Imagining Transgender

An Ethnography of a Category

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appear on the last printed page of this book.

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FOR VIANNA-FAYE WILLIAMS,

in place of the chicken soup I never had

the chance to bring you

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The Making of a Field

Anthropology and Transgender Studies

On a hot summer's afternoon in August 1997, a group of us chatted around a conference table before the regular GIP staff meeting at the Center. With the exception of myself and Dr. Barbara Warren, everyone present was a transgender-identified woman, and with the exception of Arlene, who is African American, everyone was white. As I was talking to Rosalyne I heard Chloe mention to Melissa that she was reading Leon Pettiway's *Honey, Honey, Miss Thang* (1997), a collection of extended narratives of five Philadelphia sex workers whom the author identifies variously as "gay," "transvestite," and "transgender."

"You didn't get here on the gay track, did you?" Chloe asked Melissa, to which Melissa responded in the negative.

I asked Chloe what she meant by this. She explained that while many transexual women had lived at least part of their lives as gay men, she found Pettiway's book annoying because he seemed to conflate gay male sexuality with transexual or transgender identification. When I mentioned that many of the Meat Market girls we both knew identified in ways similar to those described by Pettiway, Chloe nodded. Yes, she said, she knew this. But they aren't really gay, they're transgender, she argued, and it

was only a lack of knowledge which prevented them from abandoning gay identification.

In this brief anecdote, the themes of the previous two chapters are immediately apparent. However, my interest in this chapter is in how Pettiway's book found its way into Chloe's hands, or rather, the reasons that Chloe might have picked it up. Its subtitle—"Being Black, Gay, and on the Streets"—makes it, implicitly, a part of the ever-growing literature in "lesbian and gay studies." But its contents—about people who are identified by the GIP and its staff members as being "transgender"—shifts it into a different (if related) category, the emerging and fast-growing field of "transgender studies."

In this chapter, I investigate this new field of knowledge, transgender studies, and the complexities, contradictions, and confluences that have enabled its emergence. I look at how many different kinds of texts (from autobiographies and ethnographies, to journal articles and political manifestos) in a range of different fields (from anthropology, literary criticism, history, and philosophy, to psychology, public health, and criminology) get grouped, or come to be understood, as being about a set of people who are defined as transgender. In particular, I want to focus on anthropological texts and their co-option into this field because anthropological knowledge is frequently cited (or contested) by transgender-identified people as a source of knowledge about themselves.

These processes are intimately connected, for the appropriation and contestation of scholarly work (and the subjects of that work) is part of a broader cultural process whereby a field of knowledge is being produced about people—historical and contemporary, Western and non-Western, male-bodied and female-bodied—who are seen to be understandable through the category of transgender. Like the practices of community building, social service provision, or activism organized by this category, these intellectual and hermeneutic practices are part of a broader reorganization of what "gender" and "sexuality" are coming to mean in the United States.

There are three primary themes in this chapter. The first is precisely this diverse set of social practices around creating something that can be understood as a field of transgender studies. The decision about whether a book or article can be understood to be part of this field is not only a decision on the part of an author, bookseller, or library cataloguer. It is also a social practice of figuring out the "transness" of a particular text by teachers,

scholars, and readers, both transgender- and non-transgender-identified (by, for example, including it in a bibliography or syllabus or appropriating it in a critical reading, such as this one). As such, while this chapter is in some ways a traditional literature review, it is simultaneously a critical investigation of a set of social practices on the part of scholars, readers, and cataloguers which enables me to discuss this literature as a body in the first place. (This is also not a conventional literature review as I cannot do a comprehensive review of the many texts that could be drawn into such a chapter.)

The second theme is the way the indeterminacy of "transgender" simultaneously enables and complicates the stabilization of this field. "Transgender studies" is not an isolated field—it intersects with and is incorporated into "queer studies," "LGBT studies," "women's studies," and "gender studies" in different institutional contexts. Given the operative distinction between transgender and homosexuality, though, I am particularly interested in those texts about "homosexuality" which tend to get drawn into a discussion of "transgender"—and vice versa. This is not to say that these texts should not contribute to interconnected intellectual trajectories (and indeed, they do). But, as I will argue, at crucial moments the absorption of certain texts into transgender studies engages the same distinction that results in the dilemmas noted in part II. My concern here is: what does transgender achieve in organizing knowledge about people?

The third theme of this chapter is the differing places of male-bodied and female-bodied people in this literature, a difference which is marked by geographies of physical space, historical location, and contemporary politics. I will argue that these differences contribute to and are shaped by the power of the collective mode of transgender. More importantly, these different placings speak to another difference—the way that gender and sexuality are differently understood in feminism and LGBT/queer studies (Butler 1994).

In short, I examine the production of this emerging field to further develop my arguments about the power of transgender to generate and maintain a particular theorization of gender and sexuality as distinct categories of human experience. To do so, first we must look at the emergence of transgender studies itself.

TRANSGENDER STUDIES: SPEAKING FOR THE SELF

In her introduction to the 1998 *Transgender Issue* of the journal *GLQ*, Susan Stryker writes that "as a field, transgender studies promises to offer important new insights into such fundamental questions as how bodies mean or what constitutes human personhood. And as individuals, transgender scholars who can speak intelligibly from their positions of embodied difference have something valuable to offer their colleagues and students" (1998: 155). Judith Halberstam, in her review of three books frequently understood as being part of transgender studies—Holly Devor's *FTM* (1997), Leslie Feinberg's *Trans Liberation* (1998), and Jay Prosser's *Second Skins* (1998)—notes another feature of this emerging field in her observation that "these new texts fail, fortunately, to form a coherent and noncontradictory body of work; in fact, there is as much difference among them as there is within a transgender community" (2000: 313). These statements point to three central features that characterize the emerging field of transgender studies: first, the capacity for new insights into embodied experience; second, the heterogeneity of theoretical positions, identification, embodiment, and disciplinary backgrounds that characterize the contributors to this emerging field; and third, the importance of transgender-identified scholars in producing these insights (see also Stryker 2006).

In its outlines, transgender studies shares a genealogy and its broad concerns with other areas of cross-disciplinary critical inquiry that developed in the latter part of the twentieth century—feminist scholarship, lesbian and gay studies, queer theory, critical race theory, subaltern and postcolonial studies, and disability studies—all of which emerged in the context of wider postmodernist and poststructuralist critiques. Broad shifts in the intellectual, social, and political climates of U.S. and European academies have enabled a questioning of both knowledge production about subordinated groups but also epistemological questions about the status of knowledge itself.

If transgender studies is genealogically linked to other areas of critical inquiry, its closest relative is the equally diffuse fields of queer/LGBT studies (the latter, indeed, including the "T" of "transgender" in its name), but one with which it has a complex relationship. Stryker (1998) points to Sandy Stone's "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto" (1991) as an early and central text in the emergence of this field, for not

only its content but the way its call for transexuals to actively speak from their subject positions foreshadows the tensions in the relationship between "queer" and "transgender." As Stryker notes, Stone's essay makes no reference to "transgender," but in 1991, just as it was published, transgender was emerging simultaneously as an alternative to transexuality and as a collective organizing term. At the same historical moment, "queer" was gaining steam as a repudiation of gay and lesbian accommodationist politics, fueled by the anger of self-proclaimed queers over the inattention of the U.S. government to the AIDS pandemic. The propinquity of these movements produced a complex dynamic around what transgender could mean, both as a personal identification and as a way of knowing about the world: "*transgender* became associated with a 'queer' utopianism, the erasure of specificity, and a moralizing teleology that condemned certain practices of embodiment that it characterized as transsexual. From other positions, 'queer' became something that excluded the consideration of gender altogether. Depending on one's subject position and political commitments, these trends could be embraced or bemoaned" (Stryker 1998: 153, emphasis in original). As such, Stryker argues, "transgender," "transsexual," and "queer" have "become hopelessly tangled in subsequent attempts to carry out the critical project I understand Stone to have envisioned with her neologism 'posttranssexual'" (148; see also Prosser 1998 and Namaste 2000 for a critique of queer theory and its relationship to trans scholarship, politics, and activism).

