

**Nat Raha**

Transfeminine Brokenness,  
Radical Transfeminism

**T**o name the states of our brokenness:

depression, hurt, trauma, fatigue/exhaustion,  
overwork, sadness, loneliness, stress, mental  
and physical tension, isolation; anomie and  
boredom and discontent; unemployment,  
underemployment, low wages;  
to be disregarded as a sexual subject; surviving  
abuse and abusive relationships, incarceration,  
violence including sexual violence;  
anger, Madness, and the labels of “crazy,”  
“psychotic,” “mentally ill”;<sup>1</sup> the transphobic slurs  
that are too familiar;  
to be outcast, or the pariah, to be exiled;  
the disqualification of the transfeminine.

To speak of desire in its multiplicities: the survival and breathing and possibility of transfeminine desire amid and beyond our social and material conditions—of austerity, racism, xenophobia, transphobia and transmisogyny, ableism, whorephobia.<sup>2</sup> How can we connect these conditions that undergird the negative affects of transfeminine life to ground a politicized understanding of our brokenness?

To speak of our states of brokenness: states where bodies are jammed, depowered, isolated, the struggle to begin to speak of these states; states of anger, distress, and depression, each feeding into the next; the horizon of

the day closing;<sup>3</sup> closed, the pull of inactivity, tending toward the rejection of sociality; a state in which we suspend care for our bodies or are isolated in caring for our bodies; the fact that the quick fixes in self-care offered by capital, commodity exchange, and consumption are largely unaffordable; the state in which concentration disintegrates in front of one's pleasures; to go to the workplace or Jobcentre Plus,<sup>4</sup> silent, alienated, reinforcing one's depression; the state of understanding the workplace as a ruse of the expression of one's self and gender;<sup>5</sup> the state in which one's humanity is disqualified due to the work one undertakes, disqualified as feminists or as women for selling sex as a means to money, the psychic fallout of such disqualifications; the state in which community and cohesion do not materialize into socially reproductive, sustainable care (beyond lovers and individual friends); a state in which discourses of sexuality and sexual reproduction elide the lived particularities of our bodies;<sup>6</sup> a state without a discourse to speak of abuse and its impact on trans and queer bodies and lives in our/their particulars; a state in which desire and need and love emerge only through the inauguration of worlds that do not yet exist. Such are these states of our brokenness.

### **Trans Liberalism at the Borders of Brexit**

At this pivotal, historical moment of neoliberal structural adjustment following the 2008 financial crisis and the ascendancy of far-right politics this decade, the position of transgender people is marked by extreme contradiction. There is little doubt that public discourse and consciousness of trans issues in the West is developing, in part through positive media representation and trans celebrities, hailed as “The Transgender Tipping Point” by *Time* magazine’s May 2014 issue, which featured Laverne Cox on its cover. Along with this new visibility comes a fresh push for transgender legal rights, including the pursuit of widespread legal gender recognition, employment rights, rights for trans-related health care, and marriage rights. However, the stratification of livable trans and gender-nonconforming lives along the lines of race, class, gender, dis/ability, nationality, and migration status remains firmly and increasingly in place, as neoliberal governments disinvest in social security, ramp up racialized policing and the criminalization of certain—largely Muslim and black—migrant persons, and facilitate innovative methods in the upward redistribution of wealth while amplifying xenophobic rhetoric and policy. This moment of liberal transgender politics, which I have elsewhere described as “trans liberalism,” harmonizes with global capitalist restructuring and reaffirms this stratification (Raha 2015).

Such capitalist restructuring takes forms known as austerity, structural adjustment, and the extraction of wealth from surplus populations including incarcerated people, alongside migrant persons and refugees.

