

GENDER IDENTITY TROUBLE

An Analysis of the Underrepresentation of Trans
Professors in Canadian Universities*[‡]

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Abstract

This article considers the under-representation of trans persons who specialize in trans issues employed as professors in Canadian universities, with particular attention paid to the case of departments of gender and feminist studies. The research question is: what are the systemic barriers preventing the displacement of the cis-centric subject from the center of francophone Canadian academic feminism, and contributing to the exclusion of trans persons? This article analyzes these obstacles. The first part demonstrates the presence of cisgenderism in teaching and research, creating a glass ceiling for trans persons in academia. The second studies the absence of trans issues in feminist francophone teaching and research, despite the interest of students in these issues. The third part employs a transfeminist approach to trouble the cisgender normativity of gender and feminist studies and the disciplinary divisions that marginalize trans persons in academia.

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1. Gender Identity Trouble: The Cisgender Subject of Feminism

In 1990, philosopher Judith Butler published *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. In this book, Butler interrogates the category “woman” that constituted the foundation and basis of feminist movements/studies, with the help of a Foucauldian genealogical method and an “immanent critique,”¹ to detect its mechanisms of exclusion, as well as to identify the novel forms of epistemic violence that produced the identity category of woman as a central concern to the political feminist agenda. Butler notably highlights the heterocentric conditions that have marginalized lesbians from feminism. The title of this article redeploys Butler’s title in the spirit of fanfiction, with the addition of an adjective (gender [identity]), which, as asserted by Ann Braithwaite and Catherine M. Orr,² remain invisible as much in Butler’s title as in other feminist texts, while nonetheless haunting, despite its invisibility, the methodological, epistemological, and political frames of feminist reflections since their conception. In their work, Braithwaite and Orr use simple yet poignant examples of “invisible adjectives” that cut across fields of knowledge and everyday (linguistic) practices, whether speaking of marriage (the invisible adjective being heterosexual, in contrast with the explicitly denoted gay marriage) or of certain professions such as the doctor (the invisible adjective being male, since we must otherwise specify that we are speaking of a female doctor). These “invisible adjectives” denote “unmarked identities,”³ or those identities of dominant social groups, viewed

1 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York: Routledge, 2007), v. [“Immanent critique” is a term usually associated with thinkers of the Frankfurt School of critical theory such as Adorno, and is contrasted with Kant’s “transcendental critique.” Eds.]

2 Ann Braithwaite and Catherine M. Orr, *Everyday Women’s and Gender Studies: Introductory Concept* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

3 Linda R. Waugh, “Marked and Unmarked: A Choice between Unequals in Semiotic Structure,” *Semiotica*, 38, no. 3-4 (1982): 299-318.

as natural, universal, and normal, as opposed to marginalized/ marked identities, viewed as unnatural, unusual, and abnormal. Such mechanisms of naturalization and normalization of dominant identity categories are foundational to “invisible adjectives.” We specify that we are speaking of gay marriage because, in the normalized definition of marriage as heterosexual, an invisible presumption exists, with the paradoxical effect of rendering non-heterosexual unions hyper-visible through a particular lens, while simultaneously rendering them invisible through the normalization of heterosexual unions. Shedding light on these “invisible adjectives,” as shown by Braithwaite and Orr, has significant repercussions on our fields of knowledge:

What becomes apparent in this exercise of uncovering invisible adjectives is that attempts to make any group of previously invisible people visible involve more than just inserting marginalized groups into the universalizing histories of the past. And this realization has led us to think about knowledge differently, about what has counted as knowledge and where and how knowledge could be gleaned.⁴

Though putting such “invisible adjectives” forward constitutes an important task at the heart of anti-oppression studies, including feminist and gender studies, these fields of knowledge are always already marked by concerning absences and erasures in relation to certain dominant categories in which the labour of making unmarked identities visible remains incomplete. In feminist and gender studies, particularly in francophone communities, this is the case for cisgender/cissexual (or cis) identities.⁵ It is important

4 Braithwaite and Orr, *Everyday Women's and Gender Studies*, 17.

5 Alexandre Baril, “Transsexualité et privilèges masculins. Fiction ou réalité?,” in *Diversité sexuelle et constructions de genre*, ed. Line Chamberland, et al (Québec : Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2009): 263-295. Baril notes that cissexual and cisgender (or cis) people are non-transsexual or non-transgender people. As stated by Baril: “In the field of natural science, the cis adjective is employed as the antonym of trans, the first referring to an element that is on the same side, the second, signifying “beyond” in its Latin origins, referring to an element belonging to both sides. More generally, the trans prefix designates, in contrast to the cis prefix, a transformation and a transition. The cis prefix is

to mention, from the outset, that this occultation of trans* issues through cis norms can be found in all disciplinary fields. The feminist and gender studies case, which is the focus of this article, is therefore just one of many, though it is particularly problematic, since this field of study too often concerns itself with gender issues without addressing the cis presumptions that mark its objects of study. Moreover, although this essay focuses on gender and feminist studies, the implications of the reflections I propose, notably in the concluding section of this article, apply to a wide array of disciplines, including feminist philosophy, by raising ethical and epistemological issues regarding the place of trans* studies in academia.

By paraphrasing Butler's title, the highlighting of "invisible adjectives" allows for the cis-centred character of feminism to become visible, where cis identities are normalized and taken for granted, seen as foundational to feminism and gender. Unless otherwise specified, when feminists refer to gender, they are in no way speaking of gender identity (cis/trans*⁶), but of the masculine/feminine genders, and these are, unless specifically identified as trans*, "naturally" understood as cis. The highlighting of invis-

therefore associated with sex and gender terms to designate those people who decide not to undergo sex or gender transitions."

6 Susan Stryker, *et al*, "Introduction: Trans-, Trans, or Transgender?," *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 36, no. 3-4 (2008): 11-22, <http://www.jstor.org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/stable/pdf/27649781.pdf>.

The term trans* with an asterisk is inclusive of different gender identities that exceed binaral sex and gender frames, such as those identifying as transsexual, transgender, non-binary, bigender, agender, two-spirit, transvestite, etc. The expression trans- with a hyphen, as introduced by Stryker, Currah, and Moore, aims to broaden trans- analyses beyond sex and gender issues: "A little hyphen is perhaps too flimsy a thing to carry as much conceptual freight as we intend for it [to] bear, but we think the hyphen matters a great deal precisely because it marks the difference between the implied nominalism of 'trans' and the explicit relationality of 'trans-,' which remains open-ended and resists premature foreclosure by attachment to any single suffix. Our call for papers read: 'Trans, -gender, -national, -racial, -generational, -genic, -species. The list could (and does) go on.'" The notion of trans- therefore seeks the transcending (*trans-ing*) of boundaries, be they disciplinary, theoretical, political, linguistic, or other. For more on the expressions "trans*" and "trans-," see Enke (2012a, 7, 19-20).

ible cis adjectives in feminist work, as Braithwaite and Orr demonstrate, allows for the destabilization of the universal cis identity as the foundation of feminism, to promote other perspectives of the world:

As a result, becoming aware of what (and who) has been invisible means also becoming concerned with what (and who) is seen as neutral, universal and dominant, and, by default, what (and who) is considered biased and partisan, and thus is also negated. By situating knowledge in the world, we can both destabilize its likelihood of being taken-for-granted and use those new insights to understand, talk about, and potentially act in the world differently.⁷

The addition of the adjective (gender [identity]) to the title of Butler's *Gender Trouble* represents one of the visions allowing for the conceptualization of feminist and gender analyses from a new angle, inclusive of trans* people and favouring a renewal of feminist approaches at methodological, epistemological, and political levels.

This essay adopts a multi-methodological approach, or an approach that, while founded on theoretical analysis, nevertheless utilizes data deriving from quantitative and qualitative research conducted by other researchers, quantitative data collected for this research, and factual evidence collected through various trans* discussion lists and drawn from my own experience as a trans scholar working in feminist and gender studies (auto-ethnography). The thesis defended here posits that feminism has not only established itself as a field of study by marginalizing many people, such as racialized, socio-economically disadvantaged, lesbian, elderly, intersexed, or disabled women, but is also constructed on a cisgender normativity⁸ that excludes trans* subjects and produces gender

7 Braithwaite and Orr, *Everyday Women's and Gender Studies*, 18.

8 Baril, "Transsexualité et privilèges masculins. Fiction ou réalité?," 284. Baril coined the term "cisgender normativity" to designate the normative aspect of the oppression of trans* people. He distinguishes "cisgender normativity" from "cisgenderism" and notes that "cisgenderism is a system of oppression that affects trans* people, often called transphobia. It occurs on judicial, political, economic, social, medical, and normative levels. In this last case, we speak

analyses focusing predominantly on cisgender realities. While this cis presumption of gender is starting to be questioned by Anglophone feminists, as demonstrated by the recent proliferation of transfeminist⁹ work, francophone feminists, with the few exceptions of trans* and feminist-identified people,¹⁰ seem locked into

of ‘cisgendernormativity’” (Baril, 2015a, 121).

