification is key. Articulate the choices you are making to the reader and be explicit about your thinking. If in doubt, use *They/Them* (*singular*), with full awareness of the drawbacks and nuances of this usage.

For declension tables of neutral/non-binary pronouns, see: the 'Gender Pronouns' fact sheet produced by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Resource Center. For more detail on gender-inclusive pronouns, including their history, see: Baron, *What's Your Pronoun*; Zimman, 'Transgender Language Reform'. For an example of nuanced usage of '***She/He***', see: Gutt, 'Transgender Genealogy'. For comparative analyses of gender-neutrality across languages (English, French, German, Swedish), see: Hord, 'Bucking the Linguistic Binary'. On the history of non-binary pronouns, see: Baron, *What's Your Pronoun*, esp. chs. 3-4.
*See also: **Misgender; Misgendering**, **Non-Binary**, **They/Them** (**singular**)*

*Queer (**noun and adjective**)*
Formerly a slur, now reclaimed by many as an umbrella term for anyone who does not conform to social gender norms, including gender expression and identity, and gay/lesbian/bi/pan identity. Increasingly used to denote a disruption of or divergence from structural norms, such as queer temporality, that is, the ways in which normative expectations of biological and reproductive teleology may fail to describe queer lives. Notably used in academia – queer theory, queer studies, etc. – but still offensive to some. May be referred to as 'the q-slur'.
For an overview of queer studies, see: Hall, Jagose, Bebell and Potter, *Queer Studies Reader*. On reclamation of the word 'queer', see: Rocheleau, 'Former Slur'.

*Read (**Someone**) As; Reading (**Someone**) As (**verb; present participle**)*
To 'read' someone as a particular gender is to gain an impression of their identity based on their presentation. This impression may or may not be accurate. Use 'read (someone) as' instead of '***Pass; Passing***'.
*See also: **Pass; Passing***

*Sex (**noun**)*
Sex is supposedly a biological determination dependent on bodily morphology and reproductive capacity. ***Gender*** is supposedly derived from sex: that is, the 'bodily truth' of sex characteristics, primarily genitalia. However, the 'objective' determination of sex is already a culturally contingent, gendered process. 'Physical sex' is less a biological truth than a social construct: where we in our culture have chosen to draw the line between what we see as a male sex and what we see as a female sex is more or less arbitrary. For example, for many years, ***Intersex*** infants were coercively assigned a binary sex at birth (often through genital surgery and/or hormone treatment)

(see *CAFAB*, *CAMAB*). Such classifications were dependent on normative calculations derived from genital measurement, and assumptions about whether the infant would grow up to be capable of being the penetrating partner in penis-in-vagina sex. 'Ambiguous' genitalia would be assigned male or female with the aid of a tape measure, with a 'short' phallus classified as female (a clitoris), and a 'long' phallus classified as male (a penis).

Thus it is, in fact, *gender*, and the cultural norms and assumptions which surround it, which necessitates the rigid and insistent categorization of sex. The malleability and fluidity of gender threatens to unsettle the fixity of sex, and to reveal the always already gendered nature of its construction. Thus it becomes necessary, precisely because of the destabilizing effect of the interactions of sex and gender, to deny that these interactions take place, and to attempt to locate sex beyond gender's reach. Gender precedes and establishes sex, only to posit itself as an effect of sex.

For more on this, see in particular: Butler, *Bodies That Matter*; *Gender Trouble*; Kralick, 'Human Bones'; Wade, 'Phall-O-Meter'.
See also: **Assigned Sex; Assigned Gender, Binary, Essentialism, Essentializing, Essentialist**, *Gender, Intersex, Sex Change*

Sex Change (*noun*)

Avoid. The term 'sex change' implies a total, and temporally localizable (i.e. it happens at a specific time, has a 'before' and an 'after') switch from one binary sex category to the other. This term (and its cognates, e.g. 'change of sex') is offensive and should never be used. Use instead: '*Transition*' or 'transformation', depending on temporal context(s) and the circumstances of the events.