Following the election of Donald Trump in the United States, the outcome of the United Kingdom's referendum to leave the European Union (aka Brexit), and the far-right populism that is captivating Europe, the politics of trans liberalism faces a potential backlash from the far right. While the particular local and national contexts of trans politics and consciousness of trans issues across these countries varies considerably, the project of trans legal enfranchisement through parliamentary democracy may be fractured through increased policing at the level of one's citizenship, as "immigration enforcement" is both rhetorically invoked and practically implicated across all spheres of public and private life. In the case of the United Kingdom, Brexit further undermines the means to economic survival for all who do not hold a UK passport working in the country—that is, the rights to remain in the country to work and live, which have already been undercut this decade for black and/or Muslim people. Alongside the refusal of the Conservative government led by Theresa May to guarantee job security for European Union workers is the spike in racist and xenophobic violence following the referendum, amid the naturalization and perpetration of xenophobia by newspapers. Although the British Conservative government can claim a progressive attitude on LGBT issues following the legalization of same-sex marriage in 2013,<sup>7</sup> and while fresh trans equality legislation may be put to members of parliament this decade, the government has made immigration enforcement a statutory duty of employers, universities, schools, and landlords, and the United Kingdom continues to attempt to deny the right of asylum to LGBTQ asylum seekers. Legislation including the Prevent Duty (part of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015) and the Immigration Act 2016—both architected by Theresa May as Home Secretary—make it a statutory requirement for employers to check passports, visas, and work permits of current, and in some cases prospective, employees (with the possibility of facing criminal charges if they do not comply); for universities to report student attendance to the government, at the risk of losing their power to sponsor visas for international students; and for teachers to refer students at "risk" of "radicalization" to the government. Moreover, landlords face criminal charges for leasing property to people who are in the United Kingdom "illegally," and the government has extended its "deport first, appeal later" scheme to all migrant persons in the United Kingdom (Lea 2016). This is part of the materialization of the border in the workplace, the border in the

home, the border in the school, the border in the university, the border at the Jobcentre Plus, the border in the hospital, the border in the marriage registry, the border in the street.

We face a new era of identity checks that will disproportionately impact people of color and trans and gender-nonconforming people (of color), especially for people without documents or anything but a UK passport. Trans and gender-nonconforming people face particular challenges in finding work, including but by no means limited to issues with documentation, issues around discrimination (despite limited trans protections in employment and during the hiring process under the Equality Act 2010),<sup>8</sup> the psychic difficulties of working within cis-dominated workplaces, alongside the underfunding of the LGBTQ voluntary sector amid general conditions of downsized, disinvested, and precarious work, housing and public services, and the ongoing criminalization of sex work. Further checks of one's immigration status will only compound these intersecting issues and create additional mental distress. The pursuit of trans rights, and LGBTQ rights more generally, through the channels of parliamentary democracy entails pursuing rights while the means of accessing those rights become predicated on our status as UK passport holders with access to wealth. This is not to say that the rights we currently have—particularly the Equality Act 2010—must not be defended; we must however be hyper-aware of how they may be undermined through other means that may not be clearly demarcated as “transgender issues.” The most visible instance may be the government's current plans to scrap the United Kingdom's Human Rights Act 1998, which codifies the European Convention on Human Rights. The next stage of the transformation of material conditions under austerity in the United Kingdom couples the dismantling of social support, the welfare state, and the privatization of the National Health Service to the introduction of the border into all aspects of life. On which side of the border trans activism places its support will be critical for the efficacy and power of this movement.

It is statistically and socially evident—wherever such statistics exist—that capitalist restructuring and austerity policies have a disproportionate impact on LGBTQ people and people of color (Mitchell et al. 2013; Runnymede Trust 2015). Manifestations of intermeshing forms of transphobia and transmisogyny, antiblackness, racism, xenophobia, whorephobia, femmephobia, and ableism, working in concert to create conditions of slow death, social death, and actual death for poor trans women and trans femmes/of color and/or trans sex workers are inextricable from structural economic transformations and exacerbated by the fresh governance around immigration.<sup>9</sup> At