9 Talia Mae Bettcher, “Feminist Perspectives on Trans Issues,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Stanford University, 2006. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-trans/>; Pat Califa, *Le mouvement transgenre. Changer de sexe*, Translation by Patrick Ythier. Paris: EPEL, 2003; T. L. Cowan, “Transfeminist Kill/Joys: Rage, Love, and Reparative Performance,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (2014): 501-516; Anne Enke ed., *Transfeminist Perspectives In and Beyond Transgender and Gender Studies*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press (2012); Eli R. Green, “Debating Trans Inclusion in the Feminist Movement: A Trans-Positive Analysis,” *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 10, no. 1/2 (2006): 231-248; Emi Koyama, “Transfeminist Manifesto,” in *Catching a Wave: Reclaiming Feminism for the 21st Century*, 244-259, edited by Rory Dicker and Alison Piepmeier, Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003; Emi Koyoma, “Whose Feminism Is It Anyway? The Unspoken Racism of the Trans Inclusion Debate,” in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, 698-705, edited by Susan Stryker and Stephen Wittle, New York: Routledge 2006; Jean Bobby Noble, *Sons of the Movement: FtMs Risking Incoherence on a Post-Queer Cultural Landscape*, Toronto: Women’s Press, 2006; Jean Bobby Noble, “Trans. Panic. Some Thoughts toward a Theory of Feminist Fundamentalism,” in *Transfeminist Perspectives In and Beyond Transgender and Gender Studies*, 45- 59, edited by Anne Enke, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012; Jack Pyne, “Transfeminist Theory and Action: Trans Women and the Contested Terrain of Women’s Services,” in *LGBTQ People and Social Work: Intersectional Perspectives*, 129-149, edited by Brian J O’Neil, Tracy A Swan, and Nick J. Mulé, Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press 2015; Gayle Salamon, “Transfeminism and the Future of Gender,” *Assuming a Body: Transgender and Rhetorics of Materiality*, New York, Columbia University Press (2010): 95-128; Krista Scott-Dixon ed., *Trans/Forming Feminisms: Trans/Feminist Voices Speak Out*, Toronto: Sumach Press, 2006; Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity*, Berkeley: Seal Press, 2007; Sandy Stone, “The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto,” in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, 221-236, edited by Susan Stryker and Stephen Wittle, New York, Routledge, 2006; Susan Stryker and Talia Bettcher, “Introduction: Trans/Feminisms,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 3, no. 1/2 (2016): 5-14; Stephen Whittle, “Where Did We Go Wrong? Feminism and Trans Theory: Two Teams on the Same Side?” in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, 194-202, edited by Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle, New York: Routledge, 2006.

10 M.H./Sam Bourcier, “Des ‘femmes travesties’ aux pratiques trans-

a cisgendernormativity that remains invisible. This exclusion of trans* people is reflected in the composition of research teams dealing with trans* issues, feminist and gender studies programs and courses, and publications, to name just a few examples. This essay is therefore concerned with the systematic barriers that contribute to the exclusion of trans* people and prevent the decentring of the cis-centred subject in French Canadian academic feminism. This article aims to conduct a descriptive analysis of these structural obstacles, while suggesting potential solutions to overcome these limitations, most notably through a transfeminist approach. My goal is not to target specific departments, programs of study, or research teams, but to shed light on the structural dimension of cisgendernormativity cutting across Canadian academic institutions and research teams, especially in francophone communities,

genres: repenser et queeriser le travestissement,” *CLIO, Histoire, femmes et sociétés* 10, (1999): 117-136; —, *Sexpolitiques: Queer zones 2*, Paris: La Fabrique, 2005; —, *Queer Zones. Politique des identités sexuelles et des savoirs*, Paris: Éditions Amsterdam, 2006; —, “Technotesto: biopolitiques des masculinités tr(s)ans hommes,” *Cahiers du genre* 45, no. 2 (2008): 59-84; —, *Queer Zones 3. Identités, cultures et politiques*, Paris: Éditions Amsterdam, 2011. Alexandre Baril, “Transsexualité et privilèges masculins. Fiction ou réalité?”; —, “Quelle place pour les femmes trans au sein des mouvements féministes?,” *Spirale* 247, (Winter 2014): 39-41; —, “Sexe et genre sous le bistouri (analytique): interprétations féministes des transidentités,” *Recherches féministes* 28, no. 2 (2015): 121-141; —, “Francophone Trans/Feminisms: Absence, Silence, Emergence,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 3, no. 1/2 (2016): 40-47; —, “Intersectionality, Lost in Translation? (Re)thinking Inter-sections Between Anglophone and Francophone Intersectionality,” *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture and Social Justice* 38, no. 1, (2017); M.H./ Sam Bourcier, et al., “Masculinités queer, trans et post-trans : les rejetons du féminisme: Entretiens croisés avec Carine Boeuf, Morty Diamond, Jin Haritaworn, Vincent He-say, Jean Bobby Noble et Stephen Whittle (propos recueillis par Marie-Hélène Bourcier et Pascale Molinier,” *Cahiers du genre* 45, no. 2 (2008): 85-124; Karine Espineira, *La transidentité. De l'espace médiatique à l'espace public*, Paris : L'Harmattan, 2008; —, “Les constructions médiatiques des personnages trans. Un exemple d'inscription dans le programme ‘penser le genre’ en SIC,” *Les enjeux de l'information et de la communication* 15, no. 1 (2014): 35-47; —, “Pour une épistémologie trans et féministe. Un exemple de production de savoirs situés,” *Comment s'en sortir?* 2 (Fall 2015) : 42-58; —, *Transidentités: ordre et panique de genre*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2015; —, Maud-Yeuse Thomas, et al., *Transfémismes, Cahiers de la transidentité*, no. 5, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2015.

preventing trans* people specializing in trans* issues, due to a glass ceiling phenomenon, to integrate academia and its higher ranks. This article invites all people working in academia to employ trans-inclusive practices and address the structural inequalities endured by trans* people, notably in feminist and gender studies.

This article is divided into three parts. The first section paints a portrait of cisgendernormativity in academic education and research across Canada. The second puts forward a case study of the francophone Canadian context to illustrate the near total absence of trans* issues in feminist teachings and works, despite a growing interest from students in such issues. In this section, I demonstrate that the paradox between students' growing interest and the lack of trans* university professors specializing in these issues is made possible by the exploitation of trans* people's unpaid and invisible labour. The third and concluding section utilizes a transfeminist approach and its notion of trans-ing to destabilize the cis-centrism of feminist and gender studies and to disrupt the disciplinary (sectarian) divisions contributing to the marginalization of trans* people in academia.

2. Cisgendernormativity in Academic Education and Research

The cisgendernormativity that dominates Canadian university education and research mirrors its prevalence in our society. Trans* people experience significant forms of discrimination, notably in the sphere of employment. A recent study conducted in the United States that included nearly 28,000 trans* people found that a majority of them experience forms of violence ranging from physical, psychological, and sexual violence to institutional and economic violence:

The findings show large economic disparities between transgender people in the survey and the U.S. population. Nearly one-third (29%) of respondents were living in poverty, compared to 14% in the U.S. population. A major contributor to the high

rate of poverty is likely respondents' 15% unemployment rate—three times higher than the unemployment rate in the U.S. population at the time of the survey (5%).¹¹

The Canadian figures are similar: Shelley notes some studies report up to 40% of trans* people are unemployed¹² and Bauer and Scheim, who conducted one of the largest quantitative studies of Canadian trans* populations (433 subjects), show that many trans* people are laid off, not employed, and leave or decline certain jobs because their safety is compromised:

Among trans Ontarians, 13% had been fired for being trans (another 15% were fired, and believed it might be because they were trans). Because they were trans, 18% were turned down for a job; another 32% suspected this was why they were turned down. Additionally, 17% declined a job they had applied for and were actually offered, because of the lack of a trans-positive and safe work environment.¹³

The consequences of such employment discrimination are substantial, since they trigger a cycle of poverty and social exclusion from which it is difficult to escape. These statistics are even more shocking when we consider that a majority of trans* people are qualified to work:

Previous Trans PULSE findings showed that while 71% of trans people have at least some college or university education, about half make \$15,000 per year or less. In light of this we sought to better understand the unique barriers to employment faced by trans Ontarians [...].¹⁴

11 Sandy E. James, *et al.*, *Executive Summary of the Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*, (Washington, DC: National Center for Transgender Equality 2016), 3.

12 Christopher A. Shelley. *Transpeople: Repudiation, Trauma, Healing* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 82.

13 Greta R. Bauer and Ayden I. Scheim. *Transgender People in Ontario, Canada: Statistics from the Trans PULSE Project to Inform Human Rights Policy* (London, ON: The University of Western Ontario, 2015), 3.

14 Greta R. Bauer, *et al.*, "We've Got Work to Do: Workplace Discrimination and Employment Challenges for Trans People in Ontario," *Trans PULSE Bulletin Electronique* 2, no. 1 (2011), 1.

Trans* women are especially vulnerable because of the simultaneous presence of both sexism and cisgenderism (or “cissexism”¹⁵): when they are not laid off or denied employment, their salaries, like that of other women, are affected. Based on their quantitative study, Schilt and Wiswall conclude, “In becoming women, MTFs experience significant losses in hourly earnings.”¹⁶ The testimonies of many trans* people confirm these types of discrimination, such as that of Lalla Kowska-Régnier, who was laid off and whose salary decreased following her transition: “I would add that my professional projects were interrupted, notably because my ex-future employers became aware of my transition [...]. Today, since I got fired, my [...] income has been divided by nearly 3...and I remain in a pretty precarious situation.”¹⁷

The academic world is nothing but a reflection of our societies. It is plagued by the same -isms (heterosexism, racism, colonialism, ableism, cisgenderism, etc.) shaping its structures and systems of operation. It is thus possible to think that discrimination experienced by trans* people in the general workforce also exists in the university setting.¹⁸ Though no quantitative data exists pertaining to discrimination experienced by trans* people attempting to obtain professorships in Canadian universities, I will demonstrate herein that trans* professors are under-represented, a reality linked to cisgenderist discrimination. While many trans* researchers in academia work in a diverse range of fields, including biology, economics, and communications, some, like other marginalized people, choose to specialize in fields which take up questions concerning their identities and oppression. *Yet trans* experts, specializing*

15 Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl*.

