



Call for contributions

Whatever – A Transdisciplinary Journal of Queer Theories and Studies
Issue 6, Summer 2023 + Special issue on “Ephemeral Trans Practices: T-girls,
Transvestites and Crossdressers”

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Introducing *Whatever*

Scholars working in queer studies, both in and out of academia, are still often marginalized; one of the aspects of this marginalization is the lack of publishing venues, which discourages potentially original and creative researchers from pursuing their interest in queer studies, and from contributing to the development of the field. This has a negative impact on both the queer studies community, and on scholarly, social, and political discourse in general.

Whatever exists to facilitate a dialogue among researchers who work in any field related to queer studies. We are excited that scholars the world over are spinning queer outwards in a range of new and promising directions, such as neuroqueer, animal queer, queer economies, queer pedagogies, the queer politics of migration, and many more. Their daring and original work is a powerful testimonial to the productivity and vitality of a cluster of theories which deserve to be more widely known and applied, both in scholarship, teaching, and research, and in activism, advocacy, and policy-making.

The purpose of *Whatever* is to offer scholars working in queer studies, in and out of academia, a place to share their work, to reach like-minded readers, to initiate collaborations, to make things happen. We aim to foster a diverse and mutually respectful community among scholars of different backgrounds, research interests, methodological allegiances and disciplinary affiliations.

Whatever is indexed in the following databases: Scopus, ROAD, ERIH plus, DOAJ. Applications for the following databases are pending:

EBSCO: Philosopher's Index; LGBT&Gender studies database; ProQuest; Sherpa/ROMEO; OpenAIRE; Web of science (Clarivate, formerly Thomson Reuters isi/esci).

Whatever is published once a year; the first four issues are online at <https://whatever.cirque.unipi.it/> The fifth issue will be published in June 2022

We are now inviting submission for the sixth issue, which will be published in the summer of 2023.

The issue will include a general section, which will host papers dealing with any and all aspects of queer theories and studies, a permanent themed section on BDSM, a themed section on masculinities and sex work.

In parallel with the sixth issue, we will be working on a special issue on "Ephemeral Trans Practices: T-girls, Transvestites and Crossdressers".

Each themed section and the special issue will be curated by an independent editorial team.

General section

The general section will welcome papers dealing with any and all aspects of queer theories and studies, and of any of their possible intersections with other disciplines and theories: if you believe that the theoretical productivity, intellectual relevance, and political thrust of queer can be extended and expanded, if you are working at the crossroads between queer and other methods and issues, we want to hear from you!

Contributions are accepted in English, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. Papers should be between 30.000 and 80.000 characters in length; authors wishing to submit longer works are invited to contact us first explaining their reasons; please write to the managing editor, Giovanni Campolo: giovanni@battitoriliberi.it. Authors are welcome to include a variety of media, such as images, sound files, and audiovisuals.

Papers should be submitted anonymously through the journal website following a guided five-step submission process. A submission checklist and guidelines are available at: <https://whatever.cirque.unipi.it/index.php/journal/about/submissions>.

If you are interested in contributing to the special issue on "Ephemeral Trans Practices: T-girls, Transvestites and Crossdressers", please note that an extended abstract will be due on April 19th, 2022; the extended abstract must include: topic, thesis, type of data, methodological and theoretical approaches, expected conclusions/findings the recommended length is 1000 words + partial bibliography. Please note that acceptance of the abstract does not guarantee acceptance of the final submission; all submissions to *Whatever* are evaluated in their final form by double-blind peer review.

The deadline for all submissions for issue 6 (general and themed sections alike) and for the special issue is October, 31, 2022.

Revised versions of accepted papers will be due on February, 28, 2023. Last proofs will be due on May 25, 2023.

The issue will be published in the summer of 2023.

Whatever is double-blind peer-reviewed, online, open-access.

Permanent Themed Section: Performance, subversion, relation: tracing queer in BDSM

Editors: Massimo Fusillo, Serena Guarracino, Luca Zenobi

This permanent thematic section seeks contributions investigating the hermeneutic potential of this complex and diverse universe of sexual practices, all sharing a specific attention to performance, and to the transformation of power relationships into consensual play. At the same time, it intends to explore, through a comparative approach, representations of sadomasochism, fetishism, and other anti-normative sexual behaviours in literature, arts and the media, in order to map how BDSM may contribute to identify sexual and affective practices subverting the heteropatriarchal norm.