the extreme of this continuum of violence is the murder of trans women—and trans women of color and trans sex workers in particular—across the globe and the overrepresentation of trans and gender-nonconforming people in the prison populations such as in the United States.<sup>10</sup> In suggesting that these social and economic conditions create a situation of slow death for poor trans women and trans femmes/of color and/or sex workers, I draw on Lauren Berlant's (2011: 95) formulation where "*slow death* refers to the physical wearing out of a population in a way that points to its deterioration as a defining condition of its experience and historical existence." Berlant argues that this is part of "the phenomena of collective physical and psychic attenuation from the effects of global/national regimes of capitalist structural subordination and governmentality" (95). This formulation presents a conceptual bridge across the affects and experience of transfeminine brokenness—the constellation of affective states named in the previous section—to our position as poor feminized bodies within neoliberal capitalist societies, whose situations may never be alleviated through trans rights, hate crime laws, etc. In suggesting that poor transfeminine people exist and live within a situation of slow death, I do not intend to romanticize or fetishize trans life in general, and transfeminine life in particular, in a manner that dehumanizes these/our lives (which in the context of cultural representation, leaves audiences to take pity on our lives while we are stripped of agency); nor do I intend to reinscribe the pathologization of trans life—especially disabled trans life. Rather, I intend to politicize our sense of feeling as a part of social and material injustice that must be transformed; and to center this physical and psychic attenuation in a historicized understanding of our experience.

The quantification of social and material challenges facing LGBTQ people in general, and trans people in particular, often leaves little space to conceptualize the affective and emotional experiences that cohere and dematerialize under these conditions and their political implications. Quantitative or statistical analysis also circumvents questions of agency and the opportunity to conceptualize transfeminist life and struggle as enacted and supported through forms of collectivity—of practical support, knowledge sharing, or politicized world-making. This essay offers one account of the social and material basis on which transfeminine life is fractured and presents the affects of such fractures. I offer it with an awareness that the political and material background of trans and queer liberalisms within contemporary neoliberal capitalism ensures that certain groupings of poor, trans, and queer people are class fodder as cheap, precarious labor for the reproduction

of capital—at best granted formal legal rights, but with a cost. We struggle to afford access to these rights in the same way that neoliberalism has us struggling to pay the rent,<sup>11</sup> and with our rights we encounter fresh forms of racialized, xenophobic policing from the street to spheres of public and private life. I offer this essay in hope of the trans and queer world-making project that builds a coalitional politics, mutual care and support, around the affectivities of transfeminine brokenness (a project ongoing in certain places), and in the knowledge that new forms of (potentially militant) femininities may grow through such projects.<sup>12</sup> This essay carries with the negative to synthesize possibility and inform action, to politicize our conception of these feelings for radical praxis.

The politics I and others have named *radical transfeminism* emerges in this political context. Radical transfeminism is a collective political praxis and critique developing in the tenuously United Kingdom and Europe, centering transfeminine bodies that are or find themselves precariously employed, poor, overworked, and pathologized—bodies of color and various shades of white; migrant bodies; dis/abled bodies; and/or “working” bodies. Radical transfeminism is oriented around forms of care and support, and through working together, over and across material precarity.<sup>13</sup> The forms of radical transfeminism I am speaking of here include forms of cultural production—art can be a powerful means for affective solidarity—alongside moments of political protest and solidarity and forms of socially reproductive labor: the care work of cooking and feeding and housing, resting and rearing, cleaning and washing and dressing, the work of creating our performative genders, the loving and sexual pleasure, and the emotional support that maintains our trans and queer bodies and lives.<sup>14</sup> Radical transfeminism intends to turn the tides of trans and queer liberalism through ground-level action in the world: showing the limits of such reformist politics and understanding their situation in contemporary Europe’s ascendant far-right politics and the refusal of its governments to register the humanity of people fleeing war and violence perpetrated by both Western states and ISIS in the Middle East and to provide a humanitarian response to the so-called refugee crisis. While we situate and conceptualize varied trans and queer struggles as part of this century’s challenges through direct democracy, we are also aware that the assertion of our bodies as transfeminine bodies within such struggles is both necessary and draining. Political work can open us up to forms of damage, even when riot police are out of sight; and the precarity through which we organize does not necessarily entail the possibility of safer spaces.<sup>15</sup>

### **Separations of Transfeminine Bodies and Work**

When the lack of air cuts the thought that does not refract through another body. . .