In other words, "transgender" in activism, identification, and scholarship is enmeshed in a complicated set of contradictory meanings. It can be read as a mode of revolutionary and utopian action but also one which recognizes the specific trajectories of certain identifications. Further, its coming to prominence at the same time as "queer" raises questions about the differences between or similarities among "transgender" and "queer" identities. Transgender studies, then, is inevitably implicated in questions about history and social change on the one hand, and its relationship to queerness and/or homosexuality on the other. As such, transgender studies is complicated not only by the heterogeneity of voices and the question of embodiment and experience but also by how certain voices, experiences, and embodiments come to be understood *as* transgender in the first place.

So, what does—or can—transgender studies incorporate? The "can" is important because this field is characterized precisely by disagreements about what transgender itself incorporates. However, it contains most

evidently, at its center, texts by contemporary self-identified transgender and transexual people and people who prior to the 1990s identified as transexual or as transvestite. One of the few venues in which transgender-identified people have historically been able to express their voices is in the realm of autobiography, and the list of such books is long indeed. Such texts are frequently discussed in other books as precursors of knowledge production about transgender-identified people by transgender-identified people (see Prosser 1998 and discussions in Califia 2003 [1997] and Meyerowitz 2002). Since the emergence of transgender activism in the 1990s, autobiographies have been joined by popular texts like Feinberg's *Transgender Warriors* (1996), which makes a case for everyone who transgresses gender norms ("from Joan of Arc to Dennis Rodman," as its subtitle states) as transgender warriors. Other books authored in the 1990s by nonacademic writers offer different perspectives, such as those by Wilchins (1997) and Bornstein (1994, 1998), who argue for the deconstruction of gender itself rather than the simple reclamation of historical figures under the banner of transgender.

This raises the question of the relationship of trans-identified authors to the category which incorporates them and their work. Books, collections, and journal articles by transgender-identified scholars (e.g., Cromwell 1999, More and Whittle 1999; Namaste 2000, H. Rubin 2003, Towle and Morgan 2002, Prosser 1998, Stryker 1998, and others) exhibit a complex relationship to the category. The tension at the center of most of these texts is the desire to bring a critical perspective on broader cultural and historical dynamics while, simultaneously, not wanting to erase the specific subjectivities of transgender identification. Jason Cromwell (1999) and Henry Rubin (2003), for example, insist on the specificity of FTM and transmen's experience, but their books are simultaneously available for consolidation as part of a broader transgender studies with those by Wilchins, Feinberg, and Bornstein by virtue of their authors' identities and their subject matter. Despite this, the issue of trans identity and the authority it conveys are key tropes in this diverse corpus, made most explicit in Hale's *Suggested Rules for Non-transsexuals Writing about Transsexuals, Transsexuality, Transsexualism, or Trans____* (n.d.).

Perhaps the next area of investigation which can be placed in this field is contemporary social research authored by non-transgender-identified people. This book is one example, as are books by Meyerowitz (2000), Pettiway (1997), Ekins (1997), and King (1993), and edited collections like

that by Ekins and King (1996); which incorporates both transgender- and non-transgender-identified authors and subjects identified as transexual, transvestite, or transgender. Others, like Califia (2003 [1997]), Devor (1997), and Halberstam (1998a) could also be slotted in here, though all three authors express varying affinities with transgender identification (both Califia and Devor have subsequently transitioned to different gendered identities since their books were first published).

Most of these texts are authored from the position that transgender identification is neither morally nor politically objectionable, often arguing that transgender practices or identification are potentially socially transformative. However, there are also a range of texts which take the opposite view, primarily from certain lesbian feminist perspectives. Raymond's *Transsexual Empire* (1994 [1979]), which argues that transexuality reasserts patriarchal standards of femininity and masculinity, is perhaps the best known — and, among transgender-identified people, the most reviled — of these. Many other authors decry transexuality and transvestism as politically retrograde (e.g., Jeffreys 1996, Mantilla 2000, McNeill 1982, Millot 1990, Yudkin 1978; see also Billings and Urban 1982), and more recently have applied the same analysis to transgender-identification specifically (e.g., de Motier 1998, Mantilla 2000, Raymond 1996). Others see transgender identification itself as politically progressive but have a similar analysis of SRS specifically (e.g., MacKenzie 1994). As I will discuss below, however, these texts too can be pulled into transgender studies even as their authors reject the terms of transgender identification.[1] On the other hand, other feminist texts which celebrate what could be understood as transgender practices as transformative of binary gender — notably Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) — are often considered central to the theoretical developments that characterize transgender studies.

It is also not possible to consider transgender studies without invoking a range of historical medical and sexological texts which are also available for appropriation as part of the field. These would include the works of sexologists like Magnus Hirschfeld (1991 [1910)] and Havelock Ellis (1927) who elaborated distinctions between gender and sexuality early in the twentieth century. Later twentieth-century works which engage transexuality in particular (e.g., Benjamin 1966, Lothstein 1983, Stoller 1968, 1975) are also important to consider in the critical and reflective project of transgender studies, as is related work on intersexuality. Some contemporary texts — especially the controversial book by J. Michael Bailey (2003)

—are descendants of this tradition. This medical and psychiatric literature is critically engaged in virtually all texts written in the post–*Empire Strikes Back* literature under the rubric of transgender.

On the margins of this field (and again, it is with margins that I am most interested) lie anthropological studies of non-Western and Western subjects. Here, I am referring to not only contemporary ethnographic texts like those by Besnier (2002), Blackwood (1995), Boellstorff (2005), Elliston (2002), Kulick (1998), Johnson (1997), Manalansan (2003), Robertson (1998), and Sinnott (2004) but also early-twentieth-century works like Devereux's (1937) work on the "institutionalized homosexuality of the Mohave Indians," mid-century ethnographies like Esther Newton's (1979 [1972]) groundbreaking study of gay male drag performers in urban U.S. centers in the 1960s, and Anne Bolin's (1988) ethnography of Midwestern transexual women in the 1980s.

Anthropological accounts are particularly of interest because of the ways that ethnographic subjects have been incorporated into the field of transgender studies, and vice versa. On the one hand, some transgender-identified authors have drawn on anthropological texts to argue for a commonality with historical and non-Western subjects (e.g., Feinberg 1996; see below). Moreover, anthropological and ethnohistorical accounts of Native American "*berdache*" or two-spirit people (Jacobs et al. 1997b, Lang 1998, Roscoe 1991, Williams 1986), Indian *hijra* (Nanda 1990), or Omani *xanith* (Wikan 1977, 1991) were often invoked by study participants in conversation to argue that "traditional societies accept transgender people" or as models for how people could identify. In these accounts—both published and anecdotal—"traditional" models of apparent transgender identification in non-Western contexts stand opposed to the cold modernity of the Western gender binary.

On the other hand, "transgender" has itself entered into the anthropological, medical, sociological, and other literatures with relatively little attention to how it carries certain assumptions and meanings with it. Within anthropology, "transgender" is rapidly becoming a term which is drawn on to describe and categorize *gender* non-normativity cross-culturally while, simultaneously, enabling anthropologists to engage in the (important) work of separating out the identities they are investigating from contemporary, modern homosexual identities. As we will see, the debate over whether certain people are best described through the frameworks of "transgender" or "homosexuality" is at its heart a debate over whether such

subjects are understood best as either (and primarily) gendered or sexual subjects. I will argue that these debates obscure a more central issue: how it is that certain practices, identities, and ways of knowing come to stand in an unmediated fashion as simply "sexual" or "gendered."

