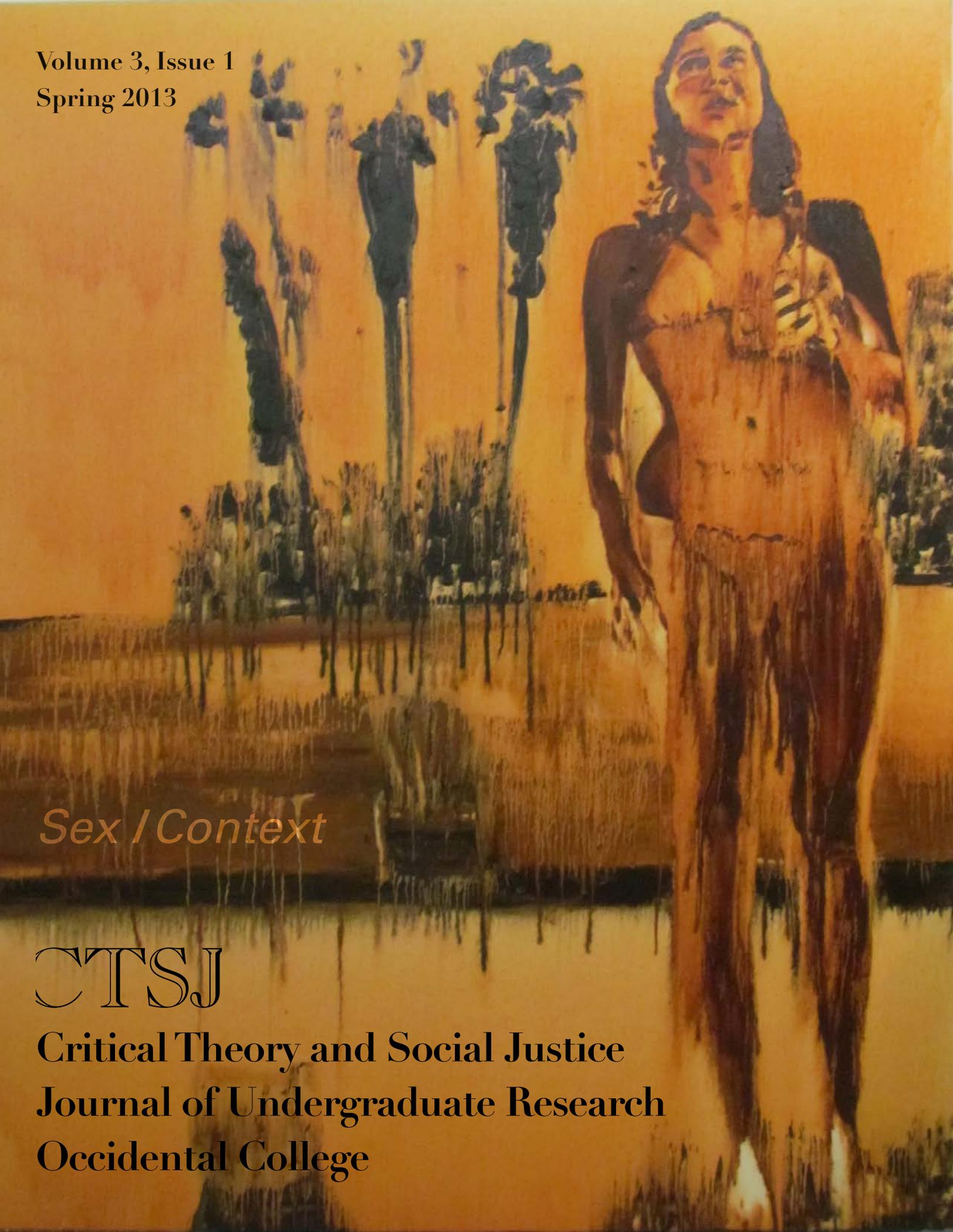


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Visible Body, Invisible Organs: Micropolitics and the LGBTTTTI Movement

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The absence was everywhere—on the red-lit stage and within the folds of the LGBTTTTI Pride Day flags. LGBTTTTI—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, Two-Spirit, intersex—that syrupy abbreviation, gelatinous letters where all fit, where all are named, where all are trapped.¹ The sequins were left hanging in the houses of Others, longing for their lover: the omnipotent spotlight. Absent was the glamour of drag, whose feathers and heels had caressed the 28th of June throughout its 10 years of celebration in Rosario. According to the leaders of Grupo de Jóvenes de Vox,² who organized the Pride Day event, the decision to replace the drag queen acts with tributes to activists and musical performances by other members of the activist group articulated a desire to pluralize and politicize the collective LGBTTTTI profile, to provide a glimpse of the underbelly of the movement, highlighting the voices of the³ multiple protagonists of the mobilization.