On the other side of the Western world I meet a poet. Our conversation tends toward a story either of us could have told, with different colleagues or collaborators, different geography, different queer and trans scenes, different bodies of different shifts through land and location. We drop off mailing lists and are absent from the spaces we have helped organize and create. The ideas and critiques we voice do not carry. The disqualification of our knowledge, of suggestions, of creating the time for our involvement, of our work within forms of queer and trans community and cultural spaces—as trans femmes or trans women, or constellating near these descriptions—are the same. We call this phenomenon textbook transmisogyny. But I also think of how Susan Stryker (2008: 154) connects the disavowal of our knowledge rooted in the understanding of transfeminine bodies as antinormative bodies to a “more fundamental and culturally pervasive disavowal of intrinsically diverse modes of bodily being as the lived ground of all knowing and of all knowledge production.” Stryker (2008: 154) argues that consequently the knowledge of how antinormative bodies are materially affected, and how such material effects transform knowledge, are “delegitimated as merely subjective,” which “circumscribes the radical potential of that knowledge [in] critique . . . as feminism, communities of color, and third world voices have long maintained.” Between the designation of the experiences rooted in transfeminine bodies as “merely subjective” and the disavowal of transfeminine knowledge as a site of knowledge in its multiplicities, the potentiality of our thought—and one might add our work—are circumscribed.

To (at best) be bearers of civil rights and socially or micropolitically disqualified as bearers of knowledge is nothing new. It is nothing new for trans femmes as it is nothing new for people of color as it is nothing new for women as it is nothing new for migrants as it is nothing new for people with disabilities as it is nothing new for intersex people of various genders. The difference is when we are organizing with fellow queers, fellow trans people, fellow feminists, fellow disabled people; sometimes we hold up the moments when we all get the issue—one person points to it as us all getting the issue that maybe next time only two people in the room will get. But the structure is such that sometimes we are not even in the room (when there are no trans women at your party) or near the politics (when there are no trans women in your feminist community). The disavowal of the knowledge of trans women and trans femmes, as Stryker suggests, as well as the exclusion of our bodies

and the disregarding of the work we undertake, materially and psychically affects those denied and granted access to these rooms. This is the separation of our bodies and work and lives from queer, feminist, and trans world-making projects, which is itself a basic fracturing of such worlds, and the erasure of the poor trans femmes (often of color) who have inaugurated them—of the names known and now held up: Sylvia Rivera, Marsha P. Johnson, Miss Major. Sometimes we witness the really beautiful spectacle of queer/feminist/of color community holding up its sisters and siblings, only to be reminded again of our deviance through exclusion. The psychic and emotional impact of this is sometimes too hard to bear, let alone to begin speaking of. Sometimes we are either broken or not too broken such that we can speak to each other (as trans siblings, or queer sisters, among ourselves or to build solidarity across these lines) and build the moment of recognition that something historically specific kept us absent from whatever room it is or was, this or that month. Sometimes this knowledge cascades into and through our interiors, into accumulating collective, communal bodies. Sometimes the conversation does not even begin to cohere this way. Sometimes it does not materialize.

### Capital Devaluations

I want to connect the epistemological disqualification of the transfeminine body as an antinormative body (in the sense articulated by Stryker) to the material precarity of antinormative bodies in general. The disqualification operating through vectors of transmisogyny, on a micropolitical level, is intimately connected to the devaluation of poor, feminized bodies under capitalism. This devaluation takes place both in regard to one's social position and one's relation to wages. The devaluation of poor, feminized bodies under capitalism is the basis of our brokenness as transfeminine bodies. It is compounded through a racialized and gendered division of labor where poor, feminized bodies and/or of color—often from or in the global South—sustain the lives, spaces, and desires inhabited by (predominately, but not exclusively, white) privileged, bourgeois bodies in or from the global North.<sup>16</sup> That our transfeminine bodies are barely deemed worthy of affective support either within capitalist society or within anticapitalist queer, feminist, and trans community organizing dovetails our devaluation through this racialized and gendered division of labor. Furthermore, the knowledge that might emerge through such affective struggles as considered above, be they individual or collective, is only valued when it is posited in certain, limited forms