As before, I am not so much interested in the center of this field but its boundaries, the places where there are disputes over what the collectivity of transgender contains. These debates often predate the emergence of transgender studies, but they have been transformed through the possibilities of transgender studies as an emerging field. Moreover, these debates also show—through the historical and geographical location of the authors and their subjects—how and where transgender comes to order particular kinds of bodies and desires, but in other cases, not. The first of these is the so-called border wars between butch lesbians and FTMs—and the lack of any analogous debate between gay men and transexual women.

BORDER WARS

Images of borders figure large in published debates over the distinctions—or rather, what the distinctions might be—between butch lesbians, transexual men, and other "female masculinities" (Halberstam 1998a). As many scholars point out, though, it is an unclear distinction at best (Halberstam 1998b, Hale 1998, G. Rubin 1992, H. Rubin 2003). These debates have arisen out of the politics of lesbian-feminism, the differentiation of butch/ femme roles in the United States in the twentieth century, and the ambivalence of (at least some) butches toward their female bodies (Kennedy and Davis 1993). Henry Rubin's chapter on the topic (entitled "Border Wars") locates the very possibilities for the solidification of FTM/ transman identification in the attempts to distinguish between "women-identified women" and "male-identified" female-bodied people in early 1970s feminism (2003: 64). Rubin writes that "this category confusion resolved itself by the consolidation of two distinct identities, male-identified transsexual men and women-identified lesbian women" (89). In these discrete territories, Rubin argues that transexual men reject the idea that they were ever lesbians, and butches contest the idea that they are men. Yet, as Hale and Halberstam both point out, the territory around these borders is not always so clearly defined. Halberstam (1998b) wants to claim a territory for the possibility of "transgender butch" while Hale (1998) stakes out a claim for a "gender-queer" position in this borderland itself.

These border wars/borderlands/frontier fears (all titles taken from these texts) also play out on the historical stage. Hale, for example, notes how the late musician Billy Tipton has become a flashpoint in these debates, claimed by both butches and FTMs as an ancestor. The radiologist Alan/Lucille Hart, who died in 1962, is another case in point. Lillian Faderman, in her history of lesbian life in the twentieth-century United States, sees both Tipton and Hart as "passing women" who took on male personae in order to achieve career goals (1991: 41–45, 316 n. 9). On the other hand, an entry on transhistory.org identifies Hart as a man and gives a link to a web page hosted by Penn State University which identifies Hart as a woman. The transhistory authors encourage readers to "let them know that His Name Was Alan Hart!!!" (Morris and Brown, n.d.; see also O'Hartigan 2002, Hale 1998: 325). Another contested lesbian/butch/FTM/transgender figure is the fictional (and semi-autobiographical) character of Stephen Gordon in Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*. While this book is usually represented as a classic of lesbian literature and history, Gordon's masculine identification also make him/her available as a transgender avatar (see, e.g., Devor and Matte 2004, Prosser 1998, Taylor 1998). Perhaps the most contested person in these debates, though, is Brandon Teena (or, in some accounts, Teena Brandon), whom I will discuss in chapter 6 (see Hale 1998, Halberstam 2003).

I am particularly interested here in the way that these debates are characterized as "border wars" and "frontiers," not only for what it says about the broader argument of this book but also because, by contrast, there is a silence in the structurally equivalent terrain between feminine gay men and transsexual women. While the idea that homosexual men are characterized by femininity has a long history in Western thought, there is no structurally equivalent contestation over iconic historical figures of gay male femininity. Indeed, it seems that contemporary gender-normative gay men are quite content to have the drag queens and fairies of yore be absorbed into a transgender history. All these points, as I will argue below, are central in the work being done to establish a field of transgender studies.

The furor over the publication of J. Michael Bailey's *The Man Who Would Be Queen* (2003) is worth some discussion here, because it is closest to this kind of frontier guarding, though the players are differently aligned. One of the most controversial aspects of Bailey's book is his claim that transsexual women are either sexually aroused by the idea of themselves as women ("autogynephilia") or else very feminine gay men who

have dealt with their femininity by transitioning (see Conway n.d.). This is a controversial claim because it locates transsexual identity in *sexual* desire rather than, as is conventionally understood, in core gender identity. However, what is so striking about the outcry over the book is the almost total silence from gay male writers. Attempts to discredit Bailey's work have resulted in a very public debate, which has even found its way into the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Wilson 2003a, 2003b). But the participants in this debate have virtually all been transsexual women, and not gay men, and unlike the butch/FTM debates, it has no broad dissemination in gay male media.[2]

In summary, unlike Halberstam's valorization of "transgender butch," there is no analogous *culturally valorized space* for male-bodied "transgender fems," gay men who adopt, play with, or assert femininity as a central aspect of their senses of self, beyond the figure of the performing drag queen. Likewise, the absence of equivalent "border wars" and the relative silence of gay men in response to Bailey's book indicate, at the very least, an unwillingness to engage with the question of femininity in gay men.[3] As such, historical drag queens and other male-bodied feminine people appear to be available for absorption into the category of transgender (and into transgender studies) without the attendant critical attention that such a reordering has received for contested figures like Tipton or Hart. Part of this dynamic lies in the different meanings of gender and sexuality in feminist and mainstream gay and lesbian activism/scholarship as I discussed in chapter 1, a theme I will return to later.

These examples have been drawn from debates about contemporary and historical U.S. subjects. Next, I turn to anthropological subjects and recent debates over how to define and describe them. They are all the more interesting since, contrary to the cases above, most of these debates have focused on femininity in male-bodied people.

THE "BERDACHE" AND THIRD GENDER DEBATES

In anthropology, the place and definition of the "berdache"[4] (or "institutionalized homosexuality") in Native American societies, has been long debated (see Lang 1998: 17ff.), and in those debates, the problem of explaining this phenomenon has revolved, at least in part, around whether "berdache" are best described through the framework of sexuality or that of gender. For Western observers, from the earliest colonial accounts to

twentieth-century writers (such as Devereux [1937]), "berdache" were evidence of Native American degeneracy and, from the late nineteenth century on, of institutionalized (male) homosexuality within Native American tribes (see Lang 1998: 26ff.). While there have been many interpretations of the meanings of "berdache" (e.g. Whitehead 1981, Blackwood 1984, Callender and Kochems 1983), most of the contemporary debate revolves around this reduction of the broad range of such roles to homosexuality (e.g., Jacobs et al. 1997a, Lang 1998, Cromwell 1999).

Califia's (2003 [1997]) analysis of anthropological and historical texts which focus on "berdache" by white gay male scholars such as Will Roscoe, Walter Williams, and Jonathan Ned Katz is particularly critical in this regard. Califia argues that while these scholars implicitly or explicitly frame "berdache" as a form of homosexual identification, Native Americans themselves perceived "berdache" as being in a different *gender* category rather than as "homosexual." He argues that this point should be accounted for "rather than distort[ing] these phenomenon [*sic*] by insisting on seeing them through the paradigm of modern Western male homosexuality" (125). For example, Califia takes issue with Roscoe's use of "he" to refer to the Zuni "man woman" WeWha when, Califia argues, all her contemporaries refer to her as "she"; and Califia cites many examples in Williams's book where he refuses to accept a gendered analysis of "berdache" identity.[5] Indeed, Califia argues "that we cannot understand third-gender roles without making use of the paradigm of transsexuality" (149) and not, he implies, homosexuality. Thus, for Califia, explaining "berdache" through a framing of sexuality and analogy to homosexuality is a stubborn refusal to recognize that they are best understood through a framing of gender and analogy to contemporary transexual/transgender people.

