

radical transfeminism



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What is Radical Transfeminism?

In my mind, radical transfeminism involves centring trans women, trans femmes and non-binary transfeminine people in particular (next to other trans and non-binary people more generally): to centre our bodies, needs, experiences and importantly our desires within our political, academic, activist and organising work. Our bodily autonomy is at the heart of this.

Radical transfeminism entails a politicised analysis of our lives and experiences – getting to the root of them; and developing a life praxis that works towards social transformation, often on a small scale, with an ethos of mutual aid and solidarity with coalitional struggles.

It should be clear that to centre transfeminine people is to centre us as poor transfeminine people, as transfeminine people of colour, as queer transfeminine people, as migrant transfeminine people, as disabled and/or Mad* transfeminine people, as transfeminine people who've been incarcerated (in prisons, hospitals or otherwise).

We are dreaming, and have been dreaming for decades, of forms of radical social transformation, rooted in Black radicalism, anarcho-communism, Gay Liberationist and other collectivist politics. We have been necessarily working towards alternatives to capitalism and practicing them on a micro level (when we can steal the hours to do so). Our feminism has emerged through the experiences of our lives of transgressing gender norms (gender norms that are always racialised, classed and abled); through challenging the gender identity police (psychiatrists) and the

bourgeois politics of trans and queer liberalisms; through imbibing feminist writings and the writings of women and men of colour, of queer and trans writers, through pulling a transfeminist herstory out of obscurity.

So, this is not simply about the inclusion of trans bodies or transfeminine people into feminism. Radical transfeminism is about centring our bodies, experiences, knowledges, desires and actions within a heterogeneous, decolonising anti-capitalist feminist project, rooting us as key actors within such a project; working with us and valourising our labour, experiences and our bodies and desires.

If we are rooting a feminist praxis in transfeminine bodies, what does this open up as the horizon of politics? What is needed to expand and develop our bodily autonomy? What practices must we put forward – social; sexual; in healthcare; in living?

What conversations must be broached? What work must be undertaken to make our lives richer, to create the ground and conditions under which we can thrive?

What social transformation must we fabricate & fight for? This isn't just about ending capitalism in its currently neoliberal forms (but there is of course this too). What forms of collective power must be harnessed? What kind of living do we want to make possible? What inhabitations of our own bodies are possible in a better context, and how to we create that context? What kind of caring labour is needed to build upon the current situation of our bare lives and limited sustenance?

How do we cut through the violence and shit of contemporary racial capitalism to fully automate a better, dykier, feminist, diasporic communism than the left is currently dreaming of? How do we 'deepen' the particulars that make up radical transfeminism? (it involves more than dilators, but then those too, and plenty of lube).

*Mad is written with a capital M, to emphasise its reclamation by psychiatric consumers and survivors, activists and Mad Studies scholars. There's much to be said about the connection between transfeminine people labelled as 'crazy' (now and historically) and its connection to gendered norms of sanity.

BORED_TRAN_21st_CENTURY.EXE

"Life in this society being, at best, an utter bore and no aspect of society being at all relevant to trans women, there remains to civic-minded, responsible, thrill-seeking transsexuals only to overthrow the government, eliminate the money system, institute complete automation and destroy the cis sex."

- From the DIE CIS SCUM manifesto

I'm bored.

"I'll give you something to do," said Frank Sinatra's father to his layabout son. "You'll come work for me," he finished, full of patriarchal condescension, unwilling to contemplate his son's cultivation of idleness as a vice. The productivity inherent to the american dream/nightmare. The myth of the real citizen being a productive citizen, the worthlessness of mere existence as political ideology, marching with jackboots to anthems: Oid Mortales, o say can you see, enfants de la patrie, god save our queen and may she rule the waves for good measure.

I sit in a castle-not-a-castle surrounded by the detritus of my life: action figures, videogames, books on translation theory and feminist theory interspersed with comics from all over the world and transforming robot figures. The trans woman who likes the trans-formers. Haha. Funny joke. If only I was the only one. Even in my deep clichés I find myself bored.

Disaffection with the modern world, how too Richey Manic circa 1993, when I was still 10 years old and thought I was a boy. Please.

I'm not exactly bored of being trans. I'm bored of trans. As a thing. As a TIME magazine cover, as a thing for a person with ZERO PERCENT of material commonality with my experience one day flipping a pronoun and exploiting pre-existing celebrity status to add themselves to the latest 'in' thing in queer identities. Being trans is just 'in', you know? Ask Miley, or Jack, or Laurie, or the other Jack who is a bit of a knucklehead bastard with terrible theory. Ask Ruby. Never ask a trans woman. If you do, make sure to insist on how fabulous she is. Take no notice of the actual black trans women who will not take that shit. Ignore that. Put on Laverne and Janet who are unequivocally incredible and let's pretend that class isn't a thing and let's pretend we don't know that some people survived where a lot of people fucking died. Let's pretend black trans women/trans feminine people were not present at Stonewall, let's clear our magazines of anything not White And Rich And Skinny And Gay. We can't fit all these trannies man, we gotta make room for the Absolut float and Scotland fucking Yard (or An Gardai Síochána or la Federal, pick your poison in uniform and stick a rainbow on that jackboot).

This isn't a manifesto. This is not even a series of new ideas. They are boring, old ideas. They're the same ideas Sylvia Rivera was yelling about so long ago. She died four years before Twitter

launched. Thank fuck. Can you imagine how many people in the activist-industrial-complex would want to be seen to be in her good graces?

At this point I have told you what's wrong but not what I want. Of course, because I am unwashed, millennial avocado-eating scum*, I want fully-automated, luxury space communism. Can I add 'immortal' to that? I wanna add immortal, because fuck dude I keep having panic attacks about my own death, and my friends dying, and my parents dying, and everyone I see in the streets dying. So yeah I'll add 'immortal' to my list if you don't mind if that's okay.

What I want is somewhat happening in some corners of queer community. That's a good thing. To wit: I want people to listen to trans women but not treat us like we're some sort of sacrosanct, perfect, godly porcelain dolls. I want people to engage with us like they would to a person but with also a view to compensate for the fact 90% of us aren't educated in your ridiculous discourse ways and plus your discourse is pathetic and alienating as fuck.

I want people to stop making a big song and dance about fucking us. We're neither forbidden fruit nor better than average in bed nor do we exist for your fucking fantasies. But do fuck us. I have it on good word a lot of us enjoy it. I also have it on good word that one of the many reasons why many lesbian/queer/trans communities are full of 'ick' towards cis women dating us is because, when someone is connected to yr

community by links of fucking-romance-etc it's harder to keep them out. It's a dynamic old as time. 'Can my girlfriend be involved in this project?' is a normal thing to ask within dyke circles. People from the in-group fucking people from the out-group can be the first step towards the out-group getting integrated (or not, obviously, because the world is terrible and all your childhood heroes are dead or dying). But yeah tl;dr transmisogyny taking the form of not wanting to fuck us is part and parcel of the process to exclude us from queer community/queer discourse.

Let me add that I've seen signs of hope in this, at least, in my little corner of the world. My understanding is that as of this writing, queer communities in a lot of big cities with big bunches of queers are still fucking goddamn terrible (London, Berlin, etc.). My little corner of Glasgow is relatively okay. I see a lot of respect given to trans women and people actually fucking us and all. Nice! I still see a lot of transmisogynist discourse of course but it's in manageable levels. Tokenising happens a lot though. And sadly there's always someone there to be the token. I know it's hard, pals, but like, can you not?

I guess I should close with a note regarding discourse (in the activist slang sense not in the academic sense). To wit: I am sick and goddamn fucking tired of orthodoxies and creating rules upon rules and people being ready to jump on each other like sharks who smelled blood in the water. I am also sick and goddamn fucking tired of people who claim to criticise this

tendency to be incredibly aggro to each other and then use it to excuse the actions of abusers. I have 0 time for people who 'call out the calling out culture' and who are re-framing a hell of a lot of abuse as 'conflict'. But at the same time I also see a lot of our community being ready to eat each other the moment current discourse is deviated from. And let's remember: today's discourse isn't tomorrow's. Today's politically correct term is tomorrow's slur. But the problem of discourse isn't that we lay down some ground rules. The problem of discourse is that we expect all rules to always apply, instead of considering that a lot of these concepts and ideas were developed by specific communities in specific spacetimes. And yes! Yes sometimes they're useful for a lot more than just the one specific spacetime. But sometimes they're the wrong tools for the job. Multiplicity of strats, guys. Can't carry every team with a Hanzo, sometimes you gotta use D.va's ult to break a choke point**.

Tl;dr

Be kind to each other.

Kick abusers to the curb.

Don't let trendy celebrities dictate trans discourse.

Be flexible in discourse. Please.

I'm bored, I'm going for a twix.

*I'm writing in 2017 and this reference will definitely not age well

**I hope when you read this in the year 3000 people still play Overwatch

It's been thirteen years since I read 'The Handmaid's Tale' as a lazy au pair in the southern Parisian suburb of Maisons Alfort. Yes, it was chilling, but it's dystopia offered a mental solace. At least in this world the misogyny was honest enough to march around in the light of day and make mincemeat of its opponents without apology.

Waking up to my own status as the politically conscious queer person of colour with nowhere to go but 'Woke' I found my enemies and allies were as shifty as weed smoke. In the novel, I knew very much where I stood; dead or with the resistance.

I came to see the fate of the gay and lesbian characters as being mortally caught up with my own. On a walk by the river Offred and her partner pass beneath the lifeless bodies of a priest, a doctor and a gay man.

"I think I heard that joke once. This wasn't the punchline." There was no punchline, because dead swinging bodies are never funny.

The 'gender traitor' is subjected to a modernised FGM procedure and told that she can't want what she does not have. Judith Butler has warned us of the zeal of the gender police, and here, they run free with guns, to wreak havoc over the lives of others.