of narrative (*the* trans narrative) or is contained within narratives of recognition. In the context of trans and gender-nonconforming people generally inhabiting the lower echelons of wage distributions (recalling our unemployment, underemployment, overwork, boredom, and isolation), our position within a racialized and gendered division of labor further circumscribes the radical potential of our knowledge as rooted in antinormative bodies. The dull white-collar, service-sector, and/or manual work we undertake may entail dissonance, isolation, and distress through its reifying qualities,<sup>17</sup> while work such as sex work faces risks of criminalization and the affects of stigmatization. The distress and precarity surrounding work in both formal and informal economies reasserts a situation of slow death even as criminalization may lead to incarceration and deportation while negating one's agency, as, for instance, Toni Mac (2016) argues in the case of multi-agency immigration raids in London that criminalize migrant workers, including sex workers, while evacuating their agency before the law. Our labor within all such work faces the possibility of the same epistemological disqualification alongside its material devaluation. However, between precarity, reification, and the increasing presence of the border, methods of undercommoning (Harney and Moten 2013) might sustain us through difficult emotions, bring moments of affirmation, and steal a few hours back for our living.

If the politics of trans and queer liberalisms is based on reform of and assimilation into the structures of neoliberal capitalist society,<sup>18</sup> what form of transfeminist politics must be articulated, and through what kind of praxis, in order to turn the tide against such disqualifications and their historical impact? This is also a question of how poor, transfeminine bodies and the bodies of work we are responsible for have influenced queer, feminist, socialist, antiracist, decolonial movements of past and present, bodies and work that, next to trans bodies in general, have been and often continue to be rendered invisible in the histories of these movements. As Che Gossett, Reina Gossett, and A. J. Lewis (2012) remind us, the work of LGBTQ politics has always entailed work against police violence and trans genealogies of Black feminism show that Black feminism has always been trans.

### Labor against Genders

The poet Anne Boyer likes my tweet about the temptation to write this essay entirely on public transport as a (creative/necessary) constraint. The fabric of queer and trans social reproduction surrounds the space between this writing. The poet (not Anne, but yours truly) must leave her house to

write, as her desk is currently occupied by her second job. The fabrics of social reproduction—of domestic space and the forms of queer feminist sociality—are the garments in which the trans femme is dissatisfied, undersupported, unable to clasp and contain the negativity of her emotions. The waged and caring labors she undertakes leave too little time for dressing to express that carefully constructed self associated with stereotypical narratives of transition.

Sometimes the work she undertakes undermines her gender. She finds herself undertaking men's work or feminized office work in which trans does not signify. Some days she is a Communist spy writing academic papers on stolen time, smiling at customers as she greets them, serving them lunch. The precarity of her waged work dovetails with the precarity of her gender expression.

Her lovers may be the arms of healing, unsure how best to hold her, arms of few arms. Her chosen lovers or johns may fetishize or abuse her. She will capture intimate moments among those she can trust as a sister or sibling, to unravel toxicities, toxic masculinities, the odors of transmisogyny and sexism. These moments of violence graze deeply, the concert of romantic ideology, the trans women as scapegoat (Serano 2007), scarce life under capital. It is here where every tone of voice transgressing a felt gender, or supposed gender, may be used against us—where the gender norms cohering around the color of our flesh and the char of the garments, where our love or our breathing, may end.