Cromwell, himself an anthropologist and a transexual man, is more subtle on this point. Cromwell's focus is on transmen and FTMs, and while he uses the term "transpeople" to refer to both historical and contemporary subjects, he is careful about not interpreting those subjects through contemporary categories of identity. At the same time, Cromwell also decries the reduction of such behaviors and identities to homosexuality, making the conventional claim that "sexuality and gender (as well as sex) are separate entities" (1999: 46). Like Califia, he insists on the primacy of gender variance as the analytic framing for discussion of "berdache" and other non-Western or historical subjects rather than that of (homo)sexuality. Cromwell makes the important distinction between transgender *identity*, which

is a very recent possibility, and transgender *behavior* "that has occurred widely both historically and cross-culturally" (17). However, for all his care, elsewhere in his book he slips from "behavior" to "identity" in order to assert a gendered over a sexual explanation. For example, in the case of a Kaska female-bodied person who was understood as a man and took a woman as a wife, he writes: "it seems reasonable to assume that this person was a female-bodied man" (56). My interest here is not so much the reasonableness of this argument but rather Cromwell's implicit assertion of a "gendered" explanation for this individual over a "sexual" one.

Making the field more complex still is the identification of contemporary Native American Two Spirit people. Lang (1998) points out that contemporary Native Americans (who might have been what she calls "women-men" or "men-women" had they lived in precolonial times) often identify as gay or lesbian or alternate between women-men/men-women status among tribe members and gay/lesbian identity in urban environments. Jacobs et al.'s (1997a) use of the recently coined "Two Spirit" further complicates the easy assertion of gender over sexuality as a source of identity, for as they note, Two Spirit incorporates contemporary self-identified gay and lesbian Native Americans, Native American transgender, transvestite, transgender people; other non–Native American gender-variant people, drag queens, and butches; as well as those subsumed under "berdache" (2).

I do not intend to make an argument either for or against these different framing rubrics (homosexuality or gender variance/transgender) for discussing Native American "berdache." Rather, what I am interested in is the way this debate has been enabled by the assertion that, to quote Cromwell again, "sexuality and gender (as well as sex) are separate entities" (1999: 46). The problem with both of these arguments is that they are based on an assumption that "sexuality" is *experienced* as separate from "gender." In other words, for Califia to say that the "berdache" are best analogized by contemporary transgender/transexual/gender-variant people invokes, as its shadow, a modern model of gender-normative "homosexuality," one untouched by gender variance. This assumption results in anachronistic claims. For example, Califia writes: "While third-gender identities may serve as roles that can be adopted by people we might label as transsexuals, hermaphrodites, and effeminate homosexuals, I believe that if hormones and surgery were made available to third-gender people in traditional societies, the great majority of them would opt for sex change. And I doubt

that even Williams, Roscoe, and Katz could disagree, in all good faith, with that hypothesis" (149). While I would not necessarily disagree with Cálifia — we simply cannot know — the more significant point is that like hormones and surgery, the distinction between gender-normative homosexuality and transgender identity is *also* a modern technology.

At the center of much of the debate over "berdache" is the contention that "berdache" should be understood as an institutionalized *third sex* or *third gender*. Other non-Western groups — such as the *hijra* of India (Nanda 1990; see Cohen 1995) and the Omani *xanith* (Wikan 1977, 1991) — have also been read through this category (see Herdt 1994) even as the category has been critiqued (Boellstorff 2004, Cohen 1995, Towle and Morgan 2002, Weston 1993: 354, Wieringa and Blackwood 1999: 25).[6] As with the debate over "berdache," figuring out the place of "third gender" subject positions in contemporary social research also engages the operative distinction between gender and sexuality.

At their heart, these claims and counterclaims revolve around three central issues. First is the problem of historical or cultural accuracy of using terms like "homosexuality," "transgender," or "third gender" to describe non-Western people. From a Foucauldian, social constructionist perspective, categories such as "homosexuality" or "transgender" can never escape the implications of modern homosexual or transgender identity. Second, the debates center on a kind of typological battle where some people will see "berdache" or (*xanith* or *hijra*) as evidence of the universality of homosexual desire, while others claim them for the category of gender variance, arguing that sexual desire is a result or elaboration, not a cause, of non-normative expressions of gender.

Finally, these debates revolve around the adequacy of "third gender" to account for the experiences of female-bodied people and the relative absence of female-bodied people from these accounts. Wieringa and Blackwood (1999) are also critical of the "third gender" framework precisely because it does not distinguish male- and female-bodied experience. They ask, "Why is it that male-bodied individuals transgress gender boundaries more freely than female-bodied individuals?" (25). To this question I would add some more: if it is the case that many of these debates revolve around the differences between homosexuality and transgender (or, at least, forms of selfhood that can be analogized as homosexual or transgender), then why is the discussion of female-bodied people relatively absent from cross-cultural accounts when it is so heatedly debated

in the United States in the butch/FTM border wars? Concomitantly, if there is an overwhelming focus on male-bodied people in the anthropological literature on "third gender," then why are there no debates in the United States analogous to the butch/FTM border wars for male-bodied people?

I should note that I have glossed over the complexities of the debate I've laid out above (including longer-standing debates over whether "berdache" were occupational or gender/sex categories; see note 5). There is no absence of discussion of the relationships among sexuality, gender, and bodily sex in these texts. But I have focused on the way these debates are predicated, at their center, on a particular understanding of "gender" and "sexuality" as ontologically distinct across time and space. This debate, then, is less about the experience of Native American "berdache" or other "third gender" people themselves than one which has been enabled by an analytic distinction between gender and sexuality within Western academic discourses and identity politics. As a result, these issues raise a central question: how does this distinction produce certain subjects as being part of transgender studies, and other subjects as not?

This assumption is, moreover, complicated by Towle's and Morgan's (2002) concerns with the third gender model: its inability to account for transnational processes; the appropriation of Western identities and categories of knowledge by non-Western subjects; and the centrality of contemporary neoliberal forms of international capitalism to social and cultural changes globally. In the next section, I consider how these latter concerns fall out both theoretically and institutionally in relation to some other, mostly recent, ethnography which engages transnational appropriations of modern Western identities.

IS TRADITION TO MODERNITY AS TRANSGENDER IS TO HOMOSEXUALITY?[7]

In a 1993 *Annual Review of Anthropology* article, Weston notes that the emergence of the cross-cultural study of homosexualities in the 1970s and 1980s, especially by gay male anthropologists, was at least in part informed by a desire to argue for the universality of homosexual desire, if not of homosexual identity itself (1993: 342–43). She argues that the cataloguing of homosexuality so defined had resulted (by the early 1990s) in an implicit typological framing of non-Western gender/sexual variation

across the globe, embodying an assumption that even if it was organized differently in "traditional" societies, it was the same innate sexual desire that animates "modern" homosexual identities (see Vance 1991). Manalansan (1997), in his analysis of similar representations by gay and lesbian activists and scholars (e.g., Adam 1995, Likosky 1992), finds a more explicitly teleological schema, with Western gender-normative, egalitarian (and implicitly, evolved) homosexuality contrasted to "traditional" forms. The latter, based on age-graded socialization into adulthood (as in parts of New Guinea) or institutionalized "third gender" roles, implicitly or explicitly stand as atavistic forerunners of modern Western homosexual identity. In turn, transnational appropriations of Western identities such as "gay" or "lesbian" are seen as evidence of contemporary "traditional" people adopting "modern" homosexuality in a way analogous to how Chloe imagines the Meat Market queens will adopt transgender identities. That is, in these accounts, if tradition is the antecedent to modernity, then gender-variant and age-graded homosexuality appears to be the antecedent to modern, egalitarian, and gender-normative homosexuality.