The visible body of the acronym speaks with the voice that sounds from the mouth of the macro-organizations. According to the leaders of the Comunidad Trans,⁴ Putos Peronistas,⁵ Grupo de Jóvenes, and other Rosario assemblages, that mouth speaks in a language that is, in

1 The original Spanish text reads *tod*s*, *nombrad*s*, and *atrapad*s* for the words translated as all, named, and, trapped. Thus, the author avoids using words that are gendered masculine even when they refer to a mixed gender group. Throughout the essay, the author uses an asterisk to remove the masculine bias of words that are gendered in conventional Spanish orthography.

2 Vox Asociación Civil is a Rosario-based nonprofit organization devoted to “legal and social equality for lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and trans” <<http://www.voxargentina.org/>>. Grupo de Jóvenes is a youth group within Vox.

3 The text reads *l*s* for the word translated *the*.

4 Comunidad Trans is a Rosario-based group devoted to “helping with trans themes” <<http://www.facebook.com/pages/comunidad-trans-rosario/262536843768689>>.

5 Putos Peronistas is a nationwide group of lower-class gay men who support the populist form of Peronism. The name of the group reclaims the word *puto*, which is literally a male whore but is used as a derogatory term for gay men. The Rosario branch of the group is especially active. See <<http://www.facebook.com/PutosPeronistasRosario>>.



many senses, unrecognized. It is a body *identical* to its own body, a body that universalizes the demands, functions, and desires of the subjects-who-battle.⁶ It is a body that universalizes the political practices and dynamics of militancy, producing a static image, an organism whose skin is uniformly perceived from outside—in the courts, in the theaters, in the media, in the streets. But beneath this skin of the LGBTTTTI movement beat the organs that at once animate and debunk the body. These organs incarnate plural demands. They are actors who connect with one another, sowing dynamics of interaction and collaboration according to a logic, as Deleuze and Guattari⁷ would say, of multiplicity beyond identifying labels but at the same time claiming identity. Politics—or rather, the micropolitics that bloom in the fleshy cavities of the LGBTTTTI movement—are what take form in the spaces between these letters, what braid together subjects⁸ and assemblages, sprouting horizontal branches that presume to be able to interweave the threads of economic class, social reality, political necessity, and desire. The June 28, 2012 event expressed the longing to externalize this invisible “interiority,” the desire to have the organs sing, honor, speak out, and dance under the bright spotlight, inviting the public to penetrate the body-of-the-movement, leaving its skin hanging at the theater door.

Why the longing to give a glimpse of the underbelly, to pluralize and politicize the image of the LGBTTTTI movement? Why now, in the era of Egalitarian Marriage and Gender Identity Laws,⁹ in the supposed era—as lesbian-feminist activist Ilse Fuskova¹⁰ argued in her July 14th talk—of “incredible liberty, through which each person can develop as they choose”? Between the question and the response we find ourselves among the organs of other bodies,

6 The text reads *l's sujet*s* for the phrase translated *the subjects*.

7 Philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari co-authored the two-volume work *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. The first volume, *Anti-Oedipus*, was published in 1972 and the second, *A Thousand Plateaus*, was published in 1980. Throughout this essay, Allen employs (and plays with) language from Deleuze and Guattari's works.

8 The text reads *sujet*s* for the word translated “subjects.”

9 The federal law permitting same-sex marriage in Argentina was enacted on July 15, 2010. An Argentine federal law allowing an individual to choose his or her legal gender identity was enacted on May 9, 2012.

10 Ilse Fuskova is an octogenarian Argentine lesbian feminist author, journalist, and activist. She is the co-author (with Silvia Schmid and Claudina Marek) of *Amor de Mujeres: El Lesbianismo en la Argentina Hoy* [Love of Women: Lesbianism in Argentina Today] (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1994). Fuskova is purported to be the first lesbian to come out on Argentine television. She gave a talk at the Chavela Bar in Rosario on July 14, 2012 to mark the second anniversary of the Egalitarian Marriage Law. Allen attended the talk and was very taken with Fuskova. In addition to quoting Fuskova here, Allen published an article on the Chavela Bar event in the newspaper *Página/12* <<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/soy/1-2544-2012-07-20.html>>.

bodies that speak in a native language, ignoring the nexuses of their interior. From outside the body of the unitedstatesian LGBTTTTI movement, we find relics useful for contemplating the micropolitics of the Argentine movement for sexual diversity.