The notion of the 'sex change' grounds sex/gender in bodily classification and assigns it the status of biological 'truth'. Thus, it rests not only on a straightforward sex binarism, which is easily and unequivocally diagnosable, but also on a simplistic view of anchoring within these categories. Having erased intersex bodies in order to reduce sex to two clear and discrete categories, this logic then locates sex solely in the body (and mostly in the genitals). Sex is thereby posited as an unassailable truth, and located as such within a prediscursive domain, where it cannot be subject to interrogation or questioning. Yet sex itself is produced by and through gender, and processes of gendering.

'Sex changes' do not exist, because the construction of 'sex' on which this concept is predicated is no more than a sociocultural fantasy – and transgender subjects are those for whom this fantasy rings most false. Non-normatively gendered individuals are subjects whose lived experience

has viscerally demonstrated to them that the sociocultural fantasy of the natural and automatic congruence of sex/gender/sexuality is in no way natural or inevitable.

NB. Depending on context, constructions such as 'Tiresias changed sex' can be a neutral way to describe the physical transformation of a literary or mythical character. This usage is different to the noun form, 'sex change' (i.e. 'Tiresias's sex change'), which tends to reify (and essentialize) an event rather than describing an effect.

For more analysis on this, see: Butler, *Gender Trouble*
*See also: **Gender**, **Intersex**, **Sex**, **Transition; Transitioning, Trans(gender)***

Sexual Reassignment Surgery (*noun*)
Avoid as antiquated; use 'gender-affirming surgery' instead.
*See: **Transition; Transitioning***

S/He (*pronoun*)
This pronoun foregrounds the feminine in a reference to a generalized subject position. As such, it has been used as a powerful means of feminist action, destabilising the patriarchal hierarchy which positions men as the 'default' subject. Use with caution, if at all, when referring to an individual, for reasons discussed in the entries for **He/She** and **She/He**.
*See also: **Pronouns***

She-He (*noun and pronoun*)
Avoid, for example, 'Ashley is a she-he'; 'she-he reads novels'. This is an offensive, derogatory term. It dismissively combines binary categories of gender whilst underscoring the rigidity of the binary itself, disallowing potential subject positions beyond 'he' or 'she'. Do not use, unless an individual has explicitly told you that this is the pronoun they use.
*See also: **Pronouns***

She/He (*noun and pronoun*)
Avoid in noun form, as in **She-He**. This is an offensive, derogatory term. Use with caution, if at all, as pronoun. 'She/he' or '**S/He**' is commonly used to denote, superficially at least, a generalized or inclusive reference – for example, if an author does not wish to stipulate 'she' or 'he'. However, when 'she/he' or 's/he' is used to refer to an individual, it may function to erase non-binary identities by constructing them as a failure of the binary, nevertheless comprehensible only on the binary's terms. In addition, this

usage may denote the author's dismissive unwillingness to consider a more accurate and respectful pronoun set beyond the binary.
*See also: **She-He; Pronouns***

Shemale (*noun*)
Avoid. This is an offensive, derogatory term.

Shim (*noun and pronoun*)
Avoid. This is an offensive, derogatory term. Never use as a noun, and do not use as a pronoun, unless an individual has explicitly asked you to.
*See also: **Pronouns***

Social Transition (*noun*)
*See: **Transition; Transitioning***

Stealth (*adjective*)
*See: **Pass; Passing***

TERF (*noun*)
This is an acronym for 'Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminist'. TERFs are a subset of (typically) second-wave feminists who explicitly reject trans women from their definition of 'woman' due to essentialist claims about genitals and reproductive capacity. They view the supposed 'trans agenda' as entrenching the gender binary, and thus harmful to women. Radical feminists with such views typically reject the label of 'TERF', considering it to be a slur. In recent years, TERF has become widely used, especially on social media, to refer to a transphobic individual, whether or not that individual is a radical feminist to boot. For archetypal frameworks underpinning TERF thinking, see: ***Gender-Critical***.
*See also: **Essentialism; Essentializing; Essentialist, Gender-Critical, Trans-misogyny, Transphobia; Transphobic***