In the decade after Weston's article was published, there were two important developments. First, the rise of transgender activism and scholarship challenged this appropriation—not for its teleologies but rather in order to claim some of these same historical and non-Western subjects for the category of transgender and to repudiate the notion that these individuals are precursors of modern homosexuals. For example, Califia's confidence in assuming that "berdache" would have chosen hormones and genital surgeries is precisely the same move made by gay and lesbian authors who assume that they are observing premodern forms of homosexual identity. Both perspectives presuppose the delinking of gender and sexuality not only from each other but also from a range of other social experiences that we name through categories like culture, kinship, gender, household, status, community, caste, class, ethnicity, race, and so on and assume the capacity of individuals to adopt such identities outside the bounds of (premodern) social organization and personhood.

The second development since Weston's article, though, is a complication of 1980s gay and lesbian anthropology by anthropologists whose work is informed by feminist and queer theory, postcolonial and subaltern studies, and a critique of the simplistic distinction between modernity and tradition. I want to examine some of these ethnographies next, showing how they complicate both the understanding of a universality of homosexual and/or transgender identification but also the easy separation of gendered or sexual experience. Despite this, as I will show in the concluding section, these accounts are still available for appropriation into, alternately, gay/lesbian and/or transgender studies.

Problematizing "Gender" and "Sexuality" Don Donham (1998) draws on the story of a male-bodied resident of Soweto, Linda (a conventional Zulu male name), to look at how "gay" identity became available to urban black South Africans in post-apartheid South Africa (see also McLean and Ngcobo 1994). Donham describes Linda's funeral in 1993, where he was valorized by local gay and lesbian activists as a gay man. However, Linda had not always been "gay." Writing of Linda's upbringing in the apartheid townships of Johannesburg, Donham argues that "instead of sexuality in the Western sense, it was local notions of sexed bodies and gendered identities—what I shall call sex/gender in the black South African sense—that divided and categorized" (7). As a young person, Linda thought of herself as a girl, was raised as a girl by parents, and was seen by others in the township as having biologically mixed sex or as a *skesana*. Donham writes that "in sum, black townships during the apartheid era found it easier to understand gender-deviant boys as girls or as a biologically mixed third sex" (9), and consequently their sexual partners were not considered *skesanas*, but (normative) men (10; see also Epprecht 1998 for a comparison to Zimbabwe). However, with the breakdown of the apartheid system, closer contact with white gay and lesbian communities, and the new availability of media about homosexuality, "the notion of sexuality was created for some black men, or more precisely, an identity based on sexuality was created. The classificatory grid in the making was different from the old one. Now, *both* partners in a same-sex relationship were *potentially classified as the same (male) gender—and as 'gay'*" (11, emphasis in original). For Linda "gay identity meant literally a new gender and a new way of relating to his body" (11).[8]

Despite the complexities Donham discusses, however, he ends with an assertion that deserves some attention: "A certain communicative density is probably a prerequisite for people to identify as gay at all, and it is not improbable that as media density increases, so will the number of gay people" (15). Here, Donham sounds very much like Califia in his contention that "if hormones and surgery were made available to third-gender people in traditional societies, the great majority of them would opt for sex

change" ([2003] 1997:149). Yet these two authors imagine very different outcomes in the availability of modern Western technologies—both physical (mass media, surgery) and epistemological (identity categories). For Califia, it is self evident that "third gender" people would have opted to be transgender or transexual; for Donham, the development of an essentially gender-normative "gay" identity is the outcome of the availability of such technologies.

Linda's adoption of "gay" identity, however, does not simply mean that Donham got it right and Califia got it wrong. As Donham himself notes, as a gay man Linda still engaged in some practices which would make him/her part of the classificatory schema of "third gender" or "transgender," including occasional cross-dressing and chores in the home which were coded as feminine. Given Califia's rereading of the "berdache" data, or Chloe's contestation of the "gayness" of Pettiway's informants, it could also be possible for Linda to be read as a transgender person who, "if hormones and surgery were made available . . . would opt for sex change." But the point is that neither "third gender," "transgender," "gay," nor "homosexual" adequately describes the complexity of Linda's identification or experience.

Mark Johnson's (1997) study of the *gay/bantut* population of Jolo in the Southern Philippines provides a subtle reading of these kinds of distinctions. While "bantut" is a "traditional" term for boys and men who adopt feminine practices, dress, and occupation, and who are also erotically drawn to and seek out male partners, they themselves prefer to call themselves "gay," a term adopted from the United States. But like Linda, it is clear that they are not doing "gay" in the same way as contemporary Western gay men. Working in beauty salons, organizing pageants, weddings, and school events, the gay/bantut residents of Jolo see themselves simultaneously as feminine persons and as defined by their desire for a normative male partner.

The gays/bantut look to the United States for models both for themselves and their lovers. They imagine the United States as a place where they would find a gender-normative, supportive, and loving boyfriend or husband. As in other parts of the world (see, e.g., Donham 1998, Lancaster 1992, Kulick 1998), the male lover of a gay/bantut is not understood as gay/bantut himself but retains his status as a normative man. The reciprocation of sexual attention is neither offered nor desired in these encounters, Johnson argues. Those men who might best be understood as

homosexual in the modern sense—that is, gender-normative men who desire gays/bantut but also desire their gay/bantut partner to be active in penetrating them—are derided by gays/bantut and non-gays/bantut alike as *silahis* or "double blades" (91).

As such, it seems that gays/bantut might be better understood through the category of "transgender" than that of "gay" or "homosexuality." The subtitle of Johnson's book—"Transgendering and Cultural Transformation in the Southern Philippines"—makes this implication. However, Johnson's focus on the "transgendered projects" of the gays/bantût is intended precisely to complicate what homosexuality and gender-variant behavior might mean in this context. Johnson argues that the adoption of "gay" by his study participants is neither a wholesale adoption of Western homosexuality nor an imposition of Western sexological models. Rather, he argues for "the possibility that there may be other histories of sexuality/gender in the Philippines which, while growing out of the . . . entangled skein of colonial and post-colonialism, may have as much to do with the discourses of state and nation, cultural and religious identity and identifications, and variously gendered ethnic bodies as it does with the proliferation and circulation of social scientific discourses of sexuality" (36).

Manalansan's (2003) study of Filipino self-identified gay male immigrants to the United States likewise contests gay male Filipino writers who decry the *bakla* (another subject position of male-bodied feminine people in the Philippines) as a feudal, false imposition which is giving way, naturally, to modern gay identity (35ff.). Manalansan sees the cross-dressing of his U.S.-resident study participants not as a vestige of pre-Stonewall, premodern gender-inflected homosexuality but rather as an "alternative modernity." He writes: "I argue that cross-dressing practices and rituals are vehicles and spaces through which Filipino gay men in New York city create and promulgate their sense of belonging and citizenship amid competing images and practices of the 'gay community' and the nation" (127). In a similar fashion, Boellstorff (2004, 2005) notes that the *waria* of Indonesia must be seen neither as a simple "traditional third gender" role for male-bodied feminine people nor as a precursor to "modern" homosexuality. Rather, he argues that the waria subject position is a specific mediation between local and transnational understandings of gender and sexual identity and behavior but, just as significantly, is equally shaped by understandings of home, marriage, kinship, modernity, and state bureaucratic categories.

In short, all these authors point out not only the dangers of describing their subjects through contemporary Western conceptions of gendered and sexual selfhood but that the analysis of their experiences far exceeds the boundaries of "gender" and "sexuality." Local conceptions of home, "the West," kinship, occupation, travel, beauty, style, as well as the facts of missionization, state violence, immigration, bureaucratic categories of identification, local and global political economies, and so on are all as significant to the formation of gay/bantut/bakla/waria identity as the restricted domains referred to by "gender" and "sexuality."

