

General Editors' Introduction

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Looking back over the first volume of *TSQ*, including this issue devoted to cultural production with which our inaugural year concludes, we are struck anew by the depth and breadth of research that can be conducted through the lens of transgender studies. As editors Julian B. Carter, David J. Getsy, and Trish Salah point out in the opening paragraph of their introduction, the question of how creativity expresses itself through the cultural reworking of the material world, including the transformation of our own living bodies, cannot be separated from very general questions about the long arc of our species' experience, the human enterprise, and the evolving margins of these undertakings. Transgender studies can thus sink long taproots into analyses grounded in the concept of culture, histories of art, philosophies of the body, and theories of representation as it tries to make sense of a contemporary moment in which mass media completely saturated with trans-content, and trans-related literary works, visual media, and other arts practices are exploding into unprecedented levels of popular awareness and critical attention.

Significantly, the field of cultural production encompassing trans- topics increasingly includes work that addresses neither the making of art and literature by people understood to be transgender in some sociological sense nor the representation of such lives in creative work but, rather, that expresses capacities, perceptions, feelings, and knowledges informed, often obliquely and in non-identitarian ways, by experiences and consequences of nonnormative genderings and embodiments. Perhaps transgender creativity can be thought to occupy a chaotic intersection, at which Eurocentric modernity's ongoing quest for the transcendence of tradition through new aesthetic forms crashes into the limit of our dawning reality that we are living amid what will likely be viewed as the next great planetary extinction. Might *transgender* name no more and no less than the common work of imagining the transformation of our embodied personhood in light of a future in which "human" as we have known it will be absent, perhaps having become something else?

If there is an overarching theme in the work collected herein, it is that of the relationship between *trans-* and *poiesis*: etymologically, simply “making”; literally, the root of poetry, which is a making of meaning that exceeds the functional communicative use of language; materially and metaphorically, a plusive breath of life into word; critically, as in Heidegger, that which brings forth; most expansively, a creative action that transforms and continues the world. How might transversal movement across existing categorizations, conceptualizations, and organizations of being be generative of new becomings, emergent life, novel modes of continuance? These are the questions that motivate trans cultural production, that invite us all to move and to make ourselves and our worlds differently.

To engage with and enact such concerns in the pages of an academic journal is to confront restrictions in one’s mode of expression: we must work in print media, with a few pictures. Printed words stage the body’s absence, yet the relationship of creative expression to bodies in processes of transformation is precisely what seems most vital to address. Consequently, the work collected here is, for the most part, the representation in words of works of cultural production in other media. The editors of this issue nevertheless have done a commendable job selecting a collection of essays that document the wide range of contemporary trans cultural production, including work not only on literature but also on photography, film, architecture, dance, theater, performance art, new media, and curation. These essays offer the field of transgender studies a useful point of departure for the ongoing and potentially vast undertaking of trans cultural criticism and the interpretation of trans cultural production.