### Cultivating Transfeminist Worlds

October 2016: In Glasgow, we hear Reina.<sup>19</sup> In a discussion titled “life in flight from every prison”—part of the Refuse Powers’ Grasp arts and politics festival organized by Arika (2016), where we hear Reina Gossett, Miss Major, Che Gossett, Dean Spade, Eric Stanley, Kai Lumumba Barrow, Joshua Allen, Sondra Perry, Juliana Huxtable, members of We Will Rise, Mujeres Creando, SCOT-PEP, and the English Collective of Prostitutes, among others—Reina speaks of five aspects of oppression. She identifies isolation as one of these aspects, which resonates with the hearts and lungs of the trans women and trans femmes in the room—at least, those friends I compare notes with after the discussion. Allen ties this to scarcity, its condition in the contemporary United States, how black trans excellence (#blacktransexcellence) can thrive despite the systems working against such life (these systems prevented trans prison abolitionist CeCe McDonald from getting her passport

in time to be in this particular room). Reina suggests that there is no healing sometimes, that recovery from certain wounds is neither possible nor necessarily desirable. We hear that we need to be wary of the appropriation and individualization of self-care. We know there is no self-care without the production of self and care and that we cannot live without our lives. We later hear from Spade, who points again to isolation and ties it to our social deskilling, sometimes through too much living online. With Reina chairing this discussion, the question becomes what forms of mutual engagement break isolation and cultivate care. The isolation in question is explicitly that of incarceration in jail, but it is also implicitly the isolation within (and from) communities, with an undercurrent of the atomization of capitalist life once described by Marxists (Debord 1970).

Mijke van der Drift and I discuss over the next few days (and over days that are yet to follow) how the cultivation of care enacted in the spaces we inhabit this particular weekend visibly resonate through various trans (of color) and feminine bodies. When conversations turn difficult, we sense moments of disagreement and frustration in the bodies of friends current and new; these bodies remove themselves momentarily, physically from the space or psychologically into an interior, to be brought back into and supported through discourse in the measured, calculated manners of critical speech. These feel like new bases for articulations of mutual support, of abolitionist work within the everyday, here an everyday of public, activist speech, as Reina says, of prefiguring the world we want to live in.

If at times healing may neither be possible nor desirable, we instead work at the cultivation of care and mutual support that inaugurates a more livable world and calls for the transformation of the material conditions that fracture and break us, conditions structured against the sustenance of poor, transfeminine people/of color and of poor, feminized people/of color more generally. Checking in, comparing notes, collectivizing lunch and dinner, bringing bodies back into conversations and spaces, keeping tabs on what kind of interactions might bridge fractures in social structure and what interactions might graze. We work ourselves out of the liberal myths of enfranchisement and the exceptionalization of struggles. Trans liberalism might alter our sense of enfranchisement in the West, but rights will reaffirm the sense of law by which certain bodies of certain genders, races, nationalities, abilities, and religions deserve the right to live in a world owned and managed by so few people, and it falls far short of establishing a sustainable basis of world-making through the coproduction of care, in which we might be centered alongside other marginalized people. We radically revise

our individualized histories and experience into a collective understanding built through our particulars, to understand that our individual struggles, the embedding of sadness, the negative affects we turn inward toward our bodies, are about the absence of a sustainable immediate world within which we could really reside.

The dialectic of struggle against a world that breaks us and for the inauguration of a world of mutuality and support where we can begin to live and thrive is always in progress, pushing the work of transformation below the visibility of the surface of neoliberal capitalist society. It is in the moments of dailiness that feel im/possible that the coproduction and autonomous support of thought and feeling and work in and through our bodies pushes back against contemporary divisions of labor, epistemological disqualifications, precarious work, devalued wages, and the strain of passport controls; it is in these moments that social reproduction and solidarity delay slow death, psychic strain, and/or deportation. If we might be fractured through the accumulation of such negative conditions qua the contemporary accumulation of capital, we also know that the work, support, and histories that might transform them are buried and disqualified as ourselves—which need to be unearthed, teased out, and held up.

## Notes

This essay is dedicated to Mijke van der Drift and Chryssy Hunter for starting the project of Radical Transfeminism. With love and solidarity to Jos Charles, Anne Boyer, Reina Gossett, Mendoza; Samuel Solomon for comments and for supporting this work; Jackqueline Frost and Jackie Wang for making such writing a possibility; Nisha Ramayya and L. Uziell for conversations in Glasgow; Sarah Golightley, Angela and Claude for the queer domestic spaces; and to Aren Aizura for editorial patience.