As such, they also demonstrate the dangers of presupposing any of these subject positions as natural precursors of *either* modern homosexual *or* transgender identity. Despite these careful analyses, however, the implication for some Western readers might be the assumption, like Califia's, that given the opportunity, the gays/bantut or waria would opt for hormones and surgery and a transgender identity. Kulick's *Travesti* (1998) complicates this assumption. Among the *travesti* population of Salvador, Brazil, Kulick observed many of the same practices associated with MTF transgender-identification in the United States—early childhood cross-gender identification and behavior, cross-dressing, feminizing body modification, and the adoption of feminine names by male-bodied people. Poor, and subject to horrifying levels of violence, the travestis eke out a living primarily as sex workers. But, he argues, a central feature of travesti narratives about themselves and each other is their explicit assertion that they are homosexual men, not women. Indeed, the idea that one is or can be a woman is seen as nonsensical by travestis themselves, and calling another travesti a woman is an insult, Kulick claims. Likewise, his travesti informants, fully aware of the possibilities of transexuality, were horrified by the notion of genital surgery, though they engage in extensive (informal) feminizing body modification of the buttocks and breasts through the injection of industrial silicone.

For the travestis, Kulick argues, gender is not linked simply to genitalia or a notion of internal identity but rather to the act of penetration in sexual encounters. Kulick shows how when a normatively gendered male client of a travesti desires to be penetrated by the travesti, he becomes "she" in his informants' accounts. Likewise, boyfriends of travestis are desired for their masculinity and capacity to anally penetrate them. Should a boyfriend desire to be penetrated by his travesti girlfriend, however, the relationship is terminated since he—she—ceases to be a man. Kulick, a gay man, was himself understood by the travestis as sharing this gendered position; and he notes how they deride Brazilian middle-class gender-normative gay men for believing themselves to be men. In short, Kulick argues that the travesti are neither a third gender nor, to extend his argument, are they uncomplicatedly either "transgender" or "gay"—rather, he argues, they share a gender category with women, and all people who are penetrated: "not men." As such, though the travestis may appear to be transgender to many Western readers, and though they claim to be homosexual, neither of these categories in the contemporary Western sense can account for their understandings of self.

It should be apparent by now that, beyond the complications evident in these ethnographic examples, there is also one similarity: the focus on male-bodied people. As Wieringa and Blackwood (1999) have noted, as with the historical absence of women and female-bodied people in the anthropological record, the ethnography of non-normative genders/sexualities is marked by a dearth of discussion of the experience of female-bodied people. They argue that the gendered inequalities that result in the absence of female-bodied people in the record also structure the (in)ability of female-bodied people to enact non-normative gender/sexual desire and practices. Indeed, while there have been several recent ethnographies of gender/sexual non-normative female-bodied people (e.g., Robertson 1998, Sinnott 2004), the relatively greater possibilities cross-culturally for male-bodied people to enter the public sphere is an important reason for the disequilibrium of representation in the anthropological record.[9]

However, the discussion of non-normative female-bodied people enables a further complication of the representation of non-Western gender/sexual variant subjects. Blackwood's (1995) contribution to this field is particularly productive, for not only does she discuss the case of Dayan, an Indonesian female-bodied masculine person who was also her lover, but she discusses how her own desires, framings, and ambivalences shape her understandings and representations of Dayan. As in the Southern Philippines, Indonesians have adopted and transformed Western categories of identity, including "lesbi" and "gay" (see also Boellstorff 2005, Oetomo 2000). Blackwood notes that "due to the close connection of alternative gender with homosexuality in West Sumatra and Indonesia" (62), the categories of lesbi and gay are used synonymously with categories of alternative gender which in West Sumatra are *bujang-gadis/becong* (for male-

bodied feminine people), and *tupik-fantan/tomboi* (for female-bodied masculine people). This close connection plays out in complex ways for Blackwood and her lover. While Blackwood sees Dayan as a strong and brave woman who resists Indonesian gendered conventions, Dayan expresses the desire to be a man and for Blackwood to adopt the role and demeanor of a wife. Blackwood writes:

> Our sexual practices were informed by these differences in gender identity and gave me further insights into the gender distinctions that Dayan drew for herself. She preferred to take the "male" role in sex, as she understood it from men she had talked to, and was little interested in being touched. Acts that emphasized her female body made her uncomfortable; she perceived them as corporal negations of her maleness. My own practices reflected an American lesbian feminist's rejection of male-defined and hierarchical sexuality; however, my attempts to negotiate greater latitude in lovemaking, in effect, to insert "equality" into sex, were generally unsuccessful. (68)

The candor with which Blackwood writes exposes, as she notes, the ways in which this relationship challenged and reshaped both her and Dayan's understandings of what it means to be a female-bodied person who desires other female-bodied people. Blackwood does not refer to Dayan as "transgender," though through her description it is clear that all those salient markers of "transgender-ness"—desire to transition to another gender, reshaping of the body, adoption of non-ascribed gender roles and behaviors—are present. Blackwood, indeed, refers to Dayan throughout as "she" and as a lesbian. Once more, I do not want to imply that Blackwood is "wrong" nor to make the claim that Dayan is "really transgender" (though this claim would certainly be made by some of my study participants). Rather, the point is to show again how "gender" and "sexuality" become deeply entangled with one another (and again, with occupation, kinship, locale . . .), indeed, inseparable for those subjects whose senses of self are not mediated through an understanding of gender and sexuality as experiences separate from one another or from other aspects of daily life. This entanglement between "gender" and "sexuality" is not specific to West Sumatra; rather, it is (as she recognizes) Blackwood's own assumptions about their separateness that produce the complexity of their relationship, and its representation in print.

These latter cases thus complicate both Donham's and Califia's assertions about the possibilities raised by the availability of categories and

technologies. Admittedly, the people discussed by Johnson, Manalansan, Boellstorff, Kulick, and Blackwood are poor and on the lowest stratum of local and global systems of socioeconomic status. Perhaps, as Donham's argument implies, urban residence and access to information would enable the kind of "sorting out" of identities Meyerowitz identifies in the mid-twentieth-century urban United States (as I outlined in chapter 1); the kinds of "education" some social service providers believe will enable Anita, Jade, or Sherry (whom I discussed in chapter 3) to identify explicitly as transgender; or the accessing of medical technologies as Califia suggests. Yet this misses the point that Johnson so cogently makes: that "there may be other histories of sexuality/gender" (1997: 36), inflected by cultural frameworks of knowledge, colonialism, global connections, and border crossings, which make a simple reading of discrete gay and transgender identity untenable in these contexts. That is, those-experiences-we-call "sexuality" and "gender" *themselves* may be organized in very different ways and be understood through other kinds of orderings (see also Besnier 2002).