They/Them (*singular*) (*pronoun*)
A non-binary or gender-neutral pronoun, also used as a 'generic' pronoun which aims to avoid offensive, irrelevant and/or inaccurate phraseology. It is often used by non-binary individuals, for whom binary 'he/him' or 'she/her' are inaccurate, and the supposedly generic (yet still binaristic) '***S/He***' (or similar) is equally problematic. Other neutral or non-binary pronoun sets include '***Ze/Hir***', '***Ze/Zir***', and '***Ey/Em***', among others. 'They' uses an already well-known pronoun for a purpose which it has already been in use for some

time. In recent years, dictionaries have formally recognized 'they' in the singular as a 'legitimate' pronoun. This shift follows the evolution of 'you' in English from a plural to a singular a few hundred years ago. 'They' singular has been in use in English for hundreds of years, and is routinely used in casual conversations today. In 2019, for instance, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary updated the entry for 'they' to include its usage by non-binary individuals, supporting existing remarks as to the usage of singular 'they' as 'well established in speech and writing, even in literary and formal contexts'.

Note that 'they/them' pronouns tend to be used in two separate ways currently. Firstly, as the correct and specific pronoun set, or one of such sets, for people who have indicated that these are the correct pronouns for them. Secondly, as a 'courtesy' or 'proxy' pronoun set when a person's correct gender pronouns are unknown. Thus, using 'they/them' is not a wholly neutral choice, nor without ramifications. For instance, using 'they/them' as a default pronoun for the categories of 'unknown' and 'other' erases the existence of individuals for whom 'they/them' is the correct pronoun set, the one which accurately reflects their identity. Moreover, referring to an individual with 'they/them' pronouns can function to deny or wilfully reject their gender identity, if deployed to 'overwrite' in bad faith the identified gender of a literary or historical figure, or if an individual has communicated that 'they/them' is not the correct pronoun set. In such cases, the use of 'they/them' to refer to an individual other than oneself may signal a refusal to acknowledge that individual's identified gender. Thus, paradoxically, 'they/them' can underscore that an individual's gender presentation is flawed, or illegible. Nevertheless, using 'they/them' as a default pronoun has significant advantages. It is better than the old-fashioned practice of defaulting to 'he' (for an unknown/unspecified subject), and of default gendering based on external appearance and/or cultural bias. Above all, be clear and precise about the choices you are making and why – including when using 'they/them' – and articulate this to the reader.

For additional guidance on 'they/them' pronouns, see in particular: Bongiovanni and Jimerson, *Guide*. On the historical usage of 'they' (singular), see: Baron, *What's Your Pronoun*, ch. 5. For an example of usage of 'they' (singular) in medieval scholarship, see: Spencer-Hall, *Medieval Saints*, passim, and the explanatory note on p. 59.
*See also: **Misgender; Misgendering**, **Non-Binary**, **Pronouns***

Tranny (*adjective and noun*)
Avoid. 'Tranny' is generally considered to be a slur. It is most commonly used in reference to trans women. The term has been reclaimed by some

trans, non-binary, and queer persons as a term of identity or endearment. It may be represented graphically as 'tr*nny', or referred to as 'the t-slur'.

For more information, see: Serano, 'Personal History'.

*See also: **Transmisogyny**, **Transmisogynoir***

Trans(*gender*) (*adjective*)

A transgender (or simply trans) individual is someone whose ***Identified Gender*** does not match their ***Assigned Gender***. It is a description of a state, rather than a process. For this reason, avoid the term 'transgender*ed*'. However, it may take some time for a transgender individual to realize and/or understand their identified gender, since the normative cultural imperative to be cisgender is so strong.

The neutral antonym of 'transgender', or 'trans', is 'cisgender' or 'cis'. The Latin prefixes 'trans' and 'cis' mean, respectively: 'across, over' (i.e. crossing from one gender (the gender assigned at birth) to another (the identified gender); and 'on this side of' (i.e. not crossing over, but remaining in the gender assigned at birth).