International LGBTTTTI Pride Day is celebrated around the world in commemoration of the insurrection that occurred in 1969 at the Stonewall Inn Bar in Greenwich Village—at the time, one of the most marginalized boroughs in New York. There, a group of transvestites, butch lesbians, drag queens, and “effeminate” young men from various social classes stood up in the face of police brutality. The Stonewall resistance was the first time that the collective queer movement came together as a political and dissident force and mobilized: a full body and yet unable to totalize its thousand arms, thousand legs, thousand skins. A body that would begin to spread out its parts in order to become a diverse entity, horizontal, multifaceted. A body that would stick its fingers into the sockets of the machines that produce politics and subjectivity.

We can say that the political force of the unitedstatesian LGBTTTTI movement appeared in the Stonewall uprising through an incarnation of Deleuze’s logic of multiplicity,¹¹ a logic that cannot be understood as “many of the One.” Nor can it be understood as a rejection of identities and totalizations, but rather as that which escapes dualisms and binarisms, that totalization that is not a sum of its parts, that which tempts us to contemplate the totalizations beside the parts, the bodies beside the organs.

This discovery of multiplicity in the eruption of the unitedstatesian LGBTTTTI movement on that humid and sweaty night in Greenwich Village dissolved gradually in the 1980s. According to Spanish sociologist Javier Sáez,¹² this dissolution followed from the establishment of sexual diversity “ghettos” and the cultivation of the “pink market.” Such capitalist mechanisms shape the unilateral subject of the LGBTTTTI “community,”¹³ who is thereby situated as a consuming micromachine. Thus was produced the visible body of the movement, a body of universalized desire whose satisfaction is found at the “gay mall” or in the lofts of expensive

11 Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (1966; New York: Zone Books, 1988).

12 Javier Sáez is a Lacanian sociologist and author of *Teoría Queer y Psicoanálisis* (Madrid: Síntesis, 2004).

13 The text reads *sujet** for the word translated “subject.”

sectors of “the scene”¹⁴—West Hollywood in Los Angeles, the Castro in San Francisco, and even Greenwich Village in New York. The organs were swallowed by the body-movement; the assembled parts were totalized; and the only mouth that speaks from this body does so in a language identical to itself, where the sterilized force of micropolitics is snuffed out in a belly steeped in silence.

In post-marriage-law Argentine society, a unilateralization of the LGBTTTI movement has begun to be articulated through a political focus that favors the production of the subject-of-individualism, a body *identical* to the body of the movement on the molar level, as Félix Guattari and Suely Rolnik underscore in their book *Micropolítica: Cartografías del Deseo*.¹⁵ This individual body is incapable of speaking due to the dynamics of its subjectivity—that is, its multiple organs. It is unconscious of the organic production of its own bowels. In the meantime, the unilateral image of the body is the one that speaks. Thus, it is the image of the body that will be heard. Its voice—in our era of civil rights and, according to Fuskova, of “incredible liberty,”—has focused its speech, with great success, on pronouncing an Argentine LGBTTTI becoming-movement that, on several levels, we can connect to the commodification and universalization of subjectivity of the collective in the United States in the 1980s. The LGBTTTI body-movement, by becoming an *individual* body, is everyday less capable of comprehensively articulating the multiple needs and desires of the organ-subjects that inhabit it. In recent months, various examples of this becoming have appeared in political and social spheres.

As our TV screens are filled with images of the wedding of Sergio López and Simón Casal—the first couple who traveled from Paraguay [to Argentina] to take advantage of the passage of the International Egalitarian Marriage Law¹⁶ in the city of Rosario in April 2012—Michelle Mendoza, an activist in the Comunidad Trans, was targeted by someone trying to burn

14 The text reads *de ambiente* for the phrase translated “the scene.” *Ambiente* literally means “milieu” but among Spanish-speaking gays, the *ambiente* is understood to mean the “gay scene” without having to use the word *gay*. See, for example, Susana Chávez-Silverman and Librada Hernández, *Reading and Writing the Ambiente: Queer Sexualities in Latino, Latin American, and Spanish Culture* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2000).