My argument is, then, that "gender" and "sexuality" are not simply universal experiences or categories that are shaped in different ways by different "cultures" but, rather, *that they are themselves transformed as categories* in different contexts. Jolly and Manderson (1997) make a similar point in their introduction to a collection of essays on sexuality in Asia and the Pacific. Noting the theoretical separation of "sexuality" from "gendered" topics such as reproduction in gay/lesbian and feminist scholarship, they argue succinctly that "the issue extends beyond the separation of sexuality and reproduction to the broader supposition that sexuality has ontological status in all times and places, that it is a thing that can be named and to which a set of behaviors, feelings, and desires can be attached" (24; see also Butler 1994).[10]

This extended discussion of the analytic place of homosexuality and transgenderism (or their assumed place) in these accounts serves to make two points: first, that a clear distinction between "gender" and "sexuality" is confounded by the observation that these categories do not contain the same experiences, understandings, ideologies, or frames of reference for all subjects. Like "homosexuality" and "transgender," they also have a history. These contemporary anthropological accounts do not simply point to the differences between different "forms" of homosexuality or of transgenderism but show how gendered and sexual experience exceeds the boundaries of those categories themselves. Indeed, it is crucial to note that all the

authors cited above explicitly complicate the relationship between gender and sexuality (and other categories of analysis) in their work and raise questions about the utility of these discrete categories to account for their informants' identities and experiences. Their ethnographic data indicate that the status of "gender" and "sexuality" are complicated and transformed in locales where they are unable to be disaggregated from phenomena that are referred to as occupation, kinship, religion, state formation, marriage, travel, separatist warfare, modernity, capitalism, and so on. Second, though, once written, these texts enter a field where they are themselves subject to another set of social and meaning-making practices. Because they are read, taught, and put on syllabi and bibliographies, Western readers are able to see in these accounts—and argue over—analogies to Western gay, lesbian, and transgender identities. More significantly, as they come to be organized through the syllabi and bibliographies of a cohering transgender studies (as each of these texts is), their presence there reproduces the distinction between gender and sexuality upon which discrete homosexual and transgender identity depends, obviating the subtlety of these ethnographic analyses which aim to complicate that very distinction. I turn to this set of social practices next.

CONSOLIDATING A FIELD

So what is "transgender studies"? I have argued that it can gather unto itself a wide range of different texts, but what is the "it-ness" that produces this unity? As Halberstam notes, transgender studies is characterized by heterogeneity and a profusion of theoretical positions—similar to the profusion of identities that inhabit the imagined collectivity of transgender as a category of identification. So in this regard, there is no unity in the sense of theoretical, methodological, or political framings. Moreover, as I noted above, like any field of critical studies, transgender studies draws in a range of texts across disciplines and from different historical periods, all of which engage variously situated social actors as their subjects, further complicating the idea of a unified field.

However, despite this heterogeneity and diversity, there is a unifying center, the very reason for the constitution of the field in the first place: the idea that there is a group of people who can be understood through the category transgender. Or perhaps it would be better to say that there is a recursive relationship between transgender studies and a transgender community, one that engages an uncomfortable doubleness common to many fields of interdisciplinary inquiry. That is, even as transgender studies critically engages "transgender," its very institutionalization and naming presupposes a referent. Simultaneously, for all its critical impulse, transgender studies comes to stand as evidence *of* such a community for those concerned with its representation in the academy and beyond. This is, indeed, the central tension between a field of study which takes the category as a critical starting point, and the movement which enabled its emergence, which depends on the notion of fixed and distinct transgender identity. Finally, and again despite its critical impulse, its institutionalization privileges a particular understanding of "gender" as the primary experience around which transgender understandings of self are organized, and in turn is predicated on the assertion of difference from other fields of knowledge and states of being, in particular, that of homosexuality.

In exploring this claim, there are two broad—and interrelated—themes in scholarly and intellectual practices in which I am interested. The first is authorial and editorial. In this set, I include all those dynamics I have discussed above: the citation of historical texts in books or journal issues about transgender; the reinterpretation of anthropological and historical data as evidence of transgender behaviors and/or identities; but also the reiteration of the modern distinction between gender and sexuality as the truth against which local, non-Western ontologies are to be understood. The second is institutional: the way in which certain texts come to be understood as part of a field of transgender studies, however it is that they characterize their subject(s).

It is useful at this point to return to the *Transgender Issue* of *GLQ* in 1998. This issue embodies many of the dynamics I discuss above: even as Stryker's introduction thematizes the fissures and fractures of the field, the issue itself frames the collection of essays as texts about transgender. The articles in this issue include Cheryl Chase's (1998) discussion of intersexuality and the intersex movement; Joanne Meyerowitz's (1998) historical reconstruction of the formation of transexual identities in the early-twentieth-century United States; two articles which take on the issue of transgender/transexual embodiment and subjectivity (Elliot and Roen 1998, H. Rubin 1998); an article on bioethics (Nelson 1998); a paired set of articles by Halberstam (1998b) and Hale (1998) on the aforementioned butch/FTM "border wars"; and an interview with a former San Francisco police officer, Elliot Blackstone, through which members of the Gay and Lesbian Histor-

ical Society of Northern California (GLHSNC) (Members 1998) explore the history of radical "MTF transgender activism" in San Francisco.

This issue is a dense enactment of both of the themes I laid out above. On the one hand, it consciously exploits the trope of transgender to incorporate a range of different texts, positions, disciplinary locations, topics, historical contexts, and critical perspectives. Hale, Halberstam, Meyerowitz, Stryker, and the GLHSNC members are all cautious about the framing of transgender, noting the ways that it intersects and overlaps with other kinds of experiences, and how "transgender" subtly, if significantly, reshapes the experiences of historical subjects (see, for example, Members 1998: 351). On the other hand, by their inclusion in a *Transgender Issue,* these texts (and their subjects) can be read as constituting a field. That is, "transgender" as a framing trope for this issue allows for a critical reading of this diversity—intersex infants, Tenderloin queens, butches, and FTMs—but also for producing the diversity itself as characteristic *of* transgender. For, like the anthropological accounts discussed above, the institutional framing of transgender as a discrete entity *also* enables the effect of erasing the complexities so central to these authors' analyses.

I must also note that my own scholarship and teaching is implicated in this process. This book itself (with "transgender" in the title) is available for appropriation into transgender studies, one of my essays (Valentine 2006) has been reprinted in a transgender studies reader (Stryker and Whittle 2006), and I have also twice taught a class called "Transgender Histories, Identities, and Politics" (Valentine 2004) which includes many readings that have been discussed above. I ask two central questions in the course description: "How is it that all these texts have been grouped together in a class about 'transgender'? What does this syllabus itself tell us about the category, and about emerging notions of gender and sexuality in the United States in the early twenty-first century?" Yet despite these critical questions, like the articles in the *Transgender Issue* of *GLQ,* this syllabus contributes to the ordering of these texts together as forming a body of work.

I certainly do not intend to argue that these processes are complete or without complication. As much as the *Transgender Issue* or my syllabus might order texts and their subjects (provisionally) through transgender as a collective term, other institutional uses are apparent. For example, the Library of Congress (LOC) had several subject headings for variations on

the root term "transgender," but (at least in 2006), each of these was empty of references and referred users to "transsexualism" or "transsexuals." Reading emergent intellectual practices from library cataloging practices is tentative at best: in early 2006 the LOC category of "gender identity" had over three hundred entries, including books on gender and schooling, gay male masculinity, butch/femme, and homosexuality in general, while others like Meyerowitz's or Wilchins's, which arguably lie at the center of transgender studies, are listed under "transsexuals" or "transsexualism" but are not cross-listed under "gender identity." Another important point to bear in mind is, as Stryker reminds us, the relationship between "transgender" and "queer" studies, and how homosexuality and transgenderism can be read against and with one another in ways that subvert the easy division between them, historically, cross-culturally, or in the contemporary United States.