BDSM is here considered as a methodological framework staging and subverting the dynamics of power in heteronormative relationships, and as a thematic core which can be traced in very different narratives, from martyrdom in Catholic culture to romantic love as the founding mythology of the heterosexual couple. We therefore intend to solicit contributions that explore BDSM through multiple textualities, focusing on interdisciplinary lines of research such as, for example:

- Representation of BDSM practices in literature and the arts - Ecstasy, martyrdom and the aestheticization of suffering
- Anti-normative relationalities: BDSM and the ethics of care - BDSM, feminism and bodily politics
- Subversion and parody of heteronormativity

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Sezione tematica: Le maschilità e il sex work

a cura di Giuseppe Burgio (UniKore) e Giulia Selmi (UniVr)

Negli ultimi decenni i mondi ed i mercati del sesso nelle società occidentali sono andati profondamente modificandosi. È aumentata significativamente - soprattutto tra chi lavora in strada - la presenza di persone migranti che si trovano quasi sempre in condizione di irregolarità in virtù delle politiche migratorie dei paesi di arrivo. Al contempo è aumentato il lavoro sessuale svolto indoor, così come quello svolto su o attraverso il web, più spesso da persone native. Questi cambiamenti hanno portato con sé delle modifiche ai dispositivi di governo del fenomeno di cui coesistono oggi, in Europa, modelli molto diversi che vanno dalla criminalizzazione dei clienti alla regolamentazione e al riconoscimento dei diritti.

A fronte di queste trasformazioni la ricerca sul lavoro sessuale è andata a sua volta diversificandosi ed è stata capace di rendere conto delle diverse forme che il lavoro sessuale può assumere, sia in termini di posizionamenti soggettivi che di assetti strutturali.

Resta tuttavia sullo sfondo della ricerca contemporanea l'esplorazione del nesso tra maschilità e lavoro sessuale. Da un lato, infatti, sebbene sia indubbio che sono le donne - cis e trans - ad essere protagoniste in questo mercato, strutturalmente segnato dalle disuguaglianze di genere, è rintracciabile una progressiva visibilità degli uomini sex workers che lavorano con clienti uomini, con clienti donne o con entrambi. Uomini sono - nella stragrande maggioranza dei casi - i clienti. Se alcuni studi hanno riguardato i clienti delle donne (cis o trans) poco frequentata appare la ricerca sui clienti di sex worker maschili. Assolutamente inesplorata appare infine - tanto tra i lavoratori quanto tra i clienti - il tema degli uomini trans e delle maschilità queer e gender non conforming. In una prospettiva intersezionale, poi, il tema delle maschilità (già in sé articolato e plurale) risulta complessificato da temi quali la cittadinanza, la migrazione, la classe, l'orientamento sessuale. Le maschilità infine - oltre che allo stigma relativo al sex

work – possono essere sottoposte a forme di eterosessismo, genderismo, abilismo, razzismo e xenofobia, etatismo, eccetera.

Alla luce di questo scenario questa call offre uno spazio per esplorare come le varie declinazioni della maschilità agiscano nel campo del lavoro sessuale. Si invitano quindi contributi – sia empirici che teorici – che esplorino, tra le altre possibili, le seguenti linee tematiche

- Declinazioni della maschilità tra i sex worker
- Differenti modelli di maschilità tra i clienti
- Maschilità cis, trans e gender non conforming
- Maschilità nel mercato postfordista del lavoro sessuale
- Maschilità e servizi di cura alla persona
- Sex work in presenza e online
- Sex work maschile e contesti omosociali
- Costruzione delle maschilità nel sex work
- Costruzione e rappresentazione culturale del desiderio sessuale maschile
- Declinazioni intersezionali delle maschilità di sex work e clientela

Themed section: masculinities and sex work

Editors: Giuseppe Burgio (UniKore) and Giulia Selmi (UniVr)

In recent decades in Western societies the sex industry has undergone profound changes. The number of undocumented migrants – especially among street-based sex workers - has significantly increased. At the same time, there has been an increase in indoor sex work, as well as sex work carried out on or through the web, mainly by native people. These changes have also brought about changes in the way sex work is regulated, with very different models coexisting in Europe, ranging from the criminalization of clients to regulation and recognition of rights.

Considering these transformations, research on sex work has in turn diversified and has been able to account for the different forms that sex work can take, both in terms of subjective positionings and in terms of structure.

However, the analysis of the connection between masculinity and sex work remains in the background of contemporary research. On the one hand, although there is no doubt that cis and trans women are the main actors in this market, structurally shaped by gender inequalities, it is possible to trace a progressive visibility of male sex workers who work with male clients, female clients or both. Moreover, clients are men in the vast majority of cases. While some studies have studied clients of cis or trans female sex workers, there is little research on clients of male sex workers. Finally, the topic of trans men, queer, and gender non-conforming masculinities both among workers and clients, seems unexplored.

From an intersectional perspective, then, the theme of masculinities (already articulated and plural in itself) is complexified by themes such as citizenship, migration, class, and sexual orientation. Finally, masculinities – in addition to the stigma of sex work – can be subjected to forms of heterosexism, genderism, ableism, racism and xenophobia, ageism, ethnocentrism, and so on.