The sole determinant for being trans is identification. Many trans people ***Transition*** (medically, socially, and/or otherwise), but others cannot, for a variety of reasons, or choose not to. This does not make the individuals any less trans. Similarly, being transgender is not determined by embodiment.

To refer to the state of being trans, use the noun '***Trans-ness***'. For example: 'An individual in the closet is someone that has not told anyone about their trans-ness.' Avoid ***Transgenderism,*** for reasons explained in the relevant entry.

'Trans' is sometimes also written as 'trans*'. The ***Asterisk*** (*******) is a wildcard character, a placeholder indicating that these five letters may be followed by any combination of other letters, such as transfeminine, transgender, transmasculine, transsexual, transvestite, and so on. This formulation is intended to broaden the possible meanings of 'trans', rendering the term more inclusive. However, many argue that 'trans' is already inclusive, and that the asterisk is therefore unnecessary. This is a polemical debate in trans studies. For a summary, see: Trans Student Educational Resources, 'Why We Used Trans*'. Note, however, that while trans is now generally preferred to trans* when referring to individuals, trans* is frequently used in trans(*) studies to refer to broader cultural aspects of trans(*) experience, and 'trans(*)' as a discursive construct, for instance, trans(*) thought, trans(*) affect, etc. On the trans asterisk and its uses, see: van Kessel, Minnaard and Steinbock, 'Trans*'; Stryker, Currah, and Moore, 'Trans-, Trans, or

Transgender?'. For an example of the productive use of the trans asterisk, see: Bey, 'Trans*-ness of Blackness'.

For further reading, see: Stryker, 'Transgender Studies 2.0'; Stryker and Aizura, *Reader 2*; Stryker and Whittle, *Reader*. On the intersection of race with trans-ness and genderqueer identities, see in particular: Aizura, et al., 'Transgender Imaginary'; Marlon M. Bailey, *Butch Queens*; Driskill, *Asegi Stories*; Ellison, et al., 'Issue of Blackness'; Johnson, *No Tea, No Shade*; Snorton, *Black on Both Sides*.
See also: Assigned Sex; Assigned Gender, Cis(gender), Identified Gender, Transition; Transitioning, Trans(gender) Man, Trans(gender) Woman, Transgenderism; Transgenderist

Transgendered (*past participle*)
Avoid. Transgender is an adjective. 'Transgendered' (like 'gendered') is a past tense verb. Generally, most people are 'transgender' people and not 'transgendered' unless in the uncommon circumstances of being made trans by outside forces. This is the reason most pro-trans writers and speakers have mostly abandoned 'transgendered' for 'transgender'. Likewise, this is why anti-trans writers and speakers use 'transgendered': either because they are using out-of-date information, or because they view trans-ness as a lifestyle that is indoctrinated into otherwise cisgender men and women. For these reasons, be intentional whenever (trans)gender or (trans)gendered is used, for both grammatical and rhetorical reasons.
See also: TERF, Trans(gender), Transgenderism; Transgenderist

Transgenderism; Transgenderist (*noun; adjective*)
Avoid. 'Transgenderism' is a term used by trans-antagonistic people to imply that being trans is a 'lifestyle choice' and/or an aberration from 'natural' and universal cisgender identity. To describe the state of being trans, use instead the noun *Trans-ness.*
See also: TERF, Trans(gender), Transgendered

Trans(gender) Man (*noun phrase*)
A person assigned female at birth (*AFAB*) who identifies as a man, regardless of whether they have medically or socially transitioned. Note: not a 'transman' or a 'trans-man', nouns implying that 'trans(-)men' and 'men' are different categories, but a 'trans man'. In the latter, the adjective 'trans' modifies the noun 'man', which is a category common to both trans men and cis men.

Trans(*gender*) *Woman* (*noun phrase*)
A person assigned male at birth (*AMAB*) who identifies as a woman, regardless of whether they have medically or socially transitioned. Note: not a 'transwoman' or a 'trans-women', a noun implying that 'trans(-)women' and 'women' are different categories, but a 'trans woman'. In the latter, the adjective 'trans' modifies the noun 'woman', which is a descriptor common to both trans women and cis women.