Yet my concern is still that the increasing use of "transgender" as a term to order knowledge produces the possibilities whereby certain subjects become appropriated into a reading of transgender that obscures the complexities of their identification and experience. Chloe's reading of Pettiway's *Honey, Honey, Miss Thang* at the beginning of this chapter reminds us that the practices of ordering and reading are not simply the product of scholarly work, syllabi, bibliographies, literature reviews, journal issues, library cataloguing practices, and so on, but of the way individuals make sense of such texts. From Chloe's perspective, Pettiway's book (listed under, among other headings, "transvestites" and "male prostitution" in LOC) is clearly about "transgender" sex workers. Their own, and Pettiway's, use of "gay" as a description of their selves is seen by Chloe as nonsensical or, at least, a reiteration of a "false" framework. Califia's rereading of Roscoe's and Williams's characterizations of the "berdache" is a similar kind of move. In both these cases, it is self-evident to these readers that the subjects of these very different books are best described as or analogized by transgender, and, moreover, that the reading of those subjects through a schema of "sexuality" rather than one of "gender" is, simply, wrong.

In the end, then, it is the distinction between gender and sexuality which produces, and is manifest in, these debates. Yet, as I have argued throughout this book, that distinction is, like contemporary categories such as transgender or homosexuality, a modern and recent innovation. It is this ordering of experience more than identity or institutionalized categories

that results in the ways that texts—and their subjects—are increasingly coming to be framed. Hence, anthropological texts—those that explicitly draw on "transgender" as a category to describe their subjects (e.g., Besnier 2002) and those that use the term to qualify their informants' practices (Boellstorff 2004, Kulick 1998, Johnson 1997), as much as those that don't (e.g., Blackwood 1995, Manalansan 2003)—can be absorbed into a field of transgender studies in readers' selection of those aspects of personhood and experience which are evidently "(trans)gendered." At the same time, the operative distinction between gender and sexuality allows readers simultaneously to contest that such subjects are (or ever were) "homosexual."

In these readings, the anthropological and historical framing of (self-evidently) transgender behavior and/or identity as a precursor to "modern" homosexuality can be contested and reclaimed *as* transgender. This reclamation depends on the conviction that the modern reading of gender and sexuality as separate and separable has ontological status, to paraphrase Jolly and Manderson (1997), for all time and all places. And "modern" here indexes not simply the assertion of a contemporary intellectual framing but also a modernist and progressivist claim: that the separation of gender and sexuality is a universal truth which has been finally revealed, and through which anthropological, historical, and contemporary Western and non-Western subjects can now be reinterpreted and given their correct place in the order of things.

This reading of gender is, as I have argued, significantly different from feminist understandings of gender as a site of relationships of power, linked in complex (though not causal) ways to sexuality and reproduction. And it is here that we can find one reason for why, in the field of transgender studies, the majority of the debates over non-Western anthropological subjects engage those ascribed male at birth; and why there is an elaborate debate over the butch/FTM border but none over the analogous border between male homosexuality and MTF transexuality in the United States. The success of the separation of gender and sexuality in queer/LGBT studies has rendered discussions of femininity in homosexual men dismissable as "stereotyping," a rejection of sexological and psychiatric models of homosexuality as gendered deviance. For female-bodied masculine people or FTMs, however, while the legacy of sexology and psychiatry is also significant, "female masculinity" is refracted through the history of second-wave feminism and a framing of gender which departs significantly from sexological and psychiatric models. Most contemporary feminists reject gender as simply "difference" and see it as a primary site of social power relations, necessarily inflected by sexuality because of the historical and cultural linkages between female sexuality and the politics of gender, even as they recognize that sexual identity is not linked to gender identification in causal ways. Hence, the butch/FTM border wars are a product not simply of a new conceptualization of gender and sexuality but of the working out of the status of masculinity in female-bodied people in the context of much broader gendered inequalities.

Likewise, the debates over anthropological and historical non-normative genders/sexualities are framed by the different, if intersecting, histories and politics of feminist and queer/gay concerns. As Wieringa and Blackwood (1999) point out, the more general absence of female-bodied people in the anthropological record is the legacy of the historical dominance of men in the field as well as the broader gendered patterns of inequality which make it harder for female-bodied people to engage in gender/sexual non-normative practices. Similarly, the concern of gay male anthropologists to describe and valorize non-Western (male) homosexualities has produced a context in which "traditional," "gendered" homosexualities can be interpreted (if not by anthropologists themselves, at least by others) as forerunners of modern ("sexual") homosexuals.

Transgender studies, then, is an emergent field of knowledge that, while impacted by feminism (and opposed to those varieties of lesbian-feminism which see transgender identity as retrograde), is being institutionalized through an understanding of "gender" that sees it primarily as a social difference, a conceptualization that flows more from the history of sex research, gay/lesbian scholarship and activism, and the concerns of MTF people than from feminism and the concerns of FTMs. Clearly, the debates over the butch/FTM borders engage these different understandings of gender. But that there is a "border war" at all (and the lack of its analogue for fem gay men/MTFs) is evidence of that very distinction.

So, what is the reason for engaging in this long discussion of transgender studies, and the place of gender and sexuality in its formation? As I wrote above, this is the first of three chapters in which I look at how "transgender" (and particular theories of gender and sexuality) are being institutionalized in certain contexts. The problem is, once more, not that this framing is false or wrong but rather that it cannot account for the complexities of lived experiences; that it reproduces the distinction between gender and sexuality as ontologically secure and universally relevant; and

that, as a result, the subjects of academic investigations—and of a range of other institutionalizing venues—are increasingly ordered by this distinction. Such institutionalization is indeed a feature of knowledge production itself, especially in an academic system where the establishment of fields of knowledge is vital for such scholarship (and the scholars who do its work) to be validated; as Chauncey argues for gay and lesbian studies (2000: 305). However, Chauncey also cautions against the narrowing potential of institutionalization and how it may close down analytic possibilities, a concern echoed by Butler (1994). Thus, while individual scholars who work within the framework of transgender studies may complicate these meanings of gender and sexuality, the broader push toward institutionalization produces conditions which obscure key critical questions at its heart. This is, indeed, the central problematic of institutionalization, and so I would argue that the very constitution of the field of transgender studies *as* a field must remain a central question *in* the field.

If, as I have argued, these debates are rooted in a modernist narrative of progress whereby the truth of the separation of gender and sexuality has come to be accepted, other conditions of modernity apply too. As Giddens (1990: 40–44) points out, one of the features of late modernity (or, in other readings, postmodernity) is that academic knowledge and social practices are related in recursive ways, so that academic models of society and its subjects come to be the ground against which social action is produced. In turn, such action becomes the source of anthropological and sociological data, framed as local knowledge. In the next chapter, I will look at how transgender—and the theories of gender and sexuality evident in anthropological, historical, sociological, and other framings—orders people in a different institutional context, that of social service provision and political grassroots activism. Indeed, to extend Giddens's argument, I believe it is in the intersection of transgender studies and transgender activism that the critical questions of transgender scholars become evened out. For even if the scholars cited above recognize the inability of discrete analytic categories to fully describe their subjects, activists and social service providers fully depend on the notion that transgender experience, even in all its diversity, is located discretely in the realm of gender.

5

The Logic of Inclusion

Transgender Activism

One busy morning at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center I was on my way out to get some coffee, down the narrow steps from the Gender Identity Project on the third floor and through the busy lobby. I stopped to look at the notice boards where there were announcements, posters, and signs—a support group, a party, a fundraiser, a housemate sought—the stuff of community centers everywhere. But my eye was caught by one which read:

DO YOU FEEL EXCLUDED FROM THE CENTER?

There followed a list of acts that the Center staff were supposedly guilty of: the ejection of transgender people from the Center; disallowing transgender groups from meeting there; discrimination against transgender people in hiring practices; and a demand that the Center own up to—and end—this perceived discrimination by "including" transgender people in its operations and its name. I went back upstairs to find Rosalyne, who had already seen the poster. She was understandably grumpy because, as the director of the GIP, she felt that the poster's author had ignored her efforts to have transgender issues addressed at the Center. But the poster—and Rosalyne's frustrations—speak more broadly to the idea of *inclusion* of the "T"