15 Félix Guattari and Suely Rolnik, *Micropolítica: Cartografías del Deseo*, trans. Florencia Gómez (Madrid: Traficantes de sueños, 2006).

16 In March 2012, the provinces of Santa Fe (where Rosario is located), Buenos Aires, and Tierra de Fuego passed laws extending same-sex wedding rights to tourists and others who do not possess a national identity card. In November 2012, the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (the federal capital) followed those three provinces.



down her house. The case drew little media attention and barely any institutional response from NGOs or other “official” organizations. Meanwhile, provincial representative Leo Busatto’s June 17, 2012 proposal requiring that a minimum of one percent of public administration positions be held by transgender persons remains caught in parliamentary purgatory. And the community’s trans women and transvestites,¹⁷ together with their allies,¹⁸ still must fight for their rights to a dignified way of life and to decent treatment in the health system.

As we await the approval of “Líneas Diversas,”¹⁹ a sector of Aerolíneas Argentinas that would be converted into a “gay friendly” airline for the international upper-class, trans men are made to wait to receive hormone treatments in Buenos Aires, and each man is given the same dose, regardless of his weight, age, or phase of hormonization. In addition, health care workers lack clinical experience and training with respect to masculine hormonization, resulting in errors in administering injections that cause blisters and infections.

At the forefront of the production of a body-movement through individualization and commodification, the logic of multiplicity is submitted to the logic of the binary, a dynamic that measures all using the totalizing logic of *One*. The body closes its eyes to the lumpen and insatiable impact of its parts, chewing them up, swallowing them, making the parts *its* parts.

However, this imaginary and lucrative focusing of the LGBTTTTI movement brings about its own unraveling. The universalization that, on the molar level, is both spoken of and speaker of desires and needs, on the molecular level configures the lines of escape and the possible points of resistance. Recently, by applying the logic of multiplicity, of formulating and strengthening horizontal links, and of opting to use the technique of visibility (protests, artistic/corporal expression, public sex education classes, and open radios,²⁰ among others), various organizations “from” the movement (Putos Peronistas, Comunidad Trans, Movimiento Evita

17 The text reads *l*s mujeres trans y travestis* for the phrase translated “trans women and transvestites.”

18 The text reads *aliad*s* for the word translated “allies.”

19 *Líneas Diversas* means “Diverse [Air] Lines.”

20 *Radio abierto*, translated as “open radio,” refers to an open-mic, community-driven radio program, often broadcast from a public plaza, typically carrying the voices of activists, popular poets, and alternative artists who are otherwise rarely broadcast. <<http://recliveart.wordpress.com/2011/11/01/la-radio-abierta-como-una-practica-etnografica-colectiva/>>



Frente para la Diversidad,²¹ Las Safinas,²² and the Grupo de Jóvenes) have joined together to begin to wrinkle the fabric of the body-movement, to pluralize it, fragment it, unite it.

By operating in multiplicity, the “unofficial” LGTTTTI assemblages (which is to say, those that do not count as NGOs or nonprofits), take on rhizomatic forms²³ and establish networks that multiply collective actions. Operating outside of the paradigms of representation, these assemblages multiply but are never repeated: they constantly mutate. They form molecular networks that resist delegation, hierarchies, and fixed leaders. They become visible in public by displaying mouths, legs, skin, and arms in the spotlight of La Comedia Theater and in the daylight of the Plaza Sarmiento.²⁴ Micropolitically, the organs speak with the body, beside the body, apart and parting from the body.

21 Movimiento Evita—named for Eva Perón—is a populist political organization that was formed to support the government of the Peronist presidents Néstor Kirchner (2003–2007) and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007–present) <<http://www.movimiento-evita.org.ar/>>. In Rosario, the Movement’s Frente de Diversidad (Diversity Front) is devoted to securing rights pertaining to differences in sexuality and gender identity.

22 Las Safinas is a Rosario-based lesbian feminist group founded in 2003 <<http://lassafinas.blogspot.com.ar/>>. While Allen participated in all of the groups mentioned in this paper, Las Safinas was the group in which she was most active <<http://lassafinas.blogspot.com.ar/2012/08/adios-una-activista-poeta-y-bruja.html>>. The original Spanish-language version of this paper can be found on Las Safinas’ webpage <<http://lassafinas.blogspot.com.ar/2012/08/katharine-kai-allennota-que-escribio.html>>.

23 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuet, 1972).

24 La Comedia is the major municipal theater in the City of Rosario. Plaza Sarmiento is a large, open square in downtown Rosario.



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