Transition; Transitioning (*verb and noun; present participle and adjective*)
Transition refers to the process of assuming or openly declaring a different gendered identity or social role. This may be a temporary or permanent shift. The use of 'transition' moves away from calling such events 'changes' (e.g. *'Sex Change'*) because most trans individuals see transition as a process of expressing what has always been their identified gender (even if they were unable to recognize this identification previously, due to *Cisnormative* culture) rather than taking on a new or 'changed' gender. Yet transition is likely also to include changing, correcting, and/or affirming gender on legal and medical documents, in familial and professional arenas, in clothing and pronoun usage, as well as by using various medical technologies.

Transitions will look different depending on the formulation of genders in the individual's cultural and temporal location, and on the technologies and procedures for transition which are available, as well as the personal inclinations of the individual transitioning. Transition can occur relatively quickly, seemingly all at once, or may occur in fits and starts over a lifetime. Transitions may involve explorations which are later set aside as the person's gender identity evolves.

Social transition refers to non-medical steps taken to alleviate *Dysphoria* and establish one's identified gender, including, but not limited to, changing one's name and/or pronouns; wearing different clothes; wearing or not wearing make-up; wearing different hairstyles; taking on a different social role. Social transition likely to be determined by an individual's cultural and temporal location, as what is socially normative for a particular gender changes in different times and places.

Medical transition refers to hormonal or surgical steps taken to change characteristics or appearance typically in order to reduce physical and/or social *Gender Dysphoria*. Medical transition does not *make* a person trans; people who medically transition do so *because* they are trans. Therefore, it is incorrect to assume that trans people did not exist before medical transition was possible. The term *'Sexual Reassignment Surgery'* (or 'SRS') denotes surgical steps undertaken as part of medical transition. It is used by some

trans people to describe their own experiences, though it is somewhat dated. Avoid, unless you are referring to yourself or you know that this term is used by the person in question. Use *'Gender-Affirming Surgery'* or *'Gender Confirmation Surgery'* instead. Note, 'surgery' is used here as non-countable, i.e. potentially plural, and does not denote a singular, definitive surgery that enacts trans-ness. There are, instead, many kinds of surgery which a trans individual may or may not undertake, as part of their transition. Transition is not a single pathway, but looks different for every individual.

Not transitioning does not make someone not trans. An individual might not be able to express their identity outwardly at a given moment for various reasons. They may wait until a better time to do so, or they may never be able to express their identity, depending on their social/cultural/historical position.
See also: Assigned Sex; Assigned Gender, Pass; Passing

Transfemininity; Transfeminine (noun; adjective)
'Transfeminine' is an umbrella term which encompasses the identities of individuals whose identified gender is more feminine than their assigned gender. Trans women are transfeminine, but so, too, are some feminine non-binary, genderqueer or genderfluid individuals. The term 'trans woman' generally suggests that femininity is a defining feature of an individual's identified gender. However, a transfeminine person may feel that, while femininity constitutes part of their gender identity, there are other aspects of their gender which are equally or more important. This may, for example, may be the case for feminine non-binary, genderqueer or genderfluid individuals.
See also: Femme; Genderfluid; Gender Fluidity, Genderqueer, Non-Binary, Trans(gender), Transmasculine

Transman (noun)
Avoid. This noun implies that 'transmen' and 'men' are different categories. Use instead 'trans man': here, the adjective 'trans' modifies the noun 'man', which is a descriptor common to both trans men and cis men.
See also: Trans(gender) Man

Transmasculinity; Transmasculine (noun; adjective)
'Transmasculine' is an umbrella term which encompasses the identities of individuals whose identified gender is more masculine than their assigned gender. Trans men are transmasculine, but so, too, are some masculine non-binary, genderqueer, or genderfluid individuals. The term 'trans man'

generally suggests that masculinity is a defining feature of an individual's identified gender. However, a transmasculine person may feel that, while masculinity constitutes part of their gender identity, there are other aspects of their gender which are equally or more important. This may, for example, be the case for masculine non-binary, genderqueer, or genderfluid individuals.