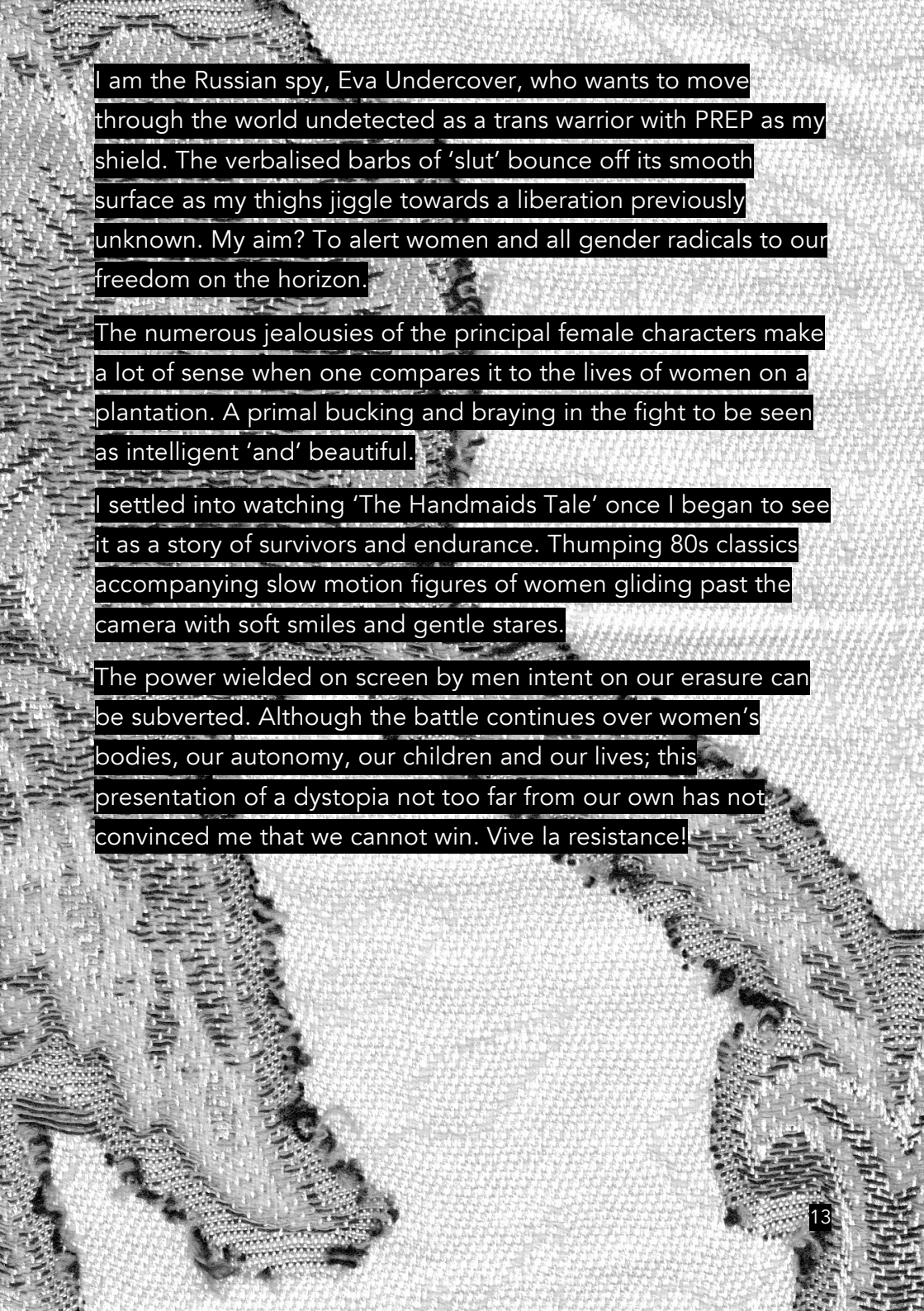
The realities of these women's lives are historically contingent yes. But it's many overlapping histories. The black slave raped and beaten whose children are ripped away from her. Poussey

becomes our Harriet Tubman on the verge of escaping but unable to save anyone but herself.

There is the joyous occasion of a murderous misandry however. In a scene reminiscent of the Dutch feminist classic "A Question of Silence" I applauded the screen as these scarlet robed women became the vengeful mob and made the blood spurting out of the rapist's mouth look beautiful and delicious. The taste of violence was intoxicating and I found myself quite drunk at the prospect of revenge. It was then I realised I was triggered. A pleasure cut short because the man who I really wanted to see sentenced was Commander Fred Waterford. He looks and behaves like my rapist. Not only was I rooting for the punishment of the rapist I watched on screen, I was gleeful that I had the chance to watch at least one man pay for what he had done.

Speaking with a black girlfriend of mine on Saturday night I balked at her assertion that she did not want a pussy because it meant she could still not have kids. In the protective glow of a life sheltered by modern science this did not penetrate my self-esteem because my gametes are cool, calm and collected in dry ice waiting for the unconventional family set up I can soon create.

Nevertheless, for the briefest of moments I was made aware that others see me as useless. A literal waste of life. I had facial feminisation surgery eleven days ago. My goal, to become the softest prettiest version of a cisgender woman I can afford. This is my way of activating my agency.



I am the Russian spy, Eva Undercover, who wants to move through the world undetected as a trans warrior with PREP as my shield. The verbalised barbs of 'slut' bounce off its smooth surface as my thighs jiggle towards a liberation previously unknown. My aim? To alert women and all gender radicals to our freedom on the horizon.

The numerous jealousies of the principal female characters make a lot of sense when one compares it to the lives of women on a plantation. A primal bucking and braying in the fight to be seen as intelligent 'and' beautiful.

I settled into watching 'The Handmaids Tale' once I began to see it as a story of survivors and endurance. Thumping 80s classics accompanying slow motion figures of women gliding past the camera with soft smiles and gentle stares.

The power wielded on screen by men intent on our erasure can be subverted. Although the battle continues over women's bodies, our autonomy, our children and our lives; this presentation of a dystopia not too far from our own has not convinced me that we cannot win. Vive la resistance!

Fear and Loathing in Upper Gloucester Road

I was walking down a hilly street one evening recently when I fell over - impossibly but apparently for no reason I tumbled. I had the slow motion experience of watching my phone flying through the air, enough time to think to myself it's going to smash (it didn't) before it hit the ground, and then suddenly the pavement and I connected intimately, exposing raw skin through abrasions on my arm and leg, and raw dignity exposed to the street. I was shocked. I looked up confused. A shopkeeper was taking his shop signs inside at closing time and showed disinterested curiosity. But a family of four who looked like tourists scooted across the road frantically to pick me up, collect my scattered belongings and check up on my wellbeing. They were concerned, solicitous and warm and left me only after I had assured them I was fine. But they had done all that they could to help me.

The following day I attended a workshop at the Brighton Trans and Non-Binary conference – a restorative justice circle. I misunderstood the purpose of the session so I didn't prepare anything to say, think or feel. In fact we sat in a circle of reassurance, and interacted in a succession of 'rounds'. We were invited to tell participants who we were and why we were attending, then on the second pass to discuss hate crimes that had been inflicted on us, thirdly how we responded and felt at the times of the incidents and finally what we would have liked to have been the resolutions of the incidents.

Not having pre-planned my input I was a little slow in engaging but when my turn to talk about hate crimes visited on me came around I tumbled into revelations. Prefacing my remarks with the observation that I wasn't clear where precisely unreasonable behaviour shades into criminality and where misogyny shades into transmisogyny and emphasising the increased potential for fear, uncertainty and immobility that such uncertainty brings, I began. I hadn't thought about the events I described in any engaged way for a long time. I assumed I had 'dealt' with them. I talked about being followed round a supermarket by a stranger who followed me home making unwelcome sexualised proposals right up to my front door. I talked about being aggressively kerb-crawled in broad daylight in a residential area just a minute from that same front door. I talked about being stalked on the DLR, thinking I had thrown the stalker off my scent, only to make it out to the open, turn a corner and have him tap me on my shoulder and ask for a light. And I talked about getting beaten up by five men, punched and kicked to the ground and having my nose broken. And I talked about the further trauma of meeting my attackers face to face, outside the court they were going to be tried at, without warning and with no one to protect me or support me. I could have talked about so much more....

On the following circle I talked about how impossible I felt it was at the time to report these incidents – in the last one the police were called by someone else but in all the others I felt completely powerless to call the police or any other official agency, or even in the stalking incident to ask for help from the security who were on the door of the pub outside which he

caught up with me. What would I say? Where was my evidence? Would they believe a woman? Would they believe a trans woman? Would they care about a trans woman?

All of these experiences were traumatic. While each of them was happening I was scared. I discovered during the circle that scared had turned to scarred. My broken nose the only lasting physical manifestation of these experiences isn't really visible now. But even writing this, simultaneously revisiting the acts of violence, misogyny, transmisogyny and oppression, and also in the retelling of each incident in the circle, I experienced such lachrymose pain again. More than this though, these acts which scared me and which have scarred and damaged me, have changed me as well. My contemporaneous reactions to them were grounded in fear, certainly, but also in uncertainty. The lack of validation I have received as a woman and as a trans woman over the course of my life has left me defenceless in significant and meaningful ways. When non-trans women have either asked me why I didn't shout at my assailants to scare them off they demonstrate they don't understand my fear that my voice will reveal me as trans and provoke an even more violent reaction. Or when they have treated the events as trivial and unworthy of anything other than the most cursory acknowledgement and support this merely serves to underline and confirm my poor sense of self. And then friends prove themselves to be anything but friends when they join in with threads suggesting that trans women are not real women or when casual remarks reveal that they exclude you from girls'-together activities, or tell you that they gave a friend a dress that

you said you liked because 'it will suit her shape better than yours'. In all these situations they compound and normalise the violence. And although for a long time I have believed that my transition had healed all my wounds and somehow 'cured' my dysfunction, this is clearly not the case.

In all the above cases I think that the people, known to me or not, are culpable in some tangible sense, for contributing to my ongoing sense of inadequacy that persists regardless of what good I try to do or achievements I think I have managed, for the raging aloneness that I often feel, for the insecurity that continues to inhabit and inhibit my every social transaction, and for the dislocation that stalks me and disables my fluency and fungibility (although being honest, I repudiate my fungibility anyway). Their actions, intentional or unintentional, continue to not allow me to float freely around the world, to walk down the street unchallenged, to use sports centres safely, to be served graciously in shops, in pubs, in restaurants, or on public transport. And continue to ensure that every transaction on a dating site or on a first date is fraught with artifice, chicanery and danger.

But this manifests as powerfully in the most mundane, the most banal ways. Powerfully after I got to where I was staying, after the conference, after the resurgent trauma, I thought through the events and connected them to my tumble in the street. When the concerned family of four had rushed over and dusted me down and picked me up, and asked solicitously if I was ok, and as I recovered my composure, my first reaction wasn't of gratitude and thankfulness. It was of distrust and fear. I

distrusted these people who had shown me no disrespect. I distrusted them as I thought they might 'find me out'. I distrusted them as I feared rejection once they saw how tall I am, how large-featured I am, when they heard my not too deep but resonant-enough voice. I have been conditioned to mistrust even people who want to help, even people who really don't care about my ontology/teleology, who may actively rejoice in the diversity that in being, I bring to the streets.