16 Kristen Schilt, and Matthew Wiswall, “Before and After: Gender Transition, Human Capital, and Workplace Experiences,” *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis and Policy* 8, no. 1 (2008), 2.

17 Lalla Kowska-Régnier, “Trans féminisme ou Transinisme?,” (2009), 2. <https://www.minorites.org/index.php/2-la-revue/375-trans-feminisme-ou-transinisme.html>. Retrieved February 11th, 2010.

18 Alex Hanna, “Being Transgender on the Job Market,” *Inside Higher Ed.*, (2016), <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2016/07/15/challenge-being-transgender-academic-jobmarket-essay>. Retrieved April 13th, 2016.

in trans studies, only occupy twelve positions¹⁹ in Canadian university departments.* Despite the new laws on trans* rights, the transformation of public and institutional politics pertaining to trans* issues (including at universities) and the increased presence of trans* people in the media and in social spheres, in 2018, only twelve self-identified trans* people specializing in trans* issues hold permanent professor positions in all of Canada.

Notions of direct and indirect discrimination held dear by feminists shed light on the absence of trans* experts in academia. We know that trans* people in certain sectors are laid off or denied employment due to their identities, which constitutes direct discrimination. Nevertheless, as stressed by feminists, indirect discrimination is omnipresent and often more difficult to prove.²⁰ For several decades, for example, the fact that some women had less

19 These data are not derived from a quantitative study. Nevertheless, since the field of trans* studies is limited within the Canadian context, all people working in this field can be located. During my research, I have come across only eleven self-identified trans* experts across Canada who hold a permanent or tenure-track position (research conducted in 2017). In January 2018, when I officially started my position as assistant professor at the School of Social Work at the University of Ottawa, I therefore became the twelfth trans person and the first francophone trans person in Canada to be hired as a professor specializing in trans* issues and teach this content in French. Some trans* people occupy permanent positions, *but they do not publicly self-identify as trans* and/or do not work on questions pertaining to trans* issues*, as is the case with Alex Hanna (2016), professor of communication studies at the University of Toronto, who is openly trans* but does not specialize in trans* studies. The majority of people who self-identify as trans* and who specialize in trans* issues do not hold permanent positions, despite their qualifications and search for work. The eleven aforementioned trans* experts work at the University of Victoria, Royal Roads University, Queen's University (two professors), York University (three professors), Carleton University, Concordia University, McGill University and the University of New Brunswick. This data has been verified by the majority of these professors and by several other people in trans* studies (who do not occupy permanent positions). There are also a few additional academics in Canada specializing in trans* issues, *but these people are not trans**.

20 Huguette Dagenais ed., "La vie quotidienne des professeurs d'université," (Montreal: Fédération québécoise des professeurs et professeurs d'université [FQPPU], 1996), 71; Louise Boucher, "L'embauche des femmes professeurs dans les universités : résistances et stratégies," (Montreal: FQPPU, 1996).

extensive CVs than their male counterparts, since they carried out most unpaid and invisible labour in the private sphere, was not interpreted as a form of indirect discrimination nor as a factor preventing women from gaining access to academic positions. The implementation of affirmative action programs has begun to address these systemic inequalities, taking into consideration the time women must invest when they have children and the ensuing repercussions on their careers.²¹ As I have demonstrated elsewhere,²² many trans* people experience particular temporalities and delays in their careers attributable to surgeries, convalescence, recurring doctors' appointments, civil identity change procedures, etc., but these delays are never taken into consideration during hiring processes. Nevertheless, many trans* people who have been pregnant maintain that these factors can be compared to a pregnancy in terms of their duration. This argument is supported by Raewyn Connell's discussion of the "work of transition" and the time it requires.²³ The violence perpetuated in the educational milieu that leads some trans* people to abandon their studies must also be considered, as must the financial difficulties faced by trans* people due to economic discrimination,²⁴ which prevent some trans* people

21 Ibid.

22 Alexandre Baril, "Transness as Debility: Rethinking Intersections between Trans and Disabled Embodiments," *Feminist Review* 111 (2015): 59-74; —, "Doctor, am I an Anglophone trapped in a Francophone body?" An Intersectional Analysis of 'Trans-crip-t Time' in Ableist, Cisnormative, Anglo-normative Societies," *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* 10, no. 2 (2016): 155-172.; —, "Temporalité trans : identité de genre, temps transitoire et éthique médiatique," *Enfances, familles, générations: Revue internationale* 25, (2017).

23 Raewyn Connell, "Transsexual Women and Feminist Thought: Toward New Understanding and New Politics," *Signs* 37, no. 4 (2012), 870.

24 Bauer, Greta, *et al.* "We've Got Work to Do: Workplace Discrimination and Employment Challenges for Trans People in Ontario," *Trans PULSE Bulletin Electronique* 2, no. 1 (2011), 1-2. Bauer, Greta R. and Ayden I. Scheim. *Trangender People in Ontario, Canada: Statistics from the Trans PULSE Project to Inform Human Rights Policy*, London, Ontario, The University of Western Ontario, 2015. Chamberland, Line, Alexandre Baril, and Natalie Duchesne. *La transphobie en milieu scolaire au Québec : rapport de recherche*, Montréal: UQAM, 2011. James, Sandy E., *et al.* *Executive Summary of the Report of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey*, Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality, 2016. OHRC (Ontario

from pursuing academic paths and applying for certain positions.

Furthermore, Canada's employment equity laws list four groups whose oppressive social conditions have prevented full participation in the work force: Indigenous people, visible minorities, disabled people, and women.²⁵ It is possible that, with the establishment of new legislation such as Bill C-16 (a law modifying Canadian human rights law and the Criminal Code), trans* people will be included among these discriminated groups but, as I write this article, this is not the case. Thus, the majority of Canadian universities, even when they take the inequalities experienced by members of these four groups seriously and implement procedures to identify them during the hiring process—having applied to about forty positions this year, I can confirm that nearly half of the universities did not send out self-identification forms regarding the four groups, though they claim to subscribe to employment equity principles—do not include gender identity as a potential negative impact on one's career, though this can evidently be the case. Let us consider the following example: on the self-identification form sent to me by a few universities, I was given the option of choosing between either "man" or "woman." As I am legally a man, I checked off "man," a choice that erases the 27 years I lived with the identity of "woman," which shaped the person I am today, as well as my career (e.g., the opportunities I was granted or denied).²⁶ In short, this choice conceals the sexism I experienced throughout these decades, while dismissing the combined effects of cisgenderism and sexism. Does the following not constitute a double standard? Having experienced systemic sexism with poten-

Human Rights Commission). *Policy on Preventing Discrimination Because of Gender Identity and Gender Expression*, Toronto: Human Rights Commission, 2014. Schilt, Kristen, et Matthew Wiswall. "Before and After: Gender Transitions, Human Capital, and Workplace Experiences," *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis and Policy* 8, no. 1 (2008): 1-26. Shelley, Christopher A. *Transpeople: Repudiation, Trauma, Healing*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008.

25 Government of Canada, "Employment Equity Act," 2017, <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-5.401/page-1.html>.

26 Jean Bobby Noble, *Sons of the Movement*, 58. Noble discusses the erasure of trans* men's past histories as women.

tial negative impacts on their careers, two people apply for a job. One person (a cis woman) benefits from affirmative action, while the other person (a trans* man assigned female at birth) may not take advantage of these measures nor even indicate the cisgenderist structural obstacles impeding their career.

Indirect discrimination is not limited to the lack of consideration of cisgenderism in hiring processes nor to the absence of affirmative action measures for trans* people in employment equity laws; it also acts on the epistemological level in academia, that is to say, on the level of knowledge considered valid and scientific.²⁷ Indirect discrimination can therefore derive from departmental decision-making processes that may seem, at first glance, to be neutral and objective (e.g., determining fields of specialization and hiring of professors, courses and seminars to be offered, and so on), but which are strongly influenced by the above-mentioned -isms, including cisgenderism. Consider the following example: the first academic feminists were refused employment, despite having qualifications equivalent or superior to their male colleagues, not necessarily because they were women (direct discrimination) but because their areas of specialization (women and feminism) were viewed as being very specific compared to the supposedly universal research of their male colleagues.²⁸ In short, it seemed more important in the 1970s and 1980s (and still often seems so) for a department to hire a fifth sociology of culture expert than a single expert on gender. The history of this indirect discrimination is repeated with respect to other marginalized groups, notably trans* people: despite a growing student interest in trans* issues, hiring in fields of specialization outside those addressing trans* issues is of higher priority (as demonstrated by the fact that only twelve trans* people specializing in trans* issues occupy tenured or tenure-track

27 Karine Espineira, "Pour une épistémologie trans et féministe", 42-58.

28 Huguette Dagenais, "L'institutionnalisation des études féministes et la transformation des connaissances et de leurs conditions de production ou Pour en finir avec un faux débat," ed. Pierrette Bouchard, *Les Cahiers de recherche du GREMF: Femmes et savoirs*, Actes du Congrès de l'ACFAS "Femmes et savoirs," (Québec: Université Laval, 1995).

positions in Canada), while departments often already employ experts in the field for which they are hiring. In other words, the privileging of a specific field, rather than being understood as a form of indirect discrimination stemming from a concrete ideological and normative cis-centred system, is often perceived as a departmental preference.