For further reading, see: Parker, *Black Transmasculine Compilation*.
See also: Butch, Genderfluid; Gender Fluidity, Genderqueer, Non-Binary, Transfeminine, Trans(gender)

Transmisogynoir (*noun*)
Moya Bailey invented the term 'misogynoir' in the late 2000s to name the nuanced, intersectional experience Black women face when dealing with gender-based hatred. Though Bailey explicitly limits the term's remit to Black women, it has become used more broadly to refer to the misogyny experienced by all women of colour. 'Misogynoir' came to be popularized online, especially by the work of the blogger Trudy. She developed Bailey's concept further, coining the term 'transmisogynoir'. Transmisogynoir is the intersection of transmisogyny and (anti-Black) racism. Trans women, and in particular trans women of colour, face high levels of abuse, violence and murder. As with misogynoir, transmisogynoir is often used to refer to an experience faced by all trans women of colour, not specifically Black trans women.

On this, see: Moya Bailey, 'They Aren't Talking About Me...'; Bailey and Trudy, 'On Misogynoir'; Trudy (@thetrudz), tweet (14 August 2013); Trudy, 'Explanation'.

On violence against trans women, see: Smith, *Transgender Day of Remembrance.*
See also: Internalized Transphobia, Transmisogyny, Transphobia; Transphobic, White Supremacy

Transmisogyny (*noun*)
Transmisogyny is the intersection of transphobia and misogyny. Trans women, and in particular trans women of colour, face high levels of abuse, violence, and murder.

On this, see: Smith, *Transgender Day of Remembrance.*
See also: Internalized Transphobia, Transmisogynoir, Transphobia; Transphobic

Trans-ness; Transness (*noun*)
See: Trans(gender)

Transphobia; Transphobic (***noun; adjective***)
Transphobia is discrimination against trans people, or people perceived to be trans, on the basis of their gender identity. At the core of transphobia is the assumption that transgender bodies, identities, and experiences are unreal, deceptive, invalid or illegitimate in comparison to cisgender bodies, identities and experiences. Transphobia is a form of structural and systemic marginalization. It occurs in interpersonal interactions as well as in discourse, including in academic work which relies on trans-exclusionary and/or transphobic assumptions.

For more on this, see in particular: Montgomerie, 'Addressing'; Serano, 'Detransition'; Smith, *Transgender Day of Remembrance*.
See also: **Internalized Transphobia**, **Transmisogyny**, **Transmisogynoir**

Transsexual (***noun and adjective***)
The term 'transsexual' is an older term for identities which are now more commonly described as transgender. A line is sometimes drawn between the two terms, stating that a transsexual person is someone who has taken surgical and/or hormonal steps to change their physical embodiment/sexed body (the implicit, binaristic assumption being that the change is to the 'other' of the two sexes), while a transgender person is someone who (merely) identifies as a gender other than the gender they were assigned at birth. Thus, all transsexuals may be considered transgender, but not all transgender individuals may be considered transsexual.

The term 'transgender' moves beyond the term 'transsexual' in two key ways. First, it surpasses the binaristic framework which 'transsexual' always implies in its attachment, and adherence, to the contours of, 'sex'. 'Transgender' facilitates the conceptualizing of non-binary, agender, and genderqueer identities by opening up possibilities of existence and identification. Secondly, 'transgender' ceases to rely on bodily morphology (and bodily modification) as indicators of identity. In the 'transgender' model, identification is enough; no more evidence of identity is required. Thus, 'transgender' allows the separation of identity and embodied existence, revealing different ways in which bodies can be understood and refusing the limitations of binaristic thinking.