I'm not sure how this fits in to a radical transfeminism zine. It is radical only in the sense of deep-seated. It offers no suggestions – I have no sense of askesis or catharsis emerging out of this. Really the opposite is true. I was brought up in a time, a place and a culture that demanded I should be self-reliant. I suppose this is a rejection of that. I think about trans* pride and associated trans-euphoria and I suppose it is also a rejection of that. And in the rejection I suppose comes the recognition. The recognition of the need to approach every situation analytically, to restlessly wrestle with my truths. And in the final analysis the recognition that while I may never 'heal' in so many ways, while there is no meaningful 'whole', there will always be in some sense alienation. And that in embracing this alienation, by turning round into a method a praxis, that through *verfremdungseffekt*, the alienation effect, perhaps there is at least some small recuperation. While I might not want to embrace optimism, I can at least have a measured relationship with pessimism. And that this might just have to be enough...

Gentrification of Politics

This is a piece about trans femme disposability, the curbing of expression, and the power of mainstreaming, which sets nobody free, but merely displaces violence. The context is trans femme life, the politics of normalisation and respectability, and how alternative festivals can function as a gentrification of the political debate. This gentrification operates on the line between radical and reasonable, through claiming the latter and disclaiming the former. What is missed is that radical is reasonable and only achieved by confronting that what needs to be confronted. This piece is not about a single event, a single festival, a single space. It is not about "cis men doing bad things", it's about you and me.

I will start by recalling there's the well-known fine line of expression of trans femme life. Either you are depressed and get to be avoided, or you are loud (hysterical) and get to be ignored, in between is the fine, fine line of accepted modesty, friction free, emotional and caring labour giving, smiling presence, tokenistic inclusion, and validating of other's open mindedness that is expected of trans femmes in queer and other spaces. Trans femmes are not the only ones walking this line – this line is a well-known distribution of social space that shifts and folds around different people in different spaces. In queer space trans femmes do not get to simply move around and "be free" or "be themselves". There's the punishment for speaking up (to be ignored and ostracised), the punishment for needing return favours (to be ignored), the punishment for having needs (to find oneself disposable).

This marking of boundaries of expression finds further links with the gentrification of the debate. The worst is when spaces of expression, such as queer cultural festivals claim to be "neutral and

welcome to everybody". This literally means that they will be mainstream and have a high chance of having offensive material, screenings, and debates. The second worse thing is if festivals aim to be lefty, but run on a "feel good" basis. This means that films are claimed to be empowering, or informing, or sometimes entertaining, even have some films that might have "a political message". These festivals are the worst, as they get to occupy political space, while in fact gentrifying the political debate. The feel-good factor ensures that certain expressions that do not feel good are left out. Sometimes this results in films that are explicitly trans misogynist, for instance, are put on the programme "because they are beautiful". In other cases it could be that documentaries – Shaleece Haas' 'Real Boy' is a great example – are screened which pull a conservative version of 'trans innocence, mediated by privilege of affluence, whiteness, narrowness of demands ("only want to be accepted by my family"), sobriety (implicitly condemning people that do drugs, alcohol, or any other means to cope), and painting a picture of trans – still a pressured category – around the spectacular moment of 'transition' (yawn, that moment when virtually every trans person is so busy with coping that no sharp critique can come out, with Real Boy ending at the moment at the first signs of emergence of this critique). Such films not only serve to establish cis-filmmakers' careers, but by being programmed by film festivals as part of the trans stream, serve to legitimise toothless debate, aspirational trans innocence, and serve moreover to gentrify the debate around trans lives away from material deprivation, border issues, lack of structural emotional and physical care, away from structural trans misogyny, racism, and by being such single issue approaches manage to turn away from 5 decades of political organising aiming for an understanding of interlocking

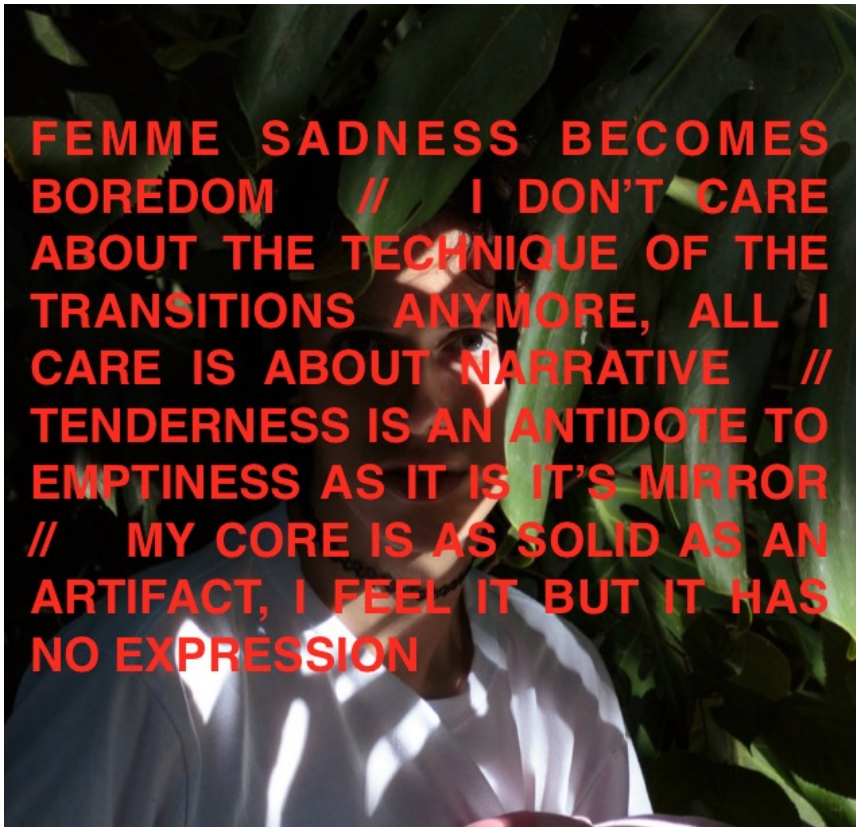
oppressions, interlocking solutions, multi-layered critique, and a perspectives away from privileged mainstream. That such films are used as representation does more harm than good, and make trans lives harder on the ground, because they fortify the ideas of the straight and narrow path in life trans people apparently so willingly conform to, thereby underlining the double bind of being punished for breaking the (perceived gender)norm, as well as being punished for conforming to the (perceived gender)norm. I don't mind so directly critiquing Real Boy because I spend an exhausting amount of emotional energy on the director who was "so grateful" for my explanations and time, and then went on to make a career with the film. Here's a trans voice that claims their work as re-enforcing oppression.

Queer festivals sometimes claim about difficult pieces that 'this work doesn't fit the programme/programming' it also claims that it is possible and necessary to make coherent programmes around incoherent, chaotic identities, which deal with contradictions as daily activity. This is a further step that serves to gentrify the politics of liberation as "I want to be me and feel good". Such curating moves away from the grinding quirkiness that structures trans femme lives in order to offer a smooth experience to the audience. This wouldn't be bad – if there was a range of expressions available. This is not so. Festivals have often no trans femme film-makers, trans femmes are only shown as either undergoing misery or transition, and still hardly have a meaningful voice of their own. If they get asked to speak, this has been happening with clueless Q&A's that get returned with whispers of transmisogyny in the corridors. Some festival can have for many years complaints about racism, an issue that hardly seems to be addressed, certainly not

publicly, and does not reflect in the curating choices, nor in programming teams.

However, a politics of representation does not really solve matters. Except of course when representation is the negative representation of absence. Then it should set one thinking. When putting the work in, and living and working towards a multi-layered understanding of one's and other's situation – this gets rebuffed with expressions such as "yes but you are political" at worst, or at best "you are radical". To claim the reflective effort of understanding one's condition as radical is one of the insidious moves whereby the festival disclaims the credit it gets for being lefty, situates themselves as in the "reasonable middle", thereby again re-enforcing the narrow path of acceptance that has to be negotiated by trans femmes in materially less favourable positions, and mostly denies their own lack of reflection as a problem to start with. Let me say it simply – exclusion is the easiest thing to do. It is easy as it follows the logic of violence on which the world runs. What is harder is to move away from that violence and present the effort of reflection. By culling every grounded, reflected position out of the debate as 'radical' platforms that get left-cred are functioning as gentrifiers that make actual trans politics impossible, by leaving such explanations in the space of incomprehensibility. This in turn does not liberate trans femmes. It only aims for some people to be included in mainstream – the same stream that created the problems in the first place. Festivals make this claim by claiming pride, but they claim it in such a way that they betray the memory of those trans femmes that started the riot at stonewall, at comptons, and at other places forgotten and ignored.

The question to platforms, festivals, and spaces is how one can centre the reasonability that is radicalism relieving pressure of adaptability and disposability of trans femmes, and shift the centre of discomfort from the margin to the middle. Part of the answer lies in modesty when claiming one is already there. Policy directed platforms, such as unions, would do well to be careful about the distinction between tactical policies and political strategies. Here too, the reasonable lies with the radical.



**FEMME SADNESS BECOMES
BOREDOM // I DON'T CARE
ABOUT THE TECHNIQUE OF THE
TRANSITIONS ANYMORE, ALL I
CARE IS ABOUT NARRATIVE //
TENDERNESS IS AN ANTIDOTE TO
EMPTINESS AS IT IS IT'S MIRROR
// MY CORE IS AS SOLID AS AN
ARTIFACT, I FEEL IT BUT IT HAS
NO EXPRESSION**

How many nights on the queer scene
were you taken home?

How many nights - few conversations,
little connections, barely hit on
or not at all?

How many nights:
no known women on stage?

How many nights were you
de-stressed, hypersexualized,
but your advances ignored
left to go home & sleep alone?

How many girlfriends,
lovers, from the scene?

How many months
without a good fuck?

‘Love your sisters, not just your cisters’

I've been thinking through this list of questions for years – at least since 2011. In this time they've remained unspeakable, except to a few of my closest trans femme friends.