In response to this argument, some people might be inclined to present the counter-argument that the trans* population in Canada represents but a miniscule percentage of the total population. If we consider the most recent statistics, however, trans* people represent close to 0.5% of the population.²⁹ By comparison, incarcerated people in Canada represent 0.14% (139/100,000).³⁰ The trans* population is therefore almost four times larger than the incarcerated population, and yet Canadian criminology departments are quite vast in terms of number of faculty. Of the hundreds of criminology professors, many specialize in prisons and incarceration, yet no one seems to question the fact that this minority group makes up a smaller portion of the general population than does the trans* population. I am not critiquing the number of criminologists and academics specializing in prisons and incarceration (several hundred in Canada), who tackle important topics (trans* people experience considerably higher rates of incarceration than the rest of the population; Scheim, *et al.* note that 6% of trans* people in Canada have been incarcerated).³¹ Neither am I arguing that any particular issue's significance should depend on a quantitative dimension. Rather, my objective is to highlight

29 Travis William Davidson, "A Review of Transgender Health in Canada," *University of Ottawa Journal of Medicine* 5, no. 2 (2015), 41; Greta R. Bauer and Ayden I. Scheim. *Transgender People in Ontario, Canada*; Anne Enke "Introduction: Transfeminist Perspectives and Note on Terms and Concepts," in *Transfeminist Perspectives In and Beyond Transgender and Gender Studies*, edited by Anne Enke, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), 1-20.

30 Alter Justice, "Le taux d'incarcération au Canada et au Québec," (2017), <http://www.alterjustice.org/dossiers/statistiques/taux-incarceration.html>. Retrieved on February 13th, 2017.

31 Ayden Scheim, *et al.*, "Les expériences de prison des participants de Trans PULSE et des recommandations de changement," *Trans PULSE Bulletin Electronique* 3, no. 3 (2013).

the fact that very few people question the relevance of hiring more experts on prisons and incarceration, while many do question the relevance of opening positions for experts on trans* issues on the pretense that the trans* population represents a very small minority of people. The refusal to consider expertise on trans* issues as relevant in sociology, criminology, political science, literature, and even feminist and gender studies, or the refusal to consider the trans* category in affirmative action measures, constitutes forms of indirect discrimination (in addition to direct discrimination) founded on a cis-centred, epistemic violence excluding trans* people from academia.

2.1 Research on Trans* People or Research by/for Trans* People?

Until recently, the overwhelming majority of scholarship building the field of transgender studies was produced by people who worked outside, or in marginal positions within, the academy: activists, graduate students, and people in temporary positions. The balance is only beginning to shift (but not yet tip), with an increasing number of scholars who have secure (tenure-track and tenured) positions in academic institutions [...].³²

If, as Enke indicates, the United States is experiencing its first wave of employment of trans* experts in trans* issues, this is not the case in Canada, where only twelve such experts have been hired in tenure-track positions. Canadian trans* people remain confined to precarious positions (research assistants, lecturers, professors with limited-term appointment, etc.) In this section, I will demonstrate that the growing body of Canadian research in trans* studies is predominantly conducted by cisgender professors and researchers. The distinction between research *on* trans* people and *by/for* trans* people may seem unimportant, but it is not, as anti-oppressive studies note. While it would be seen as problematic if a major-

32 Anne Enke, "Introduction: Transfeminist Perspectives and Note on Terms and Concepts," 8-9.

ity of feminist research was conducted by cisgender men, or if a majority of critical race research was conducted by white people, the fact that the majority of trans* research is currently conducted by cisgender people does not seem to cause any outrage. Like authors who suggest that this attitude stems from a sense of entitlement founded on cis privilege,³³ I believe that many (not all) cis Canadian researchers feel justified in leading subsidised research *on* trans* people and trans* realities without questioning the space they occupy as cis people in this field.

In October 2016, I participated in consultations conducted by the Advisory Board of Canada's Fundamental Science Review, which were mandated by Minister of science Kirsty Duncan to discuss systematic barriers affecting certain marginalized groups in academic research, particularly with respect to their careers and funding (Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR); Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC); Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)). I have done extensive research on the funding of research on trans* issues (2011-15) and have shown that trans* people receive little funding, and that research on trans* realities is predominantly led by cis people and conducted in English. Here is some of the data collected from grant agency websites about the most prestigious sources of funding in Canada:³⁴

33 Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl*; Alexandre Baril, "Transsexualité et privilèges masculins. Fiction ou réalité?"; Evin Taylor, "Cisgender Privilege: On the Privileges of Performing Normative Gender," in *Gender Outlaws: Next Generation*, 268-272, Eds. Kate Bornstein and S. Bear Bergman (Berkeley: Seal Press, 2010).

34 This research was conducted using grant agency search engines in October 2016, utilizing the keywords "transgender," "transsexual," and variations thereof (e.g., transsex* for transsexuality, etc.) in both English and French, to search keywords or titles of research projects. The application years included, unless otherwise indicated, from 2010-11 to 2014-15, data from five consecutive years (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015). Projects on trans* issues may not have been considered if their titles or keywords did not include the aforementioned terms. Results provided by the SSHRC search engine are presented year-by-year; a project granted funding over a three-year period would therefore appear three times. These duplicates have been removed.

Canada Excellence Research Chairs

- No (0) chairs on trans* issues.

Canada Research Chairs Program (CRCP), including CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC (Tiers 1 and 2)

- Of over 1800 chairs, none (0) contain, in title or keywords, the terms transsexual, transgender, or their variations.
- Of over 1800 chairs, only three (3) (Anglophone) chairs contain, in their summaries, the terms transsexual, transgender, or any variation thereof (Sexual and Gender Minority Studies, Philosophy of Gender and Sexuality, Indigenous Literature and Expressive Culture). While the last chair does not deal primarily with questions of gender or sexuality, the first two integrate these issues significantly. Nevertheless, neither of the two chairholders self-identify as trans* and, at the time of writing, their funded work does not deal primarily with trans* issues.
- In Canada, there are only two (2) research chairs interested in trans* issues: the Chair in Transgender Studies (University of Victoria) dedicated to trans* issues and led by a trans* researcher, and the Chaire de recherche sur l'homophobie (Chair of Research on Homophobia) (UQAM), focusing on LGBT issues and led by a person who does not self-identify as trans*. However, these chairs are not CRCs, and their funding derives from private sources in the first case and from a combination of funding sources in the second.

Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships (2012-2017)³⁵

- None (0) of the 424 CIHR-, NSERC-, and SSHRC-awarded grants contain, in their titles or keywords, the terms transsexual, transgender, or their variations.

SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowships

- Only four (4) of the 3133 awarded grants contain, in their titles

35 Since Banting scholarships only became available in 2012 (there is therefore no data for 2011), the present research includes the year 2016-17 (instead of concluding with 2015-16) to obtain statistics for a five-year period, in accordance with the rest of the data presented here. The same method is applied with respect to the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships.

or keywords, the terms transsexual, transgender, or their variations.

- Only one (1) of these grants was awarded to a French-language project.

SSHRC Doctoral Fellowships

- Only fifteen (15) of the 2674 awarded grants contain, in their titles or keywords, the terms transsexual, transgender, or their variations.
- Only one (1) of these grants was awarded to a French-language project.

SSHRC Doctoral Fellowships from the Canada Graduate Scholarships Program

- Only eight (8) of the 2281 awarded grants contain, in their titles or keywords, the terms transsexual, transgender, or their variations.
- Only one (1) of these grants was awarded to a French-language project.

Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (SSHRC Stream, 2012-2017)

- Only four (4) of the 276 awarded grants contain, in their titles or keywords, the terms transsexual, transgender, or their variations.³⁶

SSHRC Grants: Insight Development Grants for Single Researchers, Research Teams, and Partnerships³⁷

- Only ten (10) grants awarded to English-language projects contain, in their titles or keywords, the terms transsexual, transgender, or their variations. The majority of these projects are not

36 The results of the 2016-17 competition revealed that two new chair-holders are now dealing with trans* issues in their projects, using the terms “non-binary,” and “gender minorities.”

37 The results presented above combine all the grants included under the “Insight Program” tab of the SSHRC search engine. Though the precise number of awarded grants is not directly accessible through the search engine, it totals in the several thousands when no search term is entered.

conducted by self-identified trans* people.

- Only two (2) grants awarded to French-language projects contain, in their titles or keywords, the terms transsexual, transgender, or their variations. Neither of these two projects is conducted by self-identified trans* people.

When we include the LGBT acronym in our research on SSHRC's grants, a few more results appear (the difference remains insignificant). Still, we cannot forget, as emphasized by Stryker (2008), Namaste (2000, 2005, 2015), and Connell (2012), that a great majority of the research concerning LGBT populations focuses on lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues. In short, this focus on sexuality issues often does not entail a complete or profound discussion of trans* issues. In fact, sexual identity (or sexual orientation), though related to gender identity, is a fundamentally different issue. Many trans* researchers question the underlying "tokenism" of this grouping of trans* people with sexual minorities, which allows cisgender researchers a clear conscience in relation to trans* issues and permits them to secure research funding. As noted by Kowska-Régnier, "In other words, in my own life I prefer the term 'trans' because 'trans,' when it stands on its own, does not drown me in an ocean of queerness, and yet allows me to inscribe myself in a collective space. I have had enough of the LGBT narrative in which the T has only ever stood for: Ticket for the clear conscience of the G!"³⁸ While this critique does not apply to every person researching LGBT issues, since some do, out of ethical concerns, include trans* people as co-researchers and/or research assistants on their team, it does reflect an all too pervasive reality. In short, as the figures presented here demonstrate, the few funded research projects in Canada dealing with trans* realities are almost exclusively English-language projects, and are conducted primarily by cis people.

