Trans Sexual Affects in Contemporary Trans Erotica

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Introduction

- World Professional Association of Transgender Health’s *Standards of Care*
- American Psychiatric Association’s *DSM*
- World Health Organization’s *ICD10*

*All assert what is correct sexual development*
Introduction


The analytical approach

- I foreground transsexual/transgender bodily aesthetics
- Bodily aesthetics: appearance, feel, smell, touch, taste and so on....
- I favour bodily aesthetics over gender identity per se
The analytical approach

- Doe not have to add up to a ‘fully formed and settled subject’ (Crawford, 2008: 141)

- ‘the process of leaving home, of altering your habits, of learning new tricks’ (Crawford, 2008: 133).
Medical restraints

- The ‘true transsexual’ must perform a de-eroticized (and heterosexualized) forms of transsexualism

- Danger of being diagnosed with hyper-sexualized Autogynephillia, Autoandrophillia, Fetishistic transvestism

- Trans people often have undisclosed ‘desirous excesses’ (Bataille, 1985)
Medical restraints

- On the one hand it is a *machinic assemblage* of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another: on the other hand it is a *collective assemblage of enunciation*, of acts and statements, of intercorporeal transformations attributed to bodies [...] the assemblage has *territorial sides*, or reterritorialized sides, which stabilize it and *cutting edges of deterritorialization*, which carry it away (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 97-98 emphasis in original).
Medical restraints

- I faithfully reported each foray in heterosexuality to the hospitals noncommittal therapist, desperate to be the good patient upon whom she would confer surgery when my waiting time was up. I finally informed her that I could not be straight [and] that the only thing that gave me somewhat limp, estrogen, impaired erections were other women (Wilchins, 1997a: 142).
Medical restraints

- Social and medical norms “shapes which bodies one ‘can’ legitimately approach as would be lovers and which one [you] cannot” (Ahmed, 2006: 91).
Medical restraints

• “As she pulled herself close to me, I felt the flat muscular chest up against my back, in addition to the unmistakeable lean hardness of a man against my buttocks, I gasped. A she-male. I was so incredibly aroused” (Rosenkrans, 2006: 199)
Learning new tricks in transgender studies

- Political shift from ‘transsexual’ to ‘transgender’

- [create] bodily effects that disrupt or denaturalize heteronormatively constructed linkages between an individual’s anatomy at birth, a non-consensually assigned gender category, psychical identifications with sexed body images and or sexed subject positions, and the performance of specifically gendered social, sexual, or kinship functions (Stryker, 1998: 149).
Learning new tricks in transgender studies

• ‘wringing the turkey’s neck’, the ritual of penile masturbation just before surgery,’ [which she claims is the most] ‘secret of secret traditions’ (Stone, 2006 [1991]: 228).
A becoming language

- Increasing...Rocky’s own excitement sent a shiver up from his old genitals, the ones he’d retained behind the dildo. He didn’t know what a man would have felt, but this was good, and it propelled him to buck harder [...] he kissed her on her shoulder, a lingering kiss he knew tickled and scratched from his recent boyish beard (Christian, 2002: 89)
A becoming language

“ripping up from a place I hadn’t found before” (Cait, 2006: 106).

“it felt like a fluid shame had been given permission to escape out of my body. It felt so good, I felt so clean, and I felt so free (Rosenkrans, 2006: 70).

“for a longtime after that fuck, I knew I mattered in the world. I knew I had something good about me [...] my counterpart was real and not some insane figment of my damaged sexual fantasies (Califia, 2006: 198)

“my daily voice, my daily body, my daily fears. I am changing; we are dancing. We have broken through [...] and I wondered if I would ever break through, as I wandered through one-night stands and short-time lovers” (Wilchins, 1997: 144).

“I am filled with a kind of wonder now, my body showing me things novel and unsuspected” (Wilchins, 1997: 147).
A becoming language

“erotic deployment of the body, [...] its prosthetic extension [is used] for the purposes of a reciprocal erotic phantasy” (Butler, 2004: 142-143).
A becoming language

- ‘creativity and playfulness’

- ‘I fucked his pussy with the dildo and gave his dick a hand job while he vigorously frigged his clitoris. It was so far out to see a man frig his clit. When he came, it sounded like a woman’s orgasm, but with a man’s voice. He was, of course, capable of multiple orgasms’ (Sprinkle, 2006: 20)
Conclusion

I argue we must learn from these cultural productions and precisely analyze the aesthetic affects of trans sexuality before we become blind to the polymorphousness of trans sexualities.
Selected References