What made this unspeakable? The pain of learning that even queer worlds – bourgie and working class, white and of colour – sometimes deny us this, often don't stand by us, or consider us sexually attractive or desirable, or even worthy of welcome.

To think of AB's point that lesbian and queer community can be constituted through fucking.... that who is deemed fuckable in these contexts – contexts we may call home, in absence of other homes, or call community – often depends on our race, ability, body shape, presentation, and often on what's in our underwear.

And to speak of race here is to think of how whiteness, masculinity and cisnormativity come together, encoding the currents of who and what is desirable within queer culture; while simultaneously erasing the presence of, and devaluing, trans non-binary and cis queer femmes of colour. Our beauty is bound together.

*

Next to the erasure of trans women and trans feminine people from Stonewall [Sylvia & Marsha erased until the mid '90s] & the Gay and Lesbian liberation movements of the '70s, from the history of '90s queer culture & HIV/AIDS struggles, to ignoring vibrant trans struggles in the global South: the fact we were & are cultural producers, activists & sexual beings who were essential to the explosion of these moments. That poor trans

women, often Black or of Colour, selling their bodies, worked to keep other queers alive, housed, fed, out of jail; worked for liberation.

Next to the fetishisation of trans women's bodies: the agency of trans women sex workers making a living, & making porn.

Next to the fetishisation of trans people in culture more broadly, the emergence of trans celebrities, and the politics of queer and trans liberalisms: the privatisation of our sexualities, to be spoken of only behind closed bedroom doors, provided there's someone to speak with, or an ouch of energy to do so.

Next to the 'born in the wrong body' narrative (as Verity Spott's poetry teaches us: associating our bodies with wrongness, leading to further flight from our bodies) and the pathologisation of our sexualities by psychiatry,

as the Gender Identity Police look at anything other than heteronormative monogamy with suspicion, and try to keep in the DSM the fact some trans and gender non-conforming people dress sexy to express their sexuality (fuck that).

Next to the hyper-sexualisation of trans women of colour, the surveillance of our bodies and lives, the long & brutal history of criminalising 'Walking While Trans'.

That we have been trying to create a space in life, work, making art & culture to inhabit and express our desires, our love, our sexuality. That we are hot, that we are too sexy for wage labour.

Next to our brokenness, our boredom, our frustrations, all that feminism and queer & trans-fem(me)inism teach us: that we must

important and relevant and a domain of political struggle; that we must defy a world that deems us unworthy of fucking.

Next to the pussy at the centre of cis-feminisms and the dickshaming at the centre of queer and straight feminisms: the girl-dick as the sexual organ some of us are working with, on orgasms inflected by oestrogen.

★

It feels like next to this constellation of seeming impossibility, which makes so many trans women and non-binary trans femmes feel unlovable, unfuckable – no matter who we sleep with [and i write this a brown queer trans woman, who does not speak for trans women who date men], it feels like we hardly begin to speak of our sexualities as a practice. That there is so little feedback on what works for us sexually... It's like seven years since Mira Bellwether's pivotal *Fucking Trans Women* zine first came out, and it feels like our position within queer culture hasn't gone far. Sure, some of us are in long-term relationships; and of course some of us are fucking each other, but the position of the trans femme or trans women as sexual subject is barely a position. It feels like looking the number of trans girls looking hot on Instagram is changing something (it is.), but how that translates to social change is something else.

★

At the 2017 Dyke March in Berlin, it was great to see a decent presence of trans women and non-binary trans femme folks, asserting ourselves; however it was telling that their most visible lovers were other trans women.

Of course, this isn't the rule – some of us do date cis women, trans guys, non-binary peeps, cis guys, although next to the beauty & joy of these relationships are power dynamics. I think of stories of abuse friends have told & how i've seen their lovers manipulate them. We compare notes on that difficulty of cis partners not knowing how to engage with our bodies in bed, so our orgasms get neglected next to their pleasure. These conversations among us also seem rare – thank fuck for the internet – about what works for us, how our clits, dicks, cunts, cavities are wired; how to get over the shame we turn against our genitals for having them & fuck with the fact that some of us are women with dicks (read Mira's zine & get your lovers to do so too).

Next to conversation, we need culture, performance and art occupying the queer spaces we inhabit. The moment in the Sex Worker's Opera where the character played by Emy Fem (a white european trans woman) performs a stunning piece of abstract dance, naked, shrugging off the ropes of cis feminists in a gesture of 'whatever', speaks so clearly to this situation. & then there's the trans femme art that disappeared through the decades, that confronted so much of this: i think of portraits of Greer Lankton, particularly the poster for 'Its about me... not you', where her body faces the camera, nude, her shoulders jaunt up, and she looks right, offset, ready to storm the institution or go do something better, to make one of her vicious, disturbed dolls.

Keep loving, keep fucking, & keep talking body politics.

[there is no emoji for her orgasm / epilogue]

Radical transfem(me)inism has always been about praxis. There is only so far that one can push, explore, forge & develop her desires as a single body in a double bed, or as second fiddle in the relationship. I'm sure that part of the reasons so many trans women pursue relationships with other trans women is the possibility of an equitable relation (provided one does not turn her hang-ups against her lover). Between the dampness of the summer, the vibrant light brimming through my femme flesh, & the hunger that builds through (the) sexual isolation (that i have known through so many years of my youth), i want us to find new ways of being through our bodies: to demolish the pity of respectable, bourgeois-trans with the sexual liberation we were always promised yet the first to be sacrificed for a place in the town hall; to walk into the world ravished, or indeed to ravish each other & our lovers in the world. To work through power and play, consentfully, lovingly: to build a love in and through desires, that trans, feminist & lesbian herstories teach us are often left unspoken, neglected, unfulfilled.

Next to the pessimism, frustration and hunger i hope this piece has managed to express, is the utopianism of queer, when our outsideness burns vibrant, when our dis/identifications render us beautiful to others and ourselves all the way through, when we breathe Foucault's 'friendship as a way of live', when we are full of dyke power out in the streets & between the sheets...

Between a raw nerve and a live wire

Notes on sparks and desires of trans femmes

How to fuck away your forced sterilisation? Sexual healing, social healing, what the fuck feminists. It's hard to be a slut when you are marked as predator. It's hard to be loved in the space of unlovability. Cis feminisms come with knee-jerks which keeps one at safe distance.

Comparing notes and triangulating – old school recipes for finding patterns, it is the early witchcraft leading, always, to a resounding NO. Live triangulating finding oneself added on, and (always unfortunately) disposed. Secondary partner, tertiary, squandered. Between vulnerability and disposability lies the space for abuse, attraction, service, and emotional labour.

There is no safe space in intimacy. They cut and cut and cut, and culled, defused the predator in their minds, leave one child and futureless. The eugenical practice of sterilising those that do not match their golden ratio, their rationale, their irrationalities. Cull one out of the species, keeping their genes at bay.

But bodies will generate, and generate other forms, other sabotages. The secrets of desires Nat writes about are the whispers in back rooms, the one night stands, the proud ornamentation, and the nothingness that follows. How can one be the right body? Form is a lie used for policing.

Listening to Soft Touch/Raw Nerve. Getting advice from Peaches. Doing what we can, listening, our beautiful ornamentation in our beautiful corners, flowering all through winter. Masturbating the pain away. God, we're sensitive. Sparks fly.

Reproductive rights and trans rights: deeply interconnected yet too often misunderstood?

Content note:
discusses sexual
assault

When the issue of reproductive justice is raised, many people tend to focus exclusively on cisgender women. It is of vital importance to extend reproductive justice-related activism and discourses to include trans/genderqueer/nonbinary and other gender-plural people, which also involves using gender-inclusive language. Over the last few years, trans activists have increasingly sought to highlight the salient reality that reproductive justice acutely concerns trans people, but more work is required to make reproductive justice-related debates and campaigns more trans-inclusive. The New York Abortion Access Fund (NYAAF), for example, has taken steps to alter its core documentation (including its mission statement) and make services more gender inclusive. When trans people are brought to deal with issues of reproductive justice, they are forced to face a redoubled dose of discrimination, uptight patriarchal attitudes, healthcare provision-related complications and social stigma—to name but a few.

Reproductive Rights and Trans Rights: Closely Intertwined

Just as trans identities are constantly attacked, insulted and questioned by trans-exclusionary reactionary feminists (TERFs—this writer categorically refuses to use the adjective ‘radical’ to describe this cohort, as there is nothing radical about them) upholding a narrowly defined set of ideas of yesteryear, the call

for gender inclusive language in reproductive justice-related campaigns, services and documentation routinely earns TERF wrath. Many trans activists and reproductive justice specialists have strongly demonstrated the abject ludicrousness of such critiques. Dr Cheryl Chastine MD, an abortion service provider, wrote a trenchant article last year, clarifying the importance of brushing off reactionary opposition and making a very strong case for rendering reproductive justice-related campaigns and services gender inclusive.

Just like trans identities, the issue of reproductive justice is one that deeply offends patriarchal assumptions of childbirth and parenting. This, if anything, provides a crucial reason to conceptualise reproductive justice as an issue that directly concerns a range of people, from cisgender women to transgender men and genderqueer/non-binary and other gender-plural people. In the recent past, there has been a positive upsurge of efforts to portray and share the stories of trans men and non-binary/genderqueer individuals who have experienced or are living through pregnancy, nursing and parenting. The documentary *A Womb of Their Own*, directed by Cynthia Lubow sheds light on multiple experiences of trans men and non-binary/genderqueer people when dealing with pregnancy, childbirth, nursing and parenting.

A photography project by Jess T. Dugan entitled *Every breath we drew* [<http://www.jessdugan.com/every-breath-we-drew>] also portrays images of trans men and nonbinary people experiencing pregnancy. The extent of concern in the worldwide trans community with regards to reproductive justice can be

glimpsed in the many blogs and information resources that have lately appeared online, especially catering to trans people, such as the blog Trans Pregnancy and Abortion Resource [<http://t-par.tumblr.com/>].

My body, my business: a poignant personal narrative

Making a crucial contribution to public awareness on trans identities and reproductive justice, trans men who have experienced reproductive-justice-related services, especially in the form of undergoing an abortion, are increasingly sharing their stories. These are stories that society and the media generally tend to shun, side-line, and misinterpret at best. An excerpt of one such account, of a trans man who had an abortion, is worth quoting at some length:

I'm a man. And I had an abortion when I was 27.