Given this scenario, this call offers a space to explore how the various declinations of masculinity act in the field of sex work. We therefore invite contributions - both empirical and theoretical - that explore, among other possible themes, the following issues:

- Declination of masculinity among sex workers
- Different models of masculinity among clients
- Cis, trans and gender non-conforming masculinities
- Masculinities in the post-Fordist sex work market
- Masculinities and personal care services
- Off line and Online sex work
- Male sex work and homosocial contexts
- Construction of masculinities in sex work
- Cultural construction and representation of male sexual desire
- Intersectional declinations of masculinities in sex work and clients

Special issue: *Ephemeral Trans Practices: T-girls, Transvestites and Crossdressers*

Pratiques Trans éphémères : T-girls, Travesties et Crossdressers

Pratiche Trans effimere : T-girls, Travestite e Crossdressers

Editors: Luca Greco (Université de Lorraine) and Diego Semerene (University of Amsterdam).

Within the conceptual framework of this special issue, T-girls, transvestites, and crossdressers are different ways of naming a male-assigned-at-birth person who moves toward an ideal of femininity for a short amount of time, however repetitively, and either privately or semi-privately. Such ephemeral trans feminine practices are performed through a variety of spatial, material, sartorial and linguistic resources. T-girls, transvestites and cross-dressers (we leave the possibility for new taxonomies to emerge from contributors) have been a consistent presence in the landscape of social movements and social imaginaries both queer and straight, sex-positive and reactionary. As the exemplary case of Mario Mieli in Italy, a leading figure of FUORI (Fronte Unitario Omosessuale Rivoluzionario Italiano), who defines himself as a “part-time transvestite,” (Mieli 2019), they question the dichotomy between cisgender vs. transgender identities, bringing to life very specific forms of passing and transiting.

In this issue we would like to turn our attention to the figure of the ephemeral trans woman, whose trans-ness is made visible to others for short periods of time and either privately or semi-privately (unlike drag practices which are the subject of public performances). We are particularly interested in the contemporary part-time trans feminine subject who emerges, or is rendered possible, with the popularization of the Internet, when she is able to purchase her accoutrements and connect with trans amorous partners with practicality and privacy – as if nothing ever happened. T-girls, transvestites and crossdressers have not succeeded in attracting the attention of scholars

all while growing with and via the popularization of digital media technologies and the hook-up cultures that they have enabled. It has never been *technically* easier to become, play, or pass as, trans for a day, an evening, or a half hour. This trans subject oscillates back and forth, quickly transitioning and detransitioning between multi-semiotic gender presentations, through styling, not surgical or pharmacological means. In this special issue, we want to explore trans-ness, then, as a fleeting embodied *enjoyment* device (potentially for short-lived sex, fantasy, desire and amusement) and as a nomadic assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, Braidotti 1994) composed by corporeal, linguistic, material, and spatial resources. In this framework, trans(-ness) is more praxeological than ontological, closer to a technological means than an end, or even a process.

We would also like to investigate why the figure of the part-time trans, who may “be” trans full-time but whose trans-ness is made legible only in targeted moments and discrete spaces, has been neglected by queer theories invested in less elusive forms of being. What kind of fantasies of queerness, or trans-ness – in academic, intellectual and activist circles – might the T-girl/ transvestite/crossdresser threaten to disrupt?

We envision four main axes in the sexual/social life of the part-time trans woman: **linguaging, temporality, spatiality, and sartoriality.**

• **Linguaging: labelling, interacting, mixing**

i) What are the multi-semiotic resources mobilized by transvestites in order to perform their different, and intersectional, femininities? How do they linguistically occupy the other’s gaze? What are the categories, the pronouns, the names used by transvestites in order to talk about their bodies-in-progress, and to refer to their own selves in encounters with trans-attracted partners? Are they disidentifying with binary linguistic models of masculinities and femininities? And how might they forge a place for themselves in different languages, geographies and settings? Can we observe some hybrid linguistic, plurilingual forms of indexing polyphonic, racialized and *fronterizas* (Anzaldúa 1990) identities? What does the “T” in T-girl really stand for? Can she speak, or does her voice pose a threat to the fantasy that makes her encounters possible? What is the role of words, uttered or typed, in the transvestite’s enjoyment and her quest for the gaze, touch and recognition of others?