For these reasons, 'transsexual' is now often perceived as a reductive term. It may signal a lack of familiarity regarding current thought on trans identities, and also, in its cleaving to sex, an unwelcome medicalization and pathologization of bodies and experiences. 'Transsexual' remains close to the '***Sex Change***' narrative, in which a wholesale shift from one binary sex to the other is enacted by medical means, localizable to a specific moment

in time. 'Transgender', meanwhile, can encompass complex processes of *Transition* (or lack thereof), and relocates the emphasis of 'trans' from 'objectively' visible medical processes originating outside the self, to affirm the significance and the validity of internal, subjective experiences.

Many trans people, particularly trans elders who grew up with the term 'transsexual', use it to refer to themselves, and others are reclaiming it as an affirming designation. Avoid using this term unless you are referring to yourself, or you know that the individual to whom you are referring prefers this term. Instead, use *Trans(gender)*.
*See also: **Sex Change, Trans(gender), Transition; Transitioning***

Transvestite; Transvestism (*adjective and noun; noun*)
In popular usage, 'transvestite' is often used synonymously with 'cross-dresser' to describe an individual who wears clothes typically worn by individuals of the 'opposite' gender. Historically, however, 'transvestite' was used in psychiatric texts to describe cross-dressing behaviour as 'deviance' with particular links to the 'deviance' of homosexuality. Thus, it carried – and to a certain degree still carries – a connotation of fetish, deployed in a stigmatizing and derogatory way. As such, this terminology should be used with extreme caution. If the context is appropriate, replace with 'cross-dresser', etc., which is stigmatizing to a lesser degree.

Using the term 'transvestite' (or 'transvestism') in relation to trans individuals demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of trans identity. This misunderstanding is founded upon the perception that trans individuals wear clothing associated with the 'opposite' assigned sex/gender, when they are in fact wearing clothing associated with their identified gender. Describing a transgender individual as a 'transvestite' reduces their identity to an 'incorrect' application of cultural norms regarding clothing, and implies that they are 'really' their assigned sex/gender, but masquerading as the 'opposite' sex/gender. For example, a trans woman may be incorrectly perceived as a transvestite: a man wearing women's clothing. However, since she is in fact a woman wearing women's clothing, she is not a transvestite; to describe her as such erases and dismisses her female identity.
*See also: **Cross-Dress; Cross-Dressing; Cross-Dresser, Drag, Tranny***

Transwoman (*noun*)
Avoid. This noun implies that 'transwomen' and 'women' are different categories. Use instead 'trans woman': here, the adjective 'trans' modifies the noun 'woman', which is a descriptor common to both trans women and cis women.
*See also: **Trans(gender) Woman***

Trap (*verb; noun; adjectival noun*)

The notion of 'trap' and 'trapping' is a persistent, pervasive, derogatory trope which serves to normalize transphobia and justify transphobic violence. This trope casts trans-ness as insidiously deceptive – in other words, a trap that the trans individual is laying for an 'unsuspecting' cis-het victim. A particularly prevalent 'trap' narrative presents a trans woman 'deceiving' a male love interest, simply by presenting as her identified gender and thereby being an object of the suitor's lust. The eventual 'revelation' that his date is 'really' a man is portrayed as a betrayal of trust and an offense to his heterosexual masculinity which throws him into existential chaos. This 'legitimizes' the suitor's violent retribution against the trans woman, even up to the point of murder. If the revelation occurs before (much) physical contact, the suitor is typically portrayed as deeply relieved, having only barely 'escaped' an 'atrocity'. Even if the suitor does not respond with physical violence, he may still do harm to the trans woman, by *Outing* her to others. This narrative places emphasis on the cis-het man's experience and worldview, denying both the validity of the trans woman's identified gender, and the horrifying reality that in a sexual encounter between a trans woman and a cis man, the woman is, statistically speaking, exposed to the risk of transmisogynistic murder, even more so if she is a woman of colour. Similar narratives circulate regarding trans men, but these tend to be less virulent, and are less likely to result in violence.

'Trap' as a noun can be a derogatory term for a trans person, in particular a trans woman. Do not use.