I'm trans, and I was sexually assaulted by a group of armed men who apparently could see past two years of testosterone treatment and wanted to "prove" that I was "really" a woman. It happened in broad daylight in a park. There were people within earshot, and no one did anything. Among the many other issues that arose out of the assault, I got pregnant.

I never thought I would have to worry about that. After all, I'd been on testosterone for two years and I felt sure that my whole reproductive system had been suppressed by the male hormones. But, hey, apparently that wasn't the case. It doesn't really make sense to me even now; by all scientific

rights, I should not have been able to conceive. Nonetheless, there I was, a man finding out that he was pregnant.

Getting that abortion probably saved my life
(emphasis mine).

The writer then powerfully highlights the interrelatedness between reproductive justice and justice for trans/genderqueer/nonbinary and other gender-plural people:

I believe in choice. I believe in bodily autonomy. I believe that people should have the right and opportunity to make choices about their bodies that are best for them. I don't think there's a litmus test for what qualifies as an "acceptable" abortion. I don't need someone telling me that my abortion was sort of ok because it was due to a sexual assault, but someone else's is not. That's not how choice works.

*Trans liberation and reproductive justice movements must go hand in hand. **Social justice movements in general need to be intersectional; struggles never just impact one kind of person. Trans individuals and those fighting for reproductive justice—and there are already plenty of people falling under both categories doing the work—probably agree that we're all working toward the same goal: the ability for each of us to inhabit our own bodies and be supported in doing so.** Lack of control over our bodies, sex and reproduction are huge issues for both trans and cisgender people. There's commonality in the fight for liberation (emphasis mine).*

Trans rights/justice and reproductive rights/justice are both struggles to gain control over one's body. The intersectionality between trans and reproductive justice therefore deserves increased attention and prioritising, among trans and pro-choice activists, lobbyists and rights advocates. It is of equal importance for legislatures and lawmakers to take into account the intersectional interconnectivities between trans and reproductive justice.

Aversion to trans bodies: signature feature of many a legislature?

Accessing reproductive justice-related care and support can be extremely challenging for trans men and genderqueer/non-binary people, irrespective of where they are based. Even in countries where reproductive justice is addressed with an open-minded spirit, trans people often risk negative treatment as a consequence of gender-identity-related conservatisms, prejudices and misunderstandings. Governments, even in countries celebrated for promoting equality and justice, have long used legislation on trans people's reproductive health as a weapon to abjectly dehumanise trans people.

Many countries continue to require trans people to undergo surgery for legal gender recognition. Until recently, several EU member states upheld a blatantly inhuman policy of forcing trans people to be sterilised prior to legal gender change. It was only in 2014 that Denmark scrapped this policy. Sweden, which had an identical policy, abolished it in 2012, and it was only in 2014

that Swedish authorities stopped requiring a compulsory mental health diagnosis for legal gender recognition. In a landmark move, Ireland passed a Gender Recognition Act in 2015, enabling legal gender change without any surgery. Yet, the Irish law does not recognise gender-non-conforming/nonbinary identities on identity documentation, and Ireland is also home to extremely rigid and restrictive legislation on accessing reproductive justice.

It was only in March 2015 that the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution that calls upon member states to address blatant discrimination against trans people, which often amounts to infringements of fundamental human rights. Although the abjectly inhuman compulsory sterilisation of trans people has been scrapped in several countries, acute breaches of fundamental rights continue in many countries, such as restrictions on relationships, obligations to divorce when changing one's legal gender, loss of control over one's body, including reproductive capabilities. Amnesty International emphasises trans rights in its campaigns, but a long way lies ahead for trans people to wholesomely secure their erstwhile fundamental rights.

Trans and reproductive justice: not a concern for the wealthy?

Reproductive justice is an issue that does not negatively affect the aforementioned privileged lobby, irrespective of the country

in question. In Ireland, a wealthy person, cis or trans, requiring an abortion always has the option of travelling to Britain or to a reputed private healthcare facility in continental Europe. The same applies to a rich (more often than not white) American requiring an abortion. Similarly—and herein lies the crucial socio-economic interconnection between trans rights and reproductive rights — it is ordinary and less privileged trans/gender-plural people who suffer from financial issues to access medical treatment required to simply feel comfortable in their bodies, to be able to see themselves in a mirror with confidence. The process of affirming one's true gender identity and real self[†] is time consuming and costly, and for those with limited means, it can take years. Just as for wealthy people seeking an abortion, the small minority of wealthy trans people can also access the highest-level services and care, whether their healthcare plan/NHS/social security covers the costs or not. Those campaigning for trans/nonbinary/gender-plural rights and reproductive rights and justice are therefore up against the same identical adversary—a neoliberal patriarchy with stern socioeconomic inequalities.

In conclusion, it is vital to reiterate how patriarchal conceptions of the gender binary make trans identities unwelcome in spaces related to childbirth, parenting and family lives. Society seeks to violently stigmatise parents who happen to be trans, as well as trans children. Oppressive and exclusionary value systems are at the heart of rigid perceptions of gender, informing people of what a 'mother' and a 'father' should look like, and, as opponents of equal marriage argue, that a real family is one with

a cisgender female mother and a cisgender male father. To take a cue from France's former Justice Minister Christiane Taubira, who passionately and powerfully tore patriarchal conceptions of family and parenting to pieces in defending her *Mariage pour tous* bill in 2013, it is extremely crucial to stand against and dismantle archaic patriarchal attitudes. The struggle for fundamental rights is very much a daily battle to trans and other gender plural people worldwide. To some trans men, pregnancy may represent an experience that collides with their gender identity. Others may perceive pregnancy as a unique element of trans manhood, and giving birth as a trans man as an extremely powerful (if not the most powerful) act of resistance against patriarchal gender norms and prejudices. When it comes to issues of pregnancy, childbirth and parenting, it is up to each individual (and on this note irrespective of their gender identity), and not to those paying lip service to patriarchy, to determine how they wish to proceed.

This is the erstwhile fundamental right that is being summarily denied to people, affecting cisgender women, trans men, and queer/nonbinary and other gender-plural people. Our bodies are ours, and legislatures and judiciaries ought to exist to facilitate our efforts to take control of and manage our bodies, and not to impose dogmas, piles of discrimination, violence and recrimination upon our bodies. When the latter occurs, it is crucial that we stand together, cis, trans/genderqueer/nonbinary/gender-plural, to fight tirelessly to dismantle repressive structures of oppression, and work towards liberation.

[†] This is an effort to avoid using the term ‘transition’– trans people do not ‘transition’ into something different, or to something they are not. All they do is discover their real gender identity, what they have always been in their inner selves, affirming who they really are, taking pride in their real selves, openly, in a process of redefining realness. The term ‘transition’ does not render justice to this strenuous and challenging yet extremely unique and rewarding experience.

Chamindra’s piece, shortened here, was originally published at *Medium*, 9th February 2016.

<https://medium.com/@fremancourt/reproductive-rights-and-trans-rights-deeply-interconnected-yet-too-often-misunderstood-8b3261b1b0de>



London, 11 July 2017

Amsterdam School
of
International
Relations

Dear,

The rain has arrived in Peckham. London south by South East is covered with the light drizzle that is ~~harmless~~ harmless, ~~not~~ not joyful. It perfectly juxtaposes the political climate.

I am reading Rimbaud and see to my delight that there is a lot of magnetism around the soul. I honestly am adjacent fresh from and there an overburdened catholic eye. I love my lancien & soul (the work on...) and (am very pleased with the resonance - if that's what is).

Rimbaud writes - "Poetry will not end its rhythm to action. it will be in advance." I wonder. I claim poetry follows action, but is Poetry acting. However, this might lead to

a separation of the visionary aspect. I am ready to concede a minimal separation of the soul that is perceived in the Schuylkill meadows the totality a momentous way. The is why as to our such impression of the space, which is why friends.

fishes.
Ringbaud mentions hearing the unford - which makes me wonder
if the poet is a visionary, at least on a Holmslaken making
inaccessible multitudes accessible (for some) in the spaces
where they would otherwise remain unseen.
The unford is in South East London

where they would otherwise remain unused.
 Asks - when it summer - rains in South by South East London
 the only birds that sing are the crows.
 I moved to Bonney in which I read that "the Saison en Enfer"
 (if that is what is meant by public programme) was written

in the week before the Commagards were slaughtered.
This brings me to my leg. There - as you might remember -
is a word "Géopolis". The urban mythical or not) pe-
pole was set fire to the city - the moment the army moved in.
This then refers to "a way of dying..." which is (hopefully)
reminiscent of Shakespeare's Hamlet. "The difference
between poetry and utopianism is being ready to kill yourself
instead of your children." No wonder we are currently
living in the baby boom box of marketing.
Having said all this, I needed to think of this all
because of my thesis - which ends with destroying the
polis with the help of poetry and everything suddenly came

together.

I'm a cut, lass - a puny pirate - navigating South by South East London and courting thy way, this bohemian city slightly adrift - as befits East London where the poet will leave the inscription that will turn to generation as bodies are so apt at doing.

Bodies always undo, as they cannot help it.
That is the greatest revolutionary comfort I can currently find.

Love,

Future Justice in the Present

What might a radical transfeminist vision of justice look like?

What it might be informed by? It's clear that radical transfeminism is a politics and praxis that necessarily must be prison abolitionist – we know from experience that the foundations of punishment within liberal capitalist society do not work for poor gender deviant, feminised subjects. We have experienced the coercions of white bourgeois hetero- and cis-sexist gender norms as a form of punishment, from the family to the institutions of civil society to the clinic to the prison industrial complex.

Furthermore, we know from experience that transmisogyny can and does manifest itself through the forms of punishment including of course physical violence and death, but also social isolation, denunciation, disqualification and exile – dished out from social institutions (prisons, schools, hospitals, universities) and their administrations, in workplaces, and even from the communities that we inhabit as marginalised folks (queer communities, feminist spaces, communities of people of colour). Reina Gossett speaks eloquently of the different types of isolation that face trans women of colour; and by disqualification I here mean a disqualification of our knowledge, work and livelihood on a social, infra- or micro-political level, and the disqualification of the value of our labour in a materialist sense as poor, trans, feminised workers within a racial and gendered division of labour under capitalism. (I've written about this all, at length, in my essay 'Transfeminine Brokenness, Radical Transfeminism' [*South Atlantic Quarterly* (116.3), 2017]).