2.2 Trans* Studies Within Feminism: Between Absence and Presence³⁹

38 Kowska-Régnier, "Trans féminisme ou Transinisme?," 3.

39 The expression "between absence and presence" is borrowed from Ru-

In her book, *Oversight: Critical Reflections on Feminist Research and Politics*, Viviane Namaste introduces the polysemic concept of oversight. This term designates both that which is omitted, concealed, and absent, as well as that which is simultaneously present and hyper-visible, through processes of surveillance/vigilance. Namaste writes,

I use the term [oversight] in two specific ways. First, the notion of oversight refers to that which has been ignored—the day-to-day realities that remain unexplored by scholars and activists, the stories that have yet to be told. [...] Here, oversight is used to designate what has yet to be made visible. Yet I also use *oversight* in a second sense, specifically to refer to understanding the ways in which what appears visible has been overdetermined by specific social, activist, cultural, and economic contexts. Here, then, the focus is not on what cannot be seen. Rather, the idea is to interrogate how and why issues are made visible, in particular ways, within feminist academic and scholarly contexts.⁴⁰

The notion of oversight can be understood as a practice of erasure and occultation (absence), as well as one of (hyper)-visibilization when considering trans* issues from a specific ideological/epistemological lens (presence). I will demonstrate how this logic is the result of the presumption of mutual exclusivity between trans perspectives and feminist and gender studies, stemming from a cisgender normativity that leaves the feminist cisgender subject unchallenged.

The presence of trans* issues in cultural representations and in the media is, as of a few years ago, increasingly common: from the coming out of Caitlyn Jenner to that of Chaz Bono, from Janet Mook's autobiographies to the television series featuring Laverne Cox, and from the media coverage of the changing laws concerning trans* rights to the public demands issued by transactivist movements, trans* issues appear to be in vogue.⁴¹ Increasing

bin "Trans Studies: Between a Metaphysics of Presence and Absence."

40 Viviane Namaste, *Oversight: Critical Reflections on Feminist Research and Politics* (Toronto: Women's Press, 2015), 1-2.

41 Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl*; Karine Espineira, *La transidentité. De l'espace médiatique à l'espace public*; —, "Les constructions médiatiques des personnages

numbers of trans* people are also gaining visibility in academia and demanding that their rights be respected, calling for gender-neutral bathrooms, access to trans-inclusive campus health services, or for their preferred name(s) and pronouns to be respected in their classes. In Canadian feminist and gender studies departments, committees are forming to discuss trans-inclusive practices, to make certain spaces (such as washrooms) accessible for trans* people, and to create new courses on trans* issues in order to meet the growing demand from students. Over the last few years, as reflected by the decision of the Canadian Women's Studies Association/Association Canadienne des études sur les femmes to change its name to Women's and Gender Studies/Recherches Féministes Association (WGSRF) to be more inclusive, most departments have been changing their names. While most of these departments initially called themselves Women's Studies departments, the opposite is now true: out of a total of 48 departments, only nine (19%) have yet to change their names to include "gender studies," "sexuality studies," etc.⁴² In other words, 81% of feminist studies departments in Canada have jumped on the "gender bandwagon" by changing the names of their departments, programs, and courses. Though one could interpret this turning point as a sign of structural change, allowing for a departure from those types of feminist studies that only consider the (cis) woman subject, as the near total absence of self-identified trans* tenured professors specializing in trans* issues in these departments demonstrates, this is clearly not the case. *In fact, only three departments include such experts*: Concordia University, Queen's University, and York University. The relative absence of trans* professors specializing in trans* issues would be

trans"; Susan Stryker, Paisley Currah, and Lisa Jean Moore, "Introduction: Trans-, Trans, or Transgender?"; Alexandre Baril, "Temporalité trans : identité de genre, temps transitoire et éthique médiatique," *Enfances, familles, générations: Revue internationale* 25, (2017).

42 The list of departments can be found on the WGSRF webpage (2017). The nine departments are at the University of Calgary, University of the Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island University, Mount Saint Vincent University, Lakehead University, University of Waterloo, University of Western Ontario, Concordia University, and the Université du Québec à Montréal.

understandable if their absence was due to an absence of trans* scholars overall, but this is not the case: many trans* scholars are actively looking for work but are confined to precarious positions. In short, if Canadian feminist and gender studies departments include only three trans* professors specializing in these issues, it is because, despite seemingly trans-inclusive gestures such as the changes made to their department names, programs, and courses (gestures of presence/visibility), the implementation of trans-inclusive policies allowing for the development of trans* perspectives through the prioritization of specialization in trans* studies and the employment of trans* people, for example, remains limited.

Jean Bobby Noble demonstrates that even those departments employing trans* people have yet to abandon cis-centred perspectives, which present themselves through “micropractices” (e.g., the feminization of all departmental documents without considering trans* people, course offerings, or strategic departmental directions). Noble writes,

If I were to ask any ten feminist academics in and across my home university whether trans bodies are present, or should be, as trans bodies in women’s studies, [...] I cannot help but worry that the answer will be a quiet or completely dumbfounded no, even in the face of my hire.⁴³

Even in the United States, where cisgendernormativity is starting to be challenged, feminist and gender studies continue to conceive specialization in the field of trans* studies as exterior to their own objects of study, methodologies, and epistemologies, thereby demonstrating the cis-centred character of the notion of “gender.”^{44,45}

43 Jean Bobby Noble, “Trans. Panic, Some Thoughts toward a Theory of Feminist Fundamentalism,” 47.

44 Sara E. Cooper, and Connor James Treba, “Teaching Transgender in Women’s Studies: Snarls and Strategies,” *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 10, no.1/2 (2006): 151-180; Toby Beauchamp and Benjamin d’Harlingue, “Beyond Additions and Exceptions: The Category of Transgender and New Pedagogical Approaches for Women’s Studies,” *Feminist Formations* 24, no. 2 (2012): 25-51; T. L. Cowan, “Transfeminist Kill/Joys.”

45 For more on the feminist and trans* studies debates, see: Alexandre Baril, “Transsexualité et privilèges masculins. Fiction ou réalité ?”; —. “Quelle

Enke writes,

Nevertheless, transgender remains institutionally marginal to gender and women's studies. As a well-established field, gender and women's studies may include transgender as an add-on, without fundamentally changing the theoretical articulations and material practices that all but ensure that the definition of 'women's studies' will position transgender as something outside or other than itself. [...] Transgender studies is all but absent in most university curricula, even in gender and women's studies programs. For the most part, institutionalized versions of women's and gender studies incorporate transgender as a shadowy interloper or as the most radical outlier within a constellation of identity categories (e.g., LGBT). Conversation is limited by a

place pour les femmes trans au sein des mouvements féministes?"; —, "Sexe et genre sous le bistouri (analytique)"; —, "Intersectionality, Lost in Translation?"; Patricia Elliott, *Debates in Transgender, Queer, and Feminist Theory: Contested Sites*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2010; Eli R. Green, "Debating Trans Inclusion in the Feminist Movement: A Trans-Positive Analysis"; Cressida J. Heyes "Reading Transgender, Rethinking Women's Studies," *NWSA Journal* 12, no. 2 (2000): 170-180; —, "Feminist Solidarity after Queer Theory: The Case of Transgender," *Signs* 28, no. 4 (2003): 1093-1120; Graham Mayeda, "Re-imagining Feminist Theory: Transgender Identity, Feminism, and the Law," *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law/Revue femmes et droit*, no. 42 (2005): 423-472; —; Viviane Namaste, *Sex Change, Social Change: Reflections on Identity, Institutions, and Imperialism*, Toronto: Women's Press, 2005; —. "Undoing Theory: The 'Transgender Question' and the Epistemic Violence of Anglo-American Feminist Theory," *Hypatia* 24, no. 3 (2009): 11-32; Viviane Namaste and Georgia Sitara, "Inclusive Pedagogy in the Women's Studies Classroom: Teaching the Kimberly Nixon Case," in *The Transgender Studies Reader 2*, 213-225, edited by Susan Stryker and Aren Z. Aizura. New York: Routledge, 2013; Jack Pyne, "Transfeminist Theory and Action"; Gayle Salamon, "Transfeminism and the Future of Gender"; Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl*; —, *Excluded. Making Feminist and Queer Movements More Inclusive*. Berkeley: Seal Press, 2013; Susan Stryker, "Transgender Feminism: Queering the Woman Question," in *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration*, 59-70, edited by Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2007; Amélie Tremblay, "Transformation féministe: l'univers d'un homme transsexuel féministe. Entretien avec Alexandre Baril," in *Remous, ressacs et dérivations autour de la troisième vague féministe*, 93-111, edited by Mercédès Baillargeon and collectif Les Déferlantes. Montréal : Les éditions du Remue-ménage, 2011; Stephen Whittle, "Where Did We Go Wrong? Feminism and Trans Theory."

perception that transgender studies only or primarily concerns transgender-identified individuals—a small number of ‘marked’ people whose gender navigations are magically believed to be separate from the cultural practices that constitute gender for everyone else.⁴⁶

My emphasis herein on the cisgender and unmarked “invisible adjectives” that populate the texts, courses, and programs of study on gender, as well as the epistemological and political orientations of feminist and gender studies departments, aims to question the position of exteriority maintained by gender and feminist studies since their conception of trans* perspectives, which, while benefiting from a hyper-visibility, also remains missing from the feminist portrait. While this absence is disconcerting and increasingly studied by Anglophone transfeminist authors, it is flagrant in the francophone community and remains unproblematized.