On this trope, see: Gossett, Stanley, and Burton, *Trap Door*.
*See also: **Out; Outing**, **Pass; Passing**, **Transmisogyny**, **Transmisogynoir***

Tuck; Tucking (*verb and noun; present participle*)

The practice of manipulating, that is, 'tucking', the genitals to provide a flatter appearance between the legs. Tucking is most often associated with trans women and cisgender male drag queens, although it may be practiced by a wide variety of genders, including intersex and non-binary persons. The flatter appearance is generally supposed to make the body appear more 'feminine' and allow the body to 'pass' more readily as cis female, especially when skintight or revealing clothing, such as swimwear, evening wear, or lingerie, is worn. Yet a person may tuck for a wider variety of reasons, including to alleviate feelings of gender dysphoria, or due to an affinity for/enjoyment of the flat forms produced. The noun 'tuck' may be used to refer to the result of tucking. People who tuck may do so intermittently, or on certain occasions and not on others.

See also: **Bind; Binding; Binder, Gender Dysphoria; Gender Dysphoric, Pack; Packing; Packer, Pad; Padding, Pass; Passing**

Two-Spirit (*adjective*)

An indigenous North American gender identity. This is an 'umbrella' term, agreed upon at an international conference in 1990 by members of the of Native American and First Nations gay and lesbian community. It refers to people who are indigenous to Turtle Island (North America) and whose gender, gender roles, or gender expressions differ from the normative roles of men and women in their respective cultures.

On this, see: Driskill, *Asegi Stories*; Jacob, Thomas and Lang, *Two-Spirit People*; Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight?*; de Vries, '(Berdache) Two-Spirit'; Wilson, 'Our Coming In Stories'.
See also: **White Supremacy**

White Supremacy

Gender is inextricably bound up with racialization. White supremacy imposes and centres (white) binary gender, relentlessly othering what it views as non-normative genders, especially when these are expressed by indigenous people and/or people of colour. For this reason, the assumption that indigenous and/or non-white identities such as bakla, *Hijra*, kathoey, *Two-Spirit*, and many others, are equivalent to or part of the spectrum of trans identities is an overtly colonizing gesture which presumes the primacy and completeness of the white (trans)gender system. This does not mean, of course, that individuals with these identities cannot or do not include themselves under or see themselves as represented by the LGBTQIA+ umbrella; indeed, some versions of the acronym, such as LGBTQ2S (commonly used in Canada) explicitly reference indigenous two-spirit identities. The distinction to be drawn is between assumptions which flatten the gender of non-white subjects into reductive and marginalizing white paradigms, and the consensual participation of subjects in cultural expressions (such as Pride) which they feel represent, respect, and celebrate their identities. Racialized gender descriptors or identities should not be appropriated by those of other heritages.

On this, see: Aizura et al., 'Transgender Imaginary'; binaohan, *decolonizing*; Camminga, 'Umbrella?'; Dutta and Roy, 'Decolonizing'; Paramo, 'Transphobia'; Snorton, *Black on Both Sides*. On gender in North American indigenous cultures, see: Driskill, *Asegi Stories*; Jacob, Thomas and Lang, *Two-Spirit People*; Lang, *Men as Women, Women as Men*; Rifkin, *When Did Indians Become Straight?*. On hijra identities, see: Hinchy, *Governing Gender*;

Moorti, 'Queer Romance'; Reddy, *With Respect to Sex*. On Black trans identities, see: Bey, 'Trans*-ness of Blackness'; Ellison et al., 'Issue of Blackness'; Johnson, *No Tea, No Shade*; Snorton, *Black on Both Sides*.
*See also: **Transmisogynoir***

Ze/Hir (*pronouns*)
An example of gender neutral or non-binary pronouns, to replace 'he/him' and 'she/her'. 'Ze' may also be spelled 'zie'.
*See also: **Pronouns***

Ze/Zir (*pronouns*)
An example of gender neutral or non-binary pronouns, to replace 'he/him' and 'she/her'. 'Ze' may also be spelled 'zie'.
*See also: **Pronouns***

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