What forms might radical transfeminist demands for reparations – or a reparative support or centring – *beyond* white- cis- hetero- able- patriarchal neoliberal capitalist society? How does the knowledge we bare within our bodies – that emerges when we come together and speak, share, theorise, act, organise and operate collectively – what might these knowledges bring for a social reconstruction and a refounding of justice in a transfeminist world or future?

Justice must be about a reparative relationship to each other that understands the centuries of violence of racial capitalism – of the enslavement of Africans, dispossession of indigenous lands, imperialism, private property, wage slavery, the history of the racial and gendered division of labour, the accumulation of capital, law and policing, prisons and asylums, financial capitalism, eugenics and the forced sterilisation trans people, people of colour and/or disabled people, the gendered violences of wars, atomic weapons, mass incarceration, the border regime, unemployment, austerity, innovations in the redistribution of wealth upwards and in revenue extraction, climate change and ecological collapse.

What might we demand in recompense as working bodies often demoted to the bottom of a racial and gendered division of labour under capitalism? Left to work precariously or to undertake stigmatised work such as sex work, where the stigma attached to such work rubs off onto all poor trans women – especially poor trans women of colour (See Monica Jones' thoughts on 'walking while trans'). In a reparative world that comes into being through the small, epic acts undertaken by prison abolitionists, where ought to be the bodies and lives

positioned near the bottom of neoliberal life, in the lower echelons of capital's racial and gender division of labour, disappeared into its prisons and institutions; how ought the lives of our sisters and siblings look today and tomorrow, and what are we going to do to engender enriched being?

Against the concordance of the criminalisation of sex work, which many trans women globally and locally, now and historically, depend on or have depended on for money; against the extra-judicial and material punishment for transgressing white hetero- and cis-sexist gender norms – which includes how these norms are imbricated and reproduced through a racial and gendered division of labour under capitalism. Against these historical conditions we posit our desire(s) for the abolition of such hierarchies, *expression after the shatter of these hierarchies*, a vision of a future where our bodies, lives and labour work *for* ourselves, for and in service of a world that we want to see, where we can thrive and control our collective destinies.

Towards a reparative future in the present; a reparative ecology against the historical violence of racial capitalism and its institutions; towards a future where the legacy of our being as trans women, trans femmes, of colour, migrant, white, queer, dis/abled; where, against the cells and borders of capital's dailiness, our actions and labour, our minor insurrections and collectivisms, are legible.

Recompense for Institutional Violences

Given that prisons are undoubtedly the most extreme sites of the state's attempts to legislate, regulate and control bodies

according to strict gender norms, the regulation and control of transgender bodies and/or female and/or feminised bodies, and other sexually deviant bodies is a common thread between most social institutions, manifesting in different ways and sometimes in concert between institutions. I think here of the differential treatment of trans prisoners (subject of Chryssy's PhD thesis), especially when it comes to accessing healthcare; I think also of the more commonly discussed 'trans broken arm' situation in healthcare, where a wide range of healthcare problems – from muscle strains to mental distress – are considered in relation to our 'diagnosis' as transgender or transsexual; I think, largely thanks to Mijke, of the historical and on-going forced sterilisation of trans people in Europe, of the futures and lives and familial forms challenged and denied by medical systems that refuse to believe such futures are possible, next to the misinformation imparted to trans people about our reproductive capabilities, and the scarce resources allocated to us if allocated at all; I think of the violence and harassment we have faced trying to study or pursue education at universities and schools – from bathroom access to material disadvantages to epistemological disqualification to out-right transphobic abuse from teachers and academics (and not just from TERFs). How many jobs does a radical transfeminist have to hold to down to fund her PhD? How far away does she have to be from her teachers in order to survive their teachings, the transmisogyny embedded all the way down through their attitudes, even in the attitudes of critical feminists? I first spoke these words half a street down the road from the university where I spent four long, depressive years taking an

undergraduate degree that I initially failed, as the only out trans person in the university, where I had no more than one conversation about my trans status with university staff and none with academic staff (so much for support!). Isolated and adrift within the school system under and post-Section 28; shielding oneself in the university, where the union who are supposed to have your back are unable to conceive of your being even in Equality Act 2010 directives (gender as 'gender (no change)', and 'gender reassignment (new definition)').

I raise these points about the University, next to the more familiar forms of administrative violence from state bureaucracy and cis-sexist and transphobic healthcare provisions, because a vision of justice must not just be about transforming or destroying these institutions. The historical violence of such institutions, much of which is often illegible, sometimes revisited anecdotally within trans community but not necessarily politicised, *cannot be simply be fixed through social inclusion*. These institutions must be held accountable. We have barely survived them. We already did not survive the university. We already did not survive the hospital, the clinic. We know that trans women are taking their lives in prisons, and having their affirmations of gender and sexuality denied on the inside (see the case of Paris Green in HMP Edinburgh, moved to a men's prison cause she was having too much sex in the women's prison).

The accounting of history, more concrete than the fictions of financial capital, has much to repay us. We want our roses and we're here to get them. From our bones and this rubble and glass, the concretion of our futures with justice.

Politics of Space

for use at the LCCT, 26/27 June 2015

In June 2015, Mijke, Chryssy and Nat (aka the Deptford Wives) organised a mini conference on Radical Transfeminism in London, UK, as part of the London Conference in Critical Theory [LCCT]. Trans, non-binary and cis people of various genders joined us from across Europe for two days of discussions on #transliberalism, trans equality law, the politics of care, racism, representation, sex worker transfeminisms, crip theory, herstory/h/story, time-travelling, and totalitarianism.

We organised the conference on no money and often stolen time, and in doing so were unable to provide a safe space. So we produced a politics of space for the conference. We got really positive feedback on this, so share it here as a document of both our work and a model that we hope may be of use.

We cannot provide a safe space. We haven't aimed to provide a safe space, as organising the conference was already more than we could, in fact, accommodate in our lives.

Therefore, instead of offering up a safe space, we will offer up a politics of space. This politics emerged through the topic of the conference: Radical Transfeminism.

The LCCT was keen to host our stream, and we did bring up toilets. They promised to take care of it, and they have created gender neutral toilets in the building. The politics of toilets is so basic, that we don't want to discuss it as such in these panels, since one could go to The Labour Party and have the discussion on it, with the predictable conclusion.

The same goes for pronouns. We will not actually want to discuss pronouns too much. If you don't know them: avoid them; if you know them: flag them; and in doubt: if you talk with somebody, you don't need pronouns. You only need them if you talk about somebody. We are here for conversation with each other, acknowledge each other by name, in the 2nd person, or by the pronoun they use. If you want to discuss pronouns more, the break is excellent for that. Please use this conference for a conversation on radical transfeminism.

We expect that most people that came to the stream on radical transfeminism have a better than basic understanding of the politics of trans. We are not here to discuss transfeminism as such, but to articulate a radical politics in the light of a rise in #transliberalism.

However, within the topic of trans not all people experience oppression, or in the same way. We want each person to acknowledge that. So if your racialisation is white, and race is discussed, we ask you to be acutely aware of your lack of experience of oppression, likely complicity in contributing to existing oppressions and either listen very carefully to the discussion, or only contribute when you have a well articulated and thought-through opinion to offer. If you do not understand certain things on a topic where your experience is on the privileged side, for instance because you are white, go in the break to a white person and ask what you do not understand. They might be able to indicate resources, discussions, and information. Take your time to read them, digest them, and acknowledge them. The same goes for when you are the privileged side of ability, class, more masculine, or if you do not

have a migrant status, or are young. Take your time to understand what is going on, and remember that it is often more necessary to digest, than to react.

We, the organisers, will be chairing the panels. One of us will be chairing each panel, and the other two will be in the space helping out when necessary. The three of us cover a lot of the intersectional grounds, but not everything, nor can we always oversee everything. Therefore we ask you to support your friends in case they seem to go overboard in some discussions.

Supporting here means: calm them down if necessary, explain the topic, explain routes to resources, help them to understand. If your friend is called out, support your friend by helping them to understand what went on. It is unnecessary and unfair to ask that of the person who had to do the calling out. Since politics is always interactive, and it is necessarily public, and we are building a radical transfeminism, we expect you to work together in order to ensure the politics of this space remain both radical and cooperative.

This politics of space is written before the conference. If we miss out on things, please bring it up, and we will add it.

This politics of space is for the LCCT conference only. If you think it is a helpful manual, or parts of it, and you want to use it elsewhere, you are more than welcome. Please be so kind to inform us how you altered it, so we can use that possibly in the future too.

In solidarity, Mijke, Chryssy, Nat

STRIKE! A statement from the transfeminist strikers of the Cirque Conference (L'Aquila, Italy, 31st March – 2nd April, 2017)

In Spring 2017, a group of academics and students organised a strike at the first CIRQUE (Interuniversity Centre for Queer Research, Italy) Conference – an international queer studies conference – in L'Aquila, Italy. The strike was against precarity; structural ignorance, racism, and sexism; and unpaid pedagogical and emotional in the academy. Furthermore, the city of L'Aquila – following a major earthquake in 2009 – has been a site of major state abuse, repression and neglect in the name of neoliberalism.

This statement was born as a bilingual text. Italian, English and bilingual statements, and an extended statement on the strike can be read at <https://SomMovimentonazioAnale.noblogs.org>

We are trans, lesbians, butches, femmes, queers, feminists, trans-queers of color. We are wageless scholars or with intermittent wages, activists, performers, translators, tenured professors whose lives are made miserable by neoliberal academia for being too critical, too emotional, too subjective or too “niche”. We come from and live in different geographical and cultural contexts.

We feel the need and the urge to share how, during a conference politically problematic as many others, but maybe a little bit worse than others, something emerged that we came to see as a form of STRIKE from precarious academic work, but also from the additional exploitation and alienation that we suffer as trans, queer, lesbian, racialized workers in the academic industrial complex and in the cultural production industrial

complex. We see this STRIKE deeply connected to the 8th march women's global strike.

We witnessed many times people trying to depoliticize and appropriate "queer", but we have to say that the way this was done in the conference in L'Aquila by the CIRQUE (Interuniversity Centre for Queer Research), from the 31st March till the 2nd April was worse than usual, in terms of sense of entitlement, violence and lack of sensitivity.

The last day of the conference, we were drained and we had had enough. We striked from the official panel were we were supposed to be, some of us as audience, some of us as speakers, and we carved out the time and the physical and discursive space for a self-managed, autonomous transfeminist session.

We created a space in which we could discuss among different subjectivities, united by mutual recognition and the practice of politics of positioning. A space where we could advance our thoughts and therefore our struggles. A space where we could not be pushed back again and again by the ignorance stemming from the privilege of dominants groups.