3. Trans* Studies and Research in French Canada

Despite the increasing visibility of trans* people and their calls to action in the public sphere, the marked interest of students in trans* issues, and the efforts of francophone feminists to adopt an intersectional approach in their work and teaching philosophies in order to include more diverse groups of women,⁴⁷ Namaste’s phenomenon of oversight is rampant in French-Canadian feminism.⁴⁸ As mentioned elsewhere, in my analyses of feminist publications on intersectionality,⁴⁹ francophone feminists have yet to include

46 Enke, Anne. “Introduction: Transfeminist Perspectives and Note on Terms and Concepts,” 2.

47 Sirma Bilge, “Théorisations féministes de l’intersectionnalité,” *Diogène* 225, (2009): 70-88; Alexandre Baril, “Sexe et genre sous le bistouri (analytique): interprétations féministes des transidentités”; Geneviève Pagé, and Rosa Pires, *L’intersectionnalité en débat: pour un renouvellement des pratiques féministes au Québec*, Montréal: Service aux collectivités de l’UQAM/Fédération des femmes du Québec, 2015.

48 Namaste, *Oversight: Critical Reflections on Feminist Research and Politics*.

49 Baril, “Intersectionality, Lost in Translation?”; —, “Francophone

trans* identity and oppression on their list of identities or forms of oppression:

In a sample of 15 key Francophone texts on feminism and intersectionality, only one makes a single mention of trans issues amidst lengthy enumerations of other oppressions. Simply stated [...] Francophone feminists seem to forget that they have a gender identity [...].⁵⁰

In light of the data presented above, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that studies *by/for* trans* people in French-Canadian scholarship are non-existent; though only eleven trans* professors specializing in trans* issues are employed across Canada, at the time of writing, none of them were teaching in the French language.⁵¹ This situation will change slightly when I begin my appointment, in January 2018, as a francophone assistant professor at the School of Social Work at the University of Ottawa teaching, most notably, content related to sexual, gender, and body diversity. The situation in the international francophone community is not much brighter. In France, for example, where a few self-identified trans* experts on trans* issues can be found (such as Karine Espineira)⁵² only Sam Bourcier⁵³ occupies a tenured position, and obtained it prior to transitioning and prior to his more marked interest in trans* issues. In the following pages, I will demonstrate that the total absence of trans* francophone professors in Canada is problematic given the marked interest of students in trans* issues and is made possible thanks to the exploitation of trans* people's unpaid and invisible labour.

Trans/Feminisms: Absence, Silence, Emergence.”

50 Baril, “Intersectionality, Lost in Translation?”, 2-3.

51 Although Namaste is bilingual, she teaches at an English-language university.

52 Karine Espineira, *La transidentité. De l'espace médiatique à l'espace public*; —, “Les constructions médiatiques des personnages trans”; —, “Pour une épistémologie trans et féministe”; —, *Transidentités : ordre et panique de genre*.

53 M.H./Sam Bourcier, “Des ‘femmes travesties’ aux pratiques transgenres”; —, *Sexpolitiques: Queer Zones 2*; —, *Queer Zones. Politique des identités sexuelles et des savoirs*. —, “Technotesto: biopolitiques des masculinités tr(s)ans hommes,” —, *Queer Zones 3. Identités, cultures et politiques*.

3.1 Students' Growing Interest in Trans* Issues

In recent years, we have noticed important developments in trans* research at UQAM. More and more students are interested in such questions and are conducting research on this subject, and this trend will likely continue to progress in this direction.⁵⁴

The growing interest of students in trans* issues can be observed on many levels. I myself have noticed it in my classes (as a teaching assistant or limited-term contract professor), and it has been brought to my attention by several colleagues. This enthusiasm can also be observed in the constant requests I have received over the last five years to co-supervise major research projects/theses on trans* issues, the significant number of students present at conferences on trans* issues, the submissions of departmental student committee reports denouncing the absence of trans* issues in courses,⁵⁵ and in the use of published research concerning trans* issues. Using social media platforms like Academia.edu, we see that the works of trans* francophone scholars such as Bourcier (more than 33, 500 profile views) and Baril (more than 30, 200 profile views) are highly sought after; these two scholars' profiles have remained, for over a year and half, in the top 0.5-1% of the most visited by the website's 58 million users.⁵⁶

This interest in trans* issues is also confirmed by quantitative studies, such as that of the UQAM research chair on homophobia.⁵⁷ Using over sixty keywords on sexual and gender diversity, this research identified and reviewed all the Québec universities theses

54 Michael Chacha Enriquez, *et al.*, "Développer les études trans dans la francophonie : présentation de quelques résultats et enjeux issus de deux recherches utiles aux communautés trans," *Convergence : A Journal of Undergraduate and Community Research* 1 (September 2012), 100.

55 Comité féministe des deuxième et troisième cycles de sociologie de l'UQAM, 2017.

56 These data have been updated for the publication of this translation.

57 Marie Geoffroy and Mahault Albarracin, *Mémoires et Thèses reliés à l'homophobie et à la pluralité des genres paucis au Québec de 2000 à 2014*, (Montréal : Chaire de recherche sur l'homophobie, UQAM, 2015).

and dissertations addressing LGBT themes submitted between 2000 and 2015. This research, titled “Mémoires et thèses reliés à l’homophobie” (“Theses and Dissertations on Homophobia”) in 2014, was revisited in 2015, “[...] in order to be more representative of the themes addressed.”⁵⁸ It is now titled “Mémoires et thèses reliés à l’homophobie et à la pluralité des genres” (“Theses and Dissertations Related to Sexual Diversity and *the Plurality of Genders*”) (emphasis added). The review identified 238 texts on sexual and gender diversity, including 60 doctoral dissertations, 166 master’s projects, and 12 other texts, a high number given how few people are employed in universities to work on such topics. Based on the titles of these texts, I have identified 37 texts (32 dissertations and 5 theses) out of 238 (15.5%) linked to trans* issues.⁵⁹ Irrespective of other works unaccounted for by this research (research conducted in databases is never exhaustive), it is astounding to find no francophone trans* professors specializing in trans* issues at any Canadian university and to realize that *these projects and theses are supervised by cis people, most of whom do not specialize in trans* studies*. The UQAM report included a published list of the 107 professors who supervised these projects. With the exception of one trans* person on this list (whom I know personally), who has neither publicly self-identified as trans* nor specializes in trans* issues, all of these professors are self-identified or publicly identified cis people. Would we not find it strange if a list of 238 theses and projects on job inequality, including 15.5% percent that focused on inequalities experienced by women, were supervised by 107 men? It would be interesting to reflect critically on these lists and on who is absent or excluded from them.

3.2 The Absence of Gender Identity in Francophone Feminist Research and Education

58 Marie Geoffroy and Mahault Albacarrin, *Mémoires et thèses reliés à la diversité sexuelle et la pluralité des genres parus au Québec de 2000 à 2014*, 5.

59 The documents contain terms like trans, transgender, genderqueer, etc. in their titles.

We must insist on the importance of integrating trans people into LGBT research teams [...].⁶⁰

Though I cannot help but agree with the above statement, it nevertheless comes from research teams composed primarily of self-identified cis people, that which do not include trans* people as co-researchers or professors, but rather include them as assistant researchers (which is a start). As activists and researchers Viviane Namaste, Nora Butler Burke, and Zack Marshall demonstrate, it is essential that we take a closer look at *how* and *why* trans* people are included in research projects:

Rather than simply celebrating attention to trans people by a national AIDS organization, [our] letter inquires as to how and why ‘trans people’ have emerged as a new category within public health, including the access to grants (often by non-trans people) implicit therein.⁶¹

To make use of a culinary analogy, to “add and mix” is not enough, because the addition of ingredients, their quantities, techniques, and the timing of these additions will alter a recipe. Denouncing the fact that all too often, research projects led by cis people consult with trans* people during or at the end of the research process, Namaste, Burke, and Marshall insist that trans* people need to be actively included during *all* stages of the research process. I would add that they must also actively hold some of the most *fundamental roles* of these projects. Power is not distributed evenly across all members of a research team. According to funding agencies, research teams are divided into the following roles, from the most important (those with the greatest decision-making, administrative, and financial power) to the least important: principal investigators, co-investigators (active participants in the decision-making process), collaborator(s) (similar to co-investigators, but not necessarily affiliated with an academic institution), partner organizations, and

60 Enriquez, et al., “Développer les études trans dans la francophonie,” 100.

61 Namaste, *et al.* “Critiquing the AIDS Bureaucracy: An Open Letter to the Canadian AIDS Society,” in *Oversight: Critical Reflections on Feminist Research and Politics*, ed. Vivian Namaste (Toronto: Women’s Press, 2015), 109.