• **Temporality: preparing, waiting, passing**

ii) Is there a peculiar temporality in the encounters of the part-time trans from the time of preparation to the time of the digital and/or fleshly encounter? How is time interpreted and occupied in the to-and-fro movement between her gender embodiments? What happens in the temporal lacunae between embodiments? How are the temporalities of transvestite practices entangled with the temporalities of non-transvestite situations? What is the actual distance (symbolic, discursive, political) between part-time and full-time trans practices? Do part-time trans practices produce a different kind of waiting, or are there temporalities where transvestites, cis and trans women writ large meet? How does part-time trans feminine time complicate established ideas around *trans time*, along with its splits, cuts, disruptions and delays (Greenberg 2020)? How might cross-dressing

time situate itself in relationship to screen time (Bak 2020), family time (Halberstam 2005), queer and crip times (Kafer 2013)?

• **Spatiality: hosting, cruising, camming**

iii) What are the spaces occupied by the contemporary cross-dressing subject? Domestic spaces, (semi-)public spaces -- digital (cruising sites, apps, cams) and analog (dogging sites, streets, parking lots, woods, clubs, parks, saunas, homes, hotels)? Do transvestites occupy the periphery or the blind spots of the very center(s) of cities, digital landscapes and sexual matrixes? How and where do they have sex? Are there not spaces within these practices that acquire a specific intimacy and that become less intimate once the experience is over? How does the T-girl transit, or make others transit, geographically? How might she queer, or not, there where she passes (through)? What kind of *mise-en-scène* (lighting, props, set dressing) does the crossdresser compose, how might or must she set the scene, to host her partners? If she travels, how is her movement made possible?

• **Sartoriality: dressing, waxing, styling**

iv) What are the material instruments that make up this present-day transvestite? How do T-girls negotiate idealized thresholds of passability with the body's often contradicting borders and seams, or the "gorgeous messiness of trans" (Malatino 2020), through fashion practices of feminization? What are their stylization skills and dressing rituals? How much sartorial signaling is enough for the transvestite to successfully court the so-called admirer's gaze? At what point does such sufficiency break down? What is the function of hair, color, scent, make-up, texture and posture in the encounter between the part-time trans woman and the other? Where does she buy her clothes and her shoes? How does she figure out her size? Can her aesthetics point toward new epistemologies, or epistemological disobediences (Preciado 2020), of sexual difference beyond the somatic, the binary, the social and even the signifier?

We seek article-length submissions that explore the contemporary cross-dressing subject as laid out here but we are also interested in submissions that respond to the CFP's blind spots.

We would like contributions that engage with ephemeral trans feminine praxes of our time through trans-national and inter-disciplinary approaches that include, but are certainly not limited to: trans studies, queer theory, psychoanalysis, feminist theory, queer of color critique, fashion theory, media studies, semiotics, anthropology, philosophy and linguistics.

Timeline of the special issue

Prospective contributors should submit 1000-word extended abstracts by **19 April 2022** through the journal website following a guided five-step anonymous submission process. Abstracts should be clearly labeled as such. A submission checklist and guidelines are available at: <https://whatever.cirque.unipi.it/index.php/journal/about/submissions>.

Extended abstracts must include: topic, thesis, type of data, methodological and theoretical approaches, expected conclusions/findings, partial bibliography.

Bio of the co-editors:

Luca Greco is Full Professor in Sociolinguistics and Gender & Language Studies at the Université de Lorraine (Metz, France). Greco is the author of a monography on Drag King Workshops - *Dans les coulisses du genre: la fabrique de soi chez les Drag Kings* (2018) - and of various articles, special issues and edited books on gender and language studies, queer linguistics, and border studies. Greco's research focuses on embodied gender and multimodality, performance in contemporary art and everyday practices, and on borders in action. Forthcoming publications include "Imagining Performances : Entangled Temporalities and Corporalities in Drag King Encounters ». In R. Barrett & K. Hall (eds.) *The Oxford*

Handbook of Language and Sexuality, Oxford, Oxford University Press, and "Rethinking gender as performance in language, gender and sexuality Studies: some examples from walking practices in drag king workshops". In J. Baxter & J. Angouri (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Language, Gender and Sexuality*, London, Routledge.

<https://univ-lorraine.academia.edu/lucagreco>

Diego Semerene is Assistant Professor of Queer and Transgender Media and Cultural Analysis at University of Amsterdam and member of the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA). Semerene holds a Ph.D. in Media Arts and Practice from the University of Southern California and has published on new media technologies, psychoanalysis and queer sexual practices. Recent publications include "Cross-Dressing Violence: Digital Barebacking as Symbolic Drag," in R. Varghese (ed.) *RAW: PReP, Pedagogy, and the Politics of Barebacking* (University of Regina Press), "Creampied to Death: Ejaculative Kinship in the Age of Normative Data Flows," in *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society*, and "Tailoring the

Impenetrable Body All Over Again: Digitality, Muscle and The Men's Suit" in *The Routledge Companion to Fashion Studies*. @diegoSemerene

<https://uva.academia.edu/DiegoSemerene>