We interrupted the pedagogic labour, the emotional labour and the educational labour toward the dominant classes, that unrecognized and unpaid labour that is expected from us each time we suffer violence in and outside university, each time people expect us to explain carefully and patiently to the poor straight white male full of good intentions (or the white cis gay male, or any other subject in a position of privilege in the specific situation) why this or that behaviour of his hurts us and is

politically problematic; each time we have to remedy the ignorance or satisfy the curiosity of the "normal" people as a condition to be "accepted". The cirque conference put us in this situation many, too many and unbearable times.

We interrupted the exhausting work of networking that is supposed to be important in maybe getting us a job one day, maybe just another underpaid job. Instead we took the space and time to collectively take care of ourselves and OUR needs (and we needed it, after all the shit we went through).

We refused to comply with the imperative of "being visible", instead we gave visibility to the invisible work that we re-produce all the time.

We stopped competing with each other to get the recognition of our work and we made space to exchange/share recognition among peers in a horizontal way, and to share knowledges embodied in our lives.

We un-occupied this space (we took this space ourselves) and we defended it. Some of the organizers showed up, naively convinced as they were, that even this time and this space were devoted to addressing them; for them it was impossible to imagine that in this space privileges could be named, power relationships challenged, pedagogy interrupted to the point that they would feel uncomfortable, in the wrong place, unwelcome, expelled, so that they had to get out the room.

We demand better conditions for this unrecognized, economic, affective and care labour that we produce for the academy. Given that we already have to resist multiple oppressions in society, we refuse to have to make space and perform with

difficulty unpaid labour in a supposedly "friendly" and "progressive" academic environment which proves instead to be hostile and violent.

Our strike is against the epistemic violence, against the unpaid and unrecognized labour, that is extracted from us, the labour of explaining oneself and educating dominant classes; against precarization, exploitation and oppression that academic workers suffer. Against racism and Islamophobia and pinkwashing. We strike against these things because they have material consequences on our lives of queers, trans, precarious folks far beyond university.

Thanks to the solidarity and creativity that allowed us to partially transform our irritation, anger and pain into a tool for resistance, friction is healing. We heal, but why do those who hurt us not see the need to question themselves or face accountability for their actions? We won't shut up.

Queer and trans thought in and outside the academy is experience based and must support our lives and our struggles.

Ultimately, they can't hold us down, we resist, we strike, we fight back. The cissexistableistcapitalistwhitemaleheteropatriarchy will crumble and die and a more beautiful transfeminist queer world will arise.



Trans Health Manifesto

Edinburgh Action for Trans Health

Introduction

Following the centuries-long repression of trans lives at the hands of the state, the next stage in the UK government's war of bureaucratic attrition is the recent publication of an NHS consultation that fails in every possible capacity, and a survey that gathers less data than we've already presented them. We call upon everyone fighting for the health of trans people to boycott this consultation & the survey, and reject its procedures & results in full. We encourage hostile participation in the form of direct submissions of demands that don't react to the questions posed or restrict themselves to the scope imposed by the government.

We wholly reject the NHS's attempt to codify the abuse, torment & traumatising of trans people under the guise of 'healthcare'. We demand accountability for the historic & present abuse of power that the NHS has encouraged glorified psychiatrists to carry out. You do not own our bodies, you cannot control our lives, and you will not prevent our needs being met. We will not tolerate compromise.

The following living document is our vision for trans futures. We do not consider that our work will ever be complete, there will always be greater things on the horizon. As such, this manifesto is not final, but an open draft which will evolve as we do. This is our call to action. We will fight anyone who stands in the way of universal liberation. This is war, and we will win.

Trans Health Manifesto

Trans health is bodily autonomy. We will express our needs, and they will be met. We will change our bodies however we want. We will have universally accessible and freely available hormones & blockers, surgical procedures, and any other relevant treatments and therapies. We will end the medical gatekeeping of our bodies. We will have full, historical accountability for the abuses perpetuated against us in the name of 'healthcare'. We will see reparations for these crimes, and the crimes committed against others in our names.

We are not too ill, too disabled, too anxious, too depressed, too psychotic, too Mad, too foreign, too young, too old, too fat, too thin, too poor, or too queer to make decisions about our bodies and our futures. We are all self-medicating. Our agency will be recognised. We each labour far harder for the health of ourselves and those around us than any doctor ever has, and we will continue build supportive communities on principles of mutual aid.

We deny the separation of bodies, minds, and selves - a violence against any part of us is a violence against all of us. We believe that the epidemic of chronic conditions in our communities is a consequence of the war of attrition waged against us over centuries. We do not exist in isolation, and it is essential to our healthcare that we are all healing together, healing each other, and healing our world. We will heal the damage of borders and states, government and authority, capitalism and imperialism.

We recognise that the history of trans medicine is a history of colonial and fascist abuse. We see the history of eugenicist experimentation from Nazi concentration camps, to the colonial implementation of the West's regime of the gender binary, to

virginity tests for South Asian and other Women of Colour in the UK in the 1970s; from the sterilisation & birth control trials forced on the women of Puerto Rico, to the thousands of Black and brown people who have died on NHS psychiatric wards; from the denial of the reproductive rights of disabled people, to the denial of access to abortions to people in the North of Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, past and present. We see the continued manifestation of eugenicist medicine in the denial of our bodily autonomy as trans people today: from coercive surgeries on intersex infants, to forced sterilisation in parts of Europe, policing of and misinformation regarding our sexual reproduction, to gatekeeping of surgeries and medicines.

Our fight for bodily autonomy cannot be separated from our fight for reproductive justice. The demand to do what we want with our bodies is necessarily a demand for free and accessible abortions, for the decriminalisation of sex work, and for universal self-determination. We fight for an end to borders, prisons and police. We recognise that we do not exist independently of our environment, and so our fight for self-determination and health is a fight for climate justice, too. We are not separate from our environment, health is unattainable while the water is poisoned and the land is scorched.

There will be no clinics, and no authorities. We will conduct our own research, and experiment with our own bodies. We will heal and grow together. We will accumulate knowledge and share it freely and accessibly. **We demand nothing less than the total abolition of the clinic, of psychiatry, and of the medical-industrial complex. We demand an end to capitalist & colonialist "medicine".**

We demand hormones & blockers are made available over-the-counter and by free prescription upon request. We need free, universal access to safe hormones & blockers at any age, the opportunity to decide our own doses, and universally accessible information on the safety & efficacy of different regimens. We are already taking hormones in this way, so this demand is simply that the danger of doing so is effectively mitigated.

We demand that all therapies that can be are made available at drop-ins, with self-referral for any therapy or procedure for which drop-in is unsuitable.

We demand anonymous blood tests, both postal & at drop-in endocrinology clinics, where we can seek the advice of a consultant if we wish.

We demand the freedom to alter our bodies without justification. We demand an end to all surgical prerequisites - nobody should have to prove life experience, health or have to be taking hormones in order to exercise bodily autonomy. **We demand that these surgeries can be highly customised** to meet our individual & unique needs. **We demand the right to multiple surgeries, including reversal** of previous surgeries if desired, so that we do not have to fear regret. **We demand the free & timely provision** of genital surgeries, additive & reductive chest surgeries, hysterectomies and orchiectomies, tracheal & vocal surgeries, facial surgeries, lipoplasty, contouring & microdermabrasion, surgical hair removal & transplantation, and **any other possible procedure** to meet our needs as we express them.

We demand resources for hair removal anywhere on our bodies, and the option of local anaesthetic during these

procedures.

We demand voice coaching that does not coerce us to alter our voices in ways we do not express a need for, but respects our accents and our right to express ourselves however we desire.

We demand access to counselling & and any other therapies we choose.

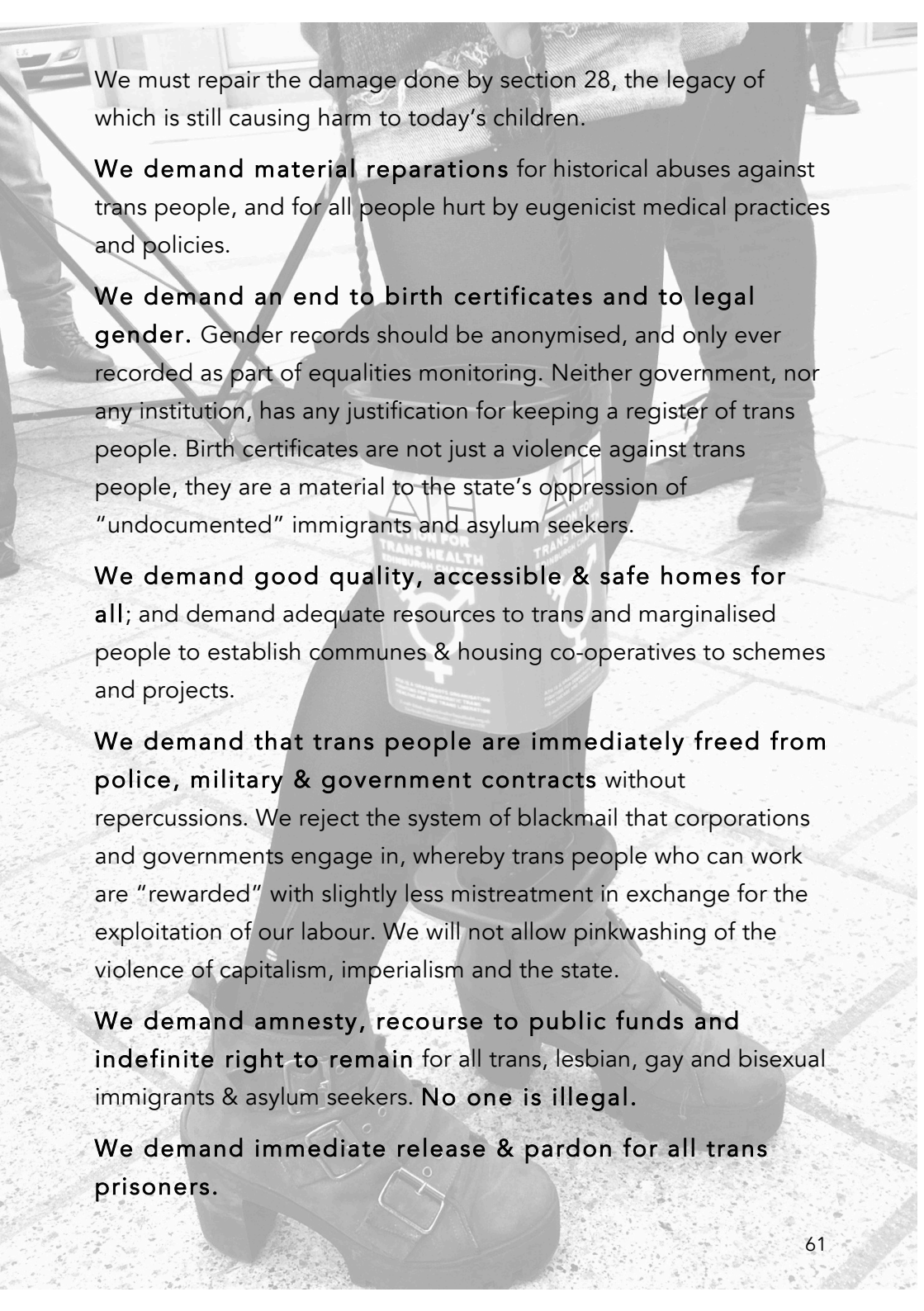
We demand the revocation of medical licenses from all gender clinic doctors & nurses, past and present.