research assistants. While the inclusion of trans* people across all these roles is important, and while we can rejoice at the inclusion of trans* people in collaborator, partner organization, or research assistant roles, trans* people should also occupy more *central* positions, such as principal investigators or co-investigators. A well-known argument of feminist studies illustrates that, while we can celebrate the increased presence of women in the labour market, the fight for equality cannot stop there; the struggle for access to positions of power has been denounced as a barrier known as the glass ceiling. It is not insignificant that, like women, trans* people, though included in research projects, do not occupy positions of power. In other words, there exists a glass ceiling for trans* people in research projects conducted *on* trans* realities, which prevents them from accessing higher positions on research teams and in institutions. In a society in which trans* people experience significant economic and employment discrimination, as noted by Namaste, Burke, and Marshall, it is crucial that we shatter this glass ceiling: “Any work to be done ought to prioritize or at least seriously consider employing trans people, given the difficulties trans people have in employment [...]”⁶²

Namaste, Burke, and Marshall condemn the opportunism of certain groups working on topics concerning lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and HIV, who seek funding to include trans* people in their work without, however, being accountable towards them: “How exactly can national AIDS organizations obtain funding for work on trans people without demonstrating that there has been meaningful consultation with trans communities?”⁶³

Their objective is not to criticize such groups *per se*, but to use this example to raise awareness about how research on trans* realities is conducted by cis people. In the same spirit, I would like to offer the example of “Knowledges on Inclusion and Exclusion of LGBTQ People (2016-23),” conducted as part of the (SSHRC) partnership grant program, which recently received 2.5 million dollars to address, among other things, the employment discrimi-

62 Ibid., 113.

63 Ibid., 118.

nation experienced by trans* people. Though we can celebrate this research team, (whose principal investigator, Line Chamberland, has worked tirelessly to integrate the concerns of trans* people in her work over the last few years), that includes 54 researchers and 48 partners, for having included some trans* people and several trans* organizations among its collaborators, the 21 university researchers from 14 universities⁶⁴ are not, to my knowledge, self-identified trans* people. How do we explain then, despite the great number of trans* people specializing in trans* issues and possessing the required qualifications to take part in this type of research, the absence of trans* scholars on this research team? This is just one example among many of the glass ceiling experienced by trans* people in academia. As previously mentioned, the aim is not to target any one team or institution—and in this case the team has made an effort to integrate trans* non-academics—rather, it is to question the general trend by which trans* experts are not generally integrated as co-investigators in funded research projects that deal with trans* issues.⁶⁵ This example illustrates how the question of the “T” in the LGBTQ acronym can sometimes be diluted.

As for the teaching of trans* issues in French Canada, the situation is just as concerning. I offer the three francophone Canadian universities with gender and feminist studies programs as examples. Geoffroy and Albarracin demonstrate that the university with the most submitted dissertations and theses linked to sexual and gender diversity since the year 2000 is UQAM.⁶⁶ For this rea-

64 Research Chair on homophobia, “Une importante subvention pour la recherche sur les minorités sexuelles et de genre,” <http://chairehomophobie.uqam.ca/nouvelles/392-une-importante-subvention-pour-une-recherchelgbtq.html>, Retrieved March 13th, 2017; SSHRC (Social Science and Humanities Research Council), “Subventions de partenariat: Attributions du concours de novembre 2015,” <http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/results-resultats/recipientaires/2015/partnerships-partenariats-fra.aspx>, Retrieved March 13th, 2017.

65 A research team that received a grant to study trans* youth and that included no trans* co-researchers recently invited me to join their team. This initiative that should inspire other research teams.

66 Marie Geoffroy and Mahault Albarracin, *Mémoires et thèses reliés à la*

son, I spend more time here discussing this university. The feminist studies program at UQAM integrates courses on sexual and gender diversity through the course offerings of the department of sexology.⁶⁷ There are three courses relating to sexual and gender diversity: *Homosexuality and Society*, *Citizenship and Sexual Minorities*, and the *History of Sexual Identities in the Western World*.⁶⁸ Though these three courses may include trans* issues (I was not able to access their course outlines), none but the last reference gender identity or trans* issues in their sexual diversity focused descriptions. In February 2017, the department of sexology announced two new courses that include trans* issues, the *Epistemology and History of Ideas About Sexualities* and *Intersectionality and Sexualities*,⁶⁹ in addition to their pre-existing course: *Gender Disorder and Atypical Sexualities* (which has been called out by students for its problematic title). While we can applaud the department of sexology's initiative to put in place two new courses in which trans* issues are discussed, it is important to note that, since their conception, these courses have never been taught by a trans* person. Moreover, the recent employment of a professor of sexology specializing in trans* issues⁷⁰ who does not self-identify as trans* suggests that the two new

diversité sexuelle et la pluralité des genres parus au Québec de 2000 à 2014, 4-6.

67 Many courses offered by the Institute of Feminist studies and Research at UQAM refer to the notion of gender and gender identity, but not in the cis/trans* sense. Trans* issues are not mentioned in the majority of the titles and descriptions of offered courses in the three cycles, with the exception of the course *Littérature et identité sexuée* [Literature and Sexual Identity] about figures labeled “hermaphrodites,” “androgynous,” and about practices of “transvestism,” and the course *Sexualité, genres, féminismes* [Sexuality, Genders, Feminisms] that includes trans* issues. The other courses that deal with them through the Département de sexologie [Department of Sexology] are discussed in the text.

68 Research Chair on homophobia, “Cours offerts à l’UQAM,” (2017), <http://chairehomophobie.uqam.ca/enseignement/cours-offerts-a-l-uqam.html>. Retrieved March 13th, 2017.

69 Research Chair on homophobia, “Info-mensuelle février 2017” (2017), http://chairehomophobie.uqam.ca/index.php?option=com_acymailing&andctrl=archiveandtask=viewandmailid=64andkey=vELKaOwFandsubid=168gI9wrsGpVRh16andtmpl=component. Retrieved on March 13th, 2017

70 UQAM (Université du Québec à Montréal). “Du sang neuf en sciences humaines : neuf nouveaux professeurs viennent grossir les rangs de la Fac-

courses are likely to continue to be taught by cis people. This problem, however, does not concern this department alone. A report presented by sociology students at UQAM demonstrates an under-representation or absence of texts assigned in their seminars written by marginalized authors (women, racialized, Indigenous, disabled, and trans* people). Though there is still a lot of work to be done with respect to many marginalized groups, the sociology department's graduate student feminist committee at UQAM notes that *gender identity is the only dimension that is completely absent in the course outlines of their 23 analyzed seminars*: “We found no required readings written by trans or non-binary people. We therefore identify a complete absence of trans and non-binary authors.”⁷¹

Université Laval, which has announced the launch of L'Institut Femmes, Sociétés, Égalité et Équité (IFSEE), as well as a new “gender studies” program, offers a master's level microprogram. Of its thirteen courses, only one, *Sexual Diversity and Social Intervention*, mentions trans* issues⁷² in its description. This course is taught by people who do not self-identify as trans. The new professor hired by Université Laval to teach the courses offered in this microprogram is a self-identified cis person. While we see a desire to include trans* issues in the university curricula and syllabuses, as exemplified by the intersex and trans* issues panel convened at Université Laval for the fifteenth edition in 2017 of “l'Université féministe d'été,” there is little structural change in relation to the contents of offered courses and programs. The third example of a university offering feminist and gender studies is the Université de Montréal, whose “minor in feminist, gender, and sexualities stud-

ulté,” 7 octobre 2016, <https://www.actualites.uqam.ca/2016/faculte-sciences-humaines-accueil-nouveaux-professeur>. Retrieved February 13th, 2017.

71 Comité féministe des deuxième et troisième cycles de sociologie de l'UQAM, *Portrait des auteur-es en lectures obligatoires dans les cours aux 2e et 3e cycles du Département de sociologie de l'UQAM: Rapport présenté au Département de sociologie* (Montréal: UQAM, 2017), 8.

72 Université Laval, “Microprogramme de deuxième cycle en études du genre” (2017), <https://www.ulaval.ca/les-etudes/programmes/repertoire/details/microprogramme-de-deuxieme-cycle-en-etudes-du-genre.html#presentation-generale>, Retrieved March 13th, 2017.

ies” has opened its doors to a first cohort in Fall 2017.⁷³ A systematic analysis of the titles and descriptions of the 30 courses offered in this new program reveals that, though many of them address sexual orientations and identities, none of them mention trans* issues. The university has not yet announced any new tenure-track positions in feminist and gender studies, but it is reasonable to assume that if none of its courses address trans* issues, the eventual opening of a position will not include a specialization in trans* studies. To make my argument clear: while we can rejoice over these developments in feminist and gender studies in French Canada, it appears that the concept of gender, as it is understood by these universities and departments, remains overwhelmingly cis-centred. My aim is to shed light on the cis-temic nature of often well-intentioned departments/programs, which perpetuate these problems unintentionally, allowing for cis people who specialize in trans* issues to be employed over trans* people. Consequently, at time of writing (in 2017), *in the history of francophone Canadian universities, no trans* person specializing in trans* issues has ever been employed in any department (my employment in 2018 would therefore be a first in Canadian history). Can we really go on claiming that these are simply coincidental departmental preferences? Isn't it time we address the structural forces that have created a glass ceiling for trans* people in universities and have directly and indirectly led to the total exclusion of trans* people among the francophone professors on a national scale?*

As explained by Marchand, Saint-Charles, and Corbeil, the glass ceiling phenomenon experienced by certain groups does not take place in a vacuum and is founded on existing (sexist, racist, cissexist, etc.) power relations that manifest themselves through a series of micro-aggressions that may initially seem trivial, such as those listed in this article, but are part of a global system and remain invisible: “The glass ceiling refers to these barriers or difficulties, at times barely perceptible, which impede ascending mo-