- 1 I capitalize the word *Madness* in the spirit of its reclamation by Mad activists, psychiatric consumers, and survivors and Mad Studies scholars. The labeling of transfeminine people as “crazy,” due to supposedly erratic behavior and emotions, must necessarily be understood in the context of gendered norms that privilege certain forms of sanity. Given its length, this essay refrains from explicating this context. For a discussion connecting trans activism to Mad activism and Mad Studies in Canada, see Kirby (2014).
- 2 This combination intends to reflect the mutual reinforcement between these social and material conditions—racism, transphobia, and whorephobia need to be understood through an integrated, historicizing lens in order to understand the multiple forms of violence levied at trans women of color, including trans-women-of-color sex workers. For a nuanced discussion of the issues around transfeminine stereotyping and these bodily intersections, see Aizura (2014).
- 3 I think of this horizon as in a dialectical relation with Muñoz’s (2009: 1) formulation of queerness as a horizon of possibility.

- 4 Jobcentre Plus is the office for unemployment benefits in the United Kingdom and work-related disability benefits. The treatment of Jobcentre Plus users has been violently rationalized by Conservative-led governments since 2010. There have been a number of media controversies surrounding suicidal claimants. While there are currently no critical accounts of trans people's experiences of the Jobcentre Plus, accounts of how Employment and Support Allowance has been used as a means to force people with disabilities back into work are numerous.
- 5 In context of certain forms of gendered labor, the expression of one's gender may be part of the work. For a discussion of the relation of expression of gender to work, see Weeks 2011. For considerations of the relation of the self to wage labor, see Marx 1959 and Lukaçs 1971.
- 6 For a significant enactment and discussion of transfeminine sexual reproduction, see cárdenas 2016.
- 7 The problems of the "spousal veto" clause of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act of 2013 in England and Wales—through which a partner can prevent their spouse from obtaining legal recognition of their chosen gender, once having changed their gender in the terms of the gender binary—have been raised at length within trans activist circles.
- 8 In the United Kingdom, discriminating against employees, or potential employees during the hiring process, based on the characteristic of their "gender reassignment" (broadly understood as anyone who is undergoing or has undergone a process of transition) is outlawed under the Equality Act 2010.
- 9 I have used the grammatical construction "poor trans women and trans femmes/of color and/or trans sex workers" to emphasize that each of these descriptions may intermesh with each other.
- 10 For a presentation of the issues facing trans and gender-nonconforming people in prison, see Stanley and Smith (2011). *Social death* is a term developed by Ruth Gilmore (2007).
- 11 There has yet to be a test case of trans discrimination in the workplace under the Equality Act 2010. Following their introduction in 2012, employment tribunal fees for discrimination cases now stand at £250 to make a claim and £950 to take the claim to a hearing (UK Government 2016). Furthermore, dramatic cuts to legal aid over the current decade have affected access to the law to the extent that criminal lawyers and barristers staged strikes against further cuts in 2014.
- 12 I have explored such politics as exemplified in the work of Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, historicizing their radical Third World and black liberation politics and collectivized care work as poor "street queens" of color who were sex workers. See Raha, 2017.
- 13 The formulation is offered in the argument made by sex workers that working together offers forms of protection among sex workers.
- 14 For a detailed conception of trans and queer social reproduction, see Raha 2017.
- 15 Regarding issues around resources for the production of safer spaces, the Radical Transfeminism conference in London deployed an "interactive" and "cooperative" politics of space that emphasized differences in experience of oppression and means to support understanding when one's views are challenged. See van der Drift, Hunter, and Raha 2015.

- 16 See Federici 2012, Farris 2015, and Aizura 2014.
- 17 The concept of reification is formulated in Lukaçs 1971 to describe the contemplative character of labor as transformed by Fordist modes of production. My intention here is to invoke the psychic impact of undertaking labor as a “contemplative activity.”
- 18 The arguments regarding LGBTQ assimilation in the context of neoliberalism include Duggan 2003, Puar 2007, and Conrad 2014.
- 19 Those named in this section are the voices that build the discussions in this and the next paragraph of the essay.

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