We demand the power to hold abusers of medical & administrative power accountable for historical & present injustices.

We demand medical training to enable us to safely carry out medical procedures & research for each other, for anyone of us who wants to learn. We will enhance our collective knowledge, so that the means to understand our bodies is universally accessible. We demand to improve the quality of medications we take and procedures we undergo, to reduce negative side effects in the long term, and to highlight our own experience and understanding of their effects on our bodies.

We demand research centres & libraries of knowledge, autonomously & horizontally organised by and for trans people, in which research subjects are equal participants in deciding the experiments conducted & the manner in which those experiments are carried out. **We demand full funding** for any research or projects undertaken by these collectives.

We demand mandatory education, written & taught entirely by trans people, at all educational stages, from nursery to adulthood. Trans kids have a need to understand themselves, in the context of their own bodies, lives & experiences.

A grayscale background image of a person in a wheelchair. The person is wearing a dark jacket and dark pants. They are holding a large, dark-colored protest sign with white text and symbols. The sign features a transgender symbol (a circle with a cross, a circle with a dot, a circle with a horizontal bar, and a circle with a vertical bar) and the words "TRANS FOR TRANS HEALTH". The person is sitting on a paved surface, and the legs of other people are visible in the background.

We must repair the damage done by section 28, the legacy of which is still causing harm to today's children.

We demand material reparations for historical abuses against trans people, and for all people hurt by eugenicist medical practices and policies.

We demand an end to birth certificates and to legal gender. Gender records should be anonymised, and only ever recorded as part of equalities monitoring. Neither government, nor any institution, has any justification for keeping a register of trans people. Birth certificates are not just a violence against trans people, they are a material to the state's oppression of "undocumented" immigrants and asylum seekers.

We demand good quality, accessible & safe homes for all; and demand adequate resources to trans and marginalised people to establish communes & housing co-operatives to schemes and projects.

We demand that trans people are immediately freed from police, military & government contracts without repercussions. We reject the system of blackmail that corporations and governments engage in, whereby trans people who can work are "rewarded" with slightly less mistreatment in exchange for the exploitation of our labour. We will not allow pinkwashing of the violence of capitalism, imperialism and the state.

We demand amnesty, recourse to public funds and indefinite right to remain for all trans, lesbian, gay and bisexual immigrants & asylum seekers. **No one is illegal.**

We demand immediate release & pardon for all trans prisoners.

Notes on the Contributors

AB Silvera [Age: 34. Nationality: Argentine-Uruguayan-Italian.] is, in the words of Hotpress Magazine, 'a south american transsexual who was born a boy' and little else apparently. She likes football and videogames and transformers and comics. She does stand-up comedy a bunch and can make you dance to 80s cheesiness at the drop of a hat. She hosts the best Eurovision parties. She's pretending she's not writing this but she totally is. She just loves throwing those Eurovision parties man. For real. Twitter: @ab_silvera.

Chamindra is a political analyst and freelance journalist.
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Chryssy lives and researches at the edges of sexgender lived and re-lived experiences. Interested in aspects of embodied and mental fluidity and lives lived in perpetual states of construction and creation. She also addresses how, in such liminal spaces, issues and states of recognition, equality, equanimity and fulfilment can be effectively framed and achieved. She's an activist and an engager, a Virgo and a Scorpio.

Edinburgh Action for Trans Health is a local chapter of Action or Trans Health – a grassroots organisation fighting for democratic trans healthcare and trans liberation.

KUCHENGA is a black trans feminist who publishes online journalism at Wear Your Voice and Gal Dem while working with Black Lives Matter UK and Bent Bars. She resides in Battersea and can often be found frolicking by the Thames with her miniature schnauzer Nene. Twitter: @kuchengcheng. Web: www.kuchenga.com

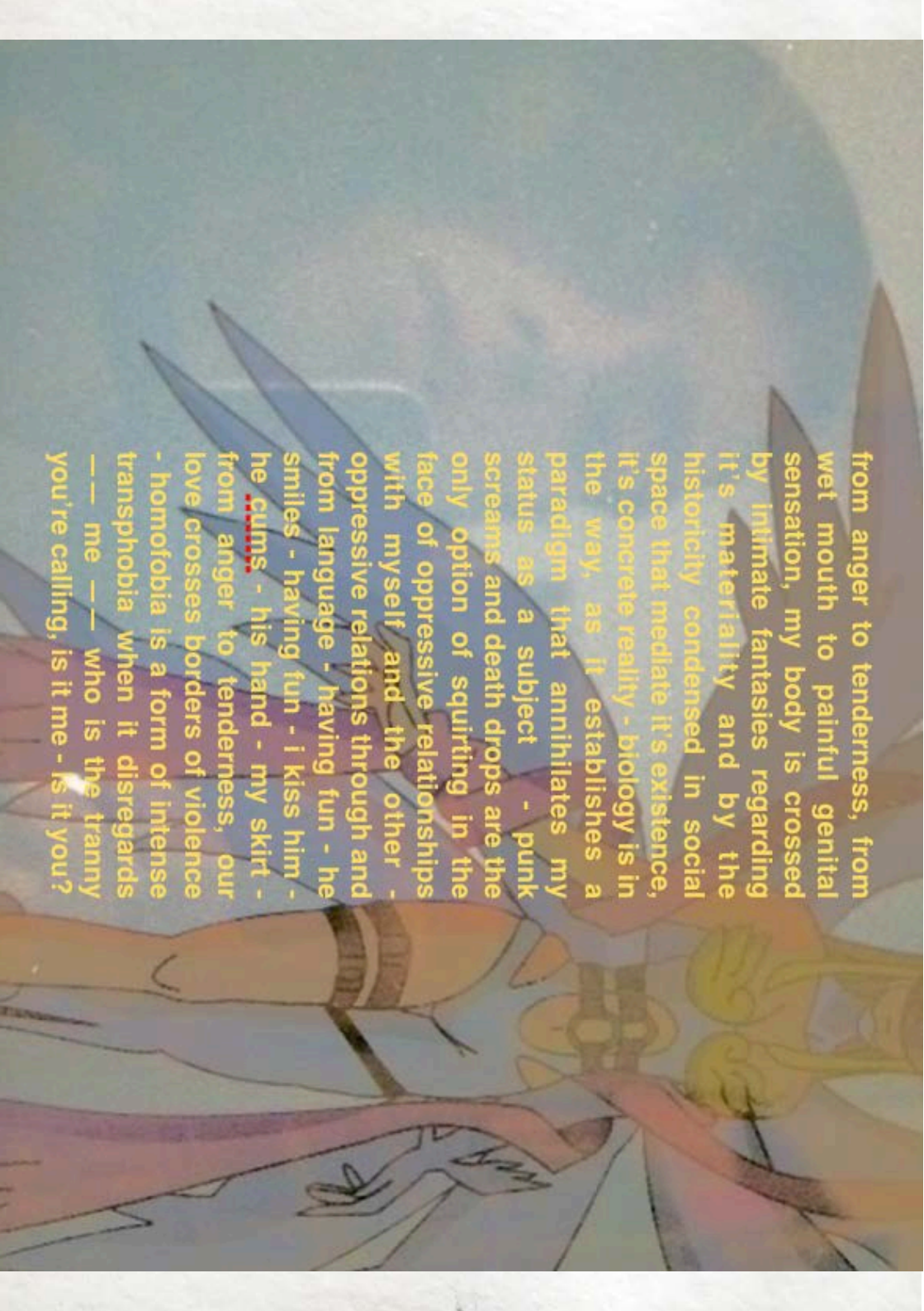
Mijke is philosopher and dancer. Dead end jobs led to over-education, and Mijke teaches now in and outside of academia, doing dead end jobs as life support. Having been a midwife for various farm animals, Mijke has some hesitation to believe the written word will sort out the world. However, philosophy provides also an amazing source of fun, and needs to be rewritten anyway, so why not get on with it? Thanks to amazing collaborations, for instance with Nat and Chryssy on Radical Transfeminism, or with Alex Reuter on film, and various collectives, Mijke has seen social change in action.

mukund wants free meds forever and more friends to draw with
^^

Nat is a poet & radical transfeminist, based in Edinburgh, Scotland. She's written a couple of books of poetry, performed her work internationally, & her essay 'Transfeminine Brokenness, Radical Transfeminism' was recently published in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*. Instagram: @full_nommunism.

Web: sociopathicsemaphores.blogspot.co.uk

Odete works through the fields of visual and performing arts, writing, djaying and lightning design. Her work focuses on the intersection between intimate fantasies, historical constraints and imaginary friendships.



from anger to tenderness, from
wet mouth to painful genital
sensation, my body is crossed
by intimate fantasies regarding
it's materiality and by the
historicity condensed in social
space that mediate it's existence,
it's concrete reality - biology is in
the way, as it establishes a
paradigm that annihilates my
status as a subject - punk
screams and death drops are the
only option of squirting in the
face of oppressive relationships
with myself and the other -
oppressive relations through and
from language - having fun - he
smiles - having fun - i kiss him -
he ~~cums~~ - his hand - my skirt -
from anger to tenderness, our
love crosses borders of violence
- homophobia is a form of intense
transphobia when it disregards
--- me --- who is the tranny
you're calling, is it me - is it you?