73 University of Montréal, “Mineure en études féministes, des genres et des sexualités” (2017), <https://admission.umontreal.ca/programmes/mineure-en-etudes-feministes-des-genres-et-des-sexualites/structure-du-programme/>, Retrieved April 13th, 2017.

bility [...]”⁷⁴ If those trans* people specializing in trans* issues do not occupy professor positions in French Canada, it is not because of their absence, but because of the obstacles obstructing their “ascending mobility” in the world of academia. Trans* people are present in all other university positions (teaching assistants, limited-term appointment professors, research assistants, independent researchers, students) and perform a significant amount of often unpaid labour behind the scenes to help cis people pursue their interests in trans* issues. Over the past twelve months, at more than one university, I have, for example, led several workshops for university staff and faculty to raise awareness about trans* discrimination in university settings, sat on committees seeking to develop trans-inclusive policies, taught three-hour classes in the courses and seminars of professors hoping to integrate a session on trans* issues, acted as external reviewer of theses addressing trans* issues, co-supervised students Ph.D. theses, provided references and advice for multiple students working on trans* issues, reviewed several articles addressing trans* issues, and I have done a number of media interviews as an expert on trans* issues. None of this work was paid, as I had not yet been hired as a professor. Mine is not an isolated case; it represents the norm. As many trans* people have noted in their work,⁷⁵ in public discussion forums, in closed group forums (the Trans PhD Network Facebook page, for example), as well as in discussions during events such as the “Trans* Studies: An International Transdisciplinary Conference,” which brought together almost 500 trans* studies researchers, this is a common occurrence. *One topic in particular, recurring like a leitmotiv in these discussions, is that people are confined to precarious employment positions in the university setting and yet are invited to perform unpaid, invisible labour furthering the careers of cis people.*

Does this phenomenon of unpaid and invisible labour not evoke the situation of women vis-à-vis men (and other minorities

74 Isabelle Marchand, *et al.*, “L’ascension professionnelle et le plafond de verre dans les entreprises privées au Québec,” *Recherches féministes* 20, no. 1 (2007), 30.

75 Namaste, *et al.*, “Critiquing the AIDS Bureaucracy.”

vis-à-vis dominant groups)? Genuine allyship from professors and researchers in feminist and gender studies would consist of making visible the unpaid, invisible labour already performed by trans* people (from which these professors and researchers benefit), promoting the employment and inclusion of trans* people as co-investigators on their research teams, giving trans* people priority to teach courses on trans* issues, and thinking critically about their identities as cis people participating in research projects on trans* realities. In short, it is now time to move from education and research *about* trans* people to education and research *by/for* trans* people. The purpose of this critical analysis is not to discourage cis people from researching and/or teaching about trans* issues. On the contrary, such work is essential. Nevertheless, it is equally important that we invert the prevailing statistics, so that the majority of research and teaching positions concerning trans* issues are conducted and held by trans* people.

4. Transfeminism and the Subversion of Cisgender Identity

This chapter seeks to name the violence of these occlusions, disavowals, and denials [of trans* people in Feminist studies] as part of a disciplinary but also historical and ideological imaginary. [...] A transfeminist reconceptualization of women's studies seems vital.⁷⁶

As suggested by this quote, the exclusion of trans* people from feminist and gender studies programs is not accidental, but rather an active part of the constitution of this field and its methodological approaches and epistemological frames, which are founded on cisgendernormativity. The invisible cisgender adjectives in gender analyses are at the heart of what has allowed this field to place

⁷⁶ Noble, "Trans. Panic, Some Thoughts toward a Theory of Feminist Fundamentalism," 48.

trans* issues, realities, bodies, and identities exterior to feminist and gender studies. Seen from this angle the transfeminist approach has significant heuristic potential to subvert the ciscentred feminist subject. Transfeminism, which combines trans* and feminist approaches, was developed in the late 1990s and early 2000s by Anglophone theorists and activists such as Emi Koyama, who wrote the first *Transfeminist Manifesto*, Krista Scott-Dixon,⁷⁷ and Julia Serano.⁷⁸ On the francophone side, though the roots of a transfeminism can be unearthed in Bourcier and Espineira,⁷⁹ journalist Lalla Kowska-Régnier⁸⁰ seems to have been the first to use the term during a conference in 2005.⁸¹ The first use of “transfeminism” as a term in francophone academic work can be found in my own texts⁸², which recommend the adoption of this approach to analyze male privilege in trans* men. Recent developments in transfeminist approaches, such as Stryker, Currah, and Moore,⁸³ and Noble⁸⁴ most notably, invite us to conceive of transfeminism as not only a framework combining trans* and feminist analyses, but also as an approach that transcends “trans” as a term, going beyond sex and/or gender issues. Stryker, Currah, and Moore conceive

77 Krista Scott-Dixon, *Trans/Forming Feminisms*.

78 Serano, *Whipping Girl*.

79 See M.H./Sam Bourcier, “Des ‘femmes travesties’ aux pratiques transgenres”; —, *Sexpolitiques: Queer Zones 2*; —, *Queer Zones. Politique des identités sexuelles et des savoirs*. —, “Technotesto: biopolitiques des masculinités tr(s)ans hommes,” —, *Queer Zones 3. Identités, cultures et politiques*; and Karine Espineira, *La transidentité. De l'espace médiatique à l'espace public*; —, “Pour une épistémologie trans et féministe”; —, *Transidentités: ordre et panique de genre*. See also Karine Espineira and M.H./Sam Bourcier, “Transfeminism: Something Else, Somewhere Else,” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 3.1-2 (2016). They theorize the emergence of a transfeminist praxis in Europe between the years 1990-2000, even if the term “transfeminism” was not used.

80 Lalla Kowska-Régnier, “Trans féminisme ou Transinisme?”

81 Elsa Dorlin, *Sexe, genre et sexualités*, (Paris : Presses Universitaire de France, 2008). Dorlin briefly discusses the transfeminist praxis, but does not define and use the transfeminist approach.

82 Baril, “Transsexualité et privilèges masculins. Fiction ou réalité?”

83 Stryker, Currah, Moore, “Introduction: Trans-, Trans, or Transgender?”

84 Noble, “Trans Panic.”

of trans* analyses as having the potential to transgress multiple categories, whether theoretical, epistemological, or disciplinary, and propose the deployment of “trans,” like that of “queer” as a verb, in new contexts: “those of us schooled in the humanities and social sciences have become familiar, over the past twenty years or so, with queering things; how might we likewise begin to critically trans- our world?”⁸⁵ Noble takes up this perspective when he writes of his desire to: “retrace the shape of women’s studies by transing its epistemologies, disciplinarity, and methodologies.”⁸⁶

This is the lens through which I conclude this article. As I have demonstrated, while feminist and gender studies programs need to start decentring their cis-centred approaches, the problematic absence of trans* people with expertise in trans* issues in francophone universities, as well Canadian universities more generally, has cis-temic roots. The structural mechanisms that feed this cis-tem include disciplinary divisions, which I call disciplinary sectarianism:⁸⁷ each discipline protects its own territory, defends its own methodological approaches and theoretical frames, canonizes authors and establishes the limits of what counts as “real” philosophy, sociology, anthropology, sexology, etc., while concurrently relegating many researchers and students to the margins of the discipline. Those necessarily interdisciplinary people who work from anti-oppression and intersectional perspectives are therefore excluded from these fields, since their work is not perceived as fitting neatly into any of these disciplines. Extending beyond direct discrimination targeting their transness, trans* people specializing in trans* issues see themselves excluded from tenure-track positions because of indirect or invisible discrimination rooted, notably, in the idea that trans* issues do not belong in philosophy, sociology, or other disciplines. No department feels that such issues concern them, relegating them to other disciplines, along with the potential for new hires: the philosophy department stipulates that such issues are relevant to the social questions tackled in sociology, the sociol-

85 Stryker, Currah, Moore, “Introduction”, 13.

86 Noble, “Trans. Panic.” 47.

87 Ibid., 55. Here Noble speaks of “disciplinary fundamentalism.”

ogy department considers these questions to be linked to feminist and gender studies, and feminist and gender studies believe trans* studies need to form their own autonomous discipline.

Social problems, including the oppression experienced by marginalized peoples such as trans* people, remain unintelligible thanks to such disciplinary sectarianisms. Though social problems are complex and stem from multiple, intertwined factors, as exemplified by intersectional feminist analyses, we must adopt multiple, complex, theoretical, epistemological, and methodological approaches that call for the *trans-cending* of disciplinary divisions. Like Roland Barthes, who asserts that interdisciplinarity,

begins effectively (and not by the simple utterance of a pious hope) when the solidarity of the old disciplines breaks down—perhaps even violently, through the shocks of fashion to the advantage of a new object, a new language, neither of which is precisely this discomfort of classification which permits diagnosing a certain mutation...⁸⁸

I believe that it is epistemologically and heuristically valuable to start a dialogue between disciplines in order to find solutions to the structural problems experienced by marginalized groups. Through this *trans-ing*, the transfeminist approach (as it is defined here), would allow for the transgression of the disciplinary sectarianism that prevents trans* people from fully participating in the academic sphere. Although it is appropriate for feminist and gender studies to question their cisgendernormativity, the invitation introduced here targets all disciplines. After all, could the “renewal of feminism in francophone philosophy” not go through a *trans-ing* that would allow for the breakdown of disciplinary barriers between feminist studies and philosophy, between feminist and trans* studies, and between philosophy and trans* studies?

88 Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (California: University of California Press, 1989), 56.