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## State In/Securities at the Airport Border

BRIGITTE PAWLIW-FRY | *Stanford University*

**ABSTRACT:** Counterterrorism efforts after 9/11 brought about a new era in airport security, intensifying the surveillance and militarization of the border like never before. Yet those changes have not affected everyone equally: They have markedly terrorized the marginalized in society, particularly in terms of race and gender. Indeed, one in five transgender travelers have reported being harassed by Transportation Security Administration officers, and many choose not to fly out of fear they will be. This paper calls into the question the current security system at the border and examines strategies of inclusion that can make border-crossing more equitable for gender nonconforming and trans travelers, while pointing to the limits and possibilities of organizing around “queer” futurities.

*Keywords: TSA, Mobility, Borders, Securitization, Gender Deviance, Nation-State, Bodily Borders*

“The airport is not a prelude to travel, not a place of transition: it is a stop. A blockage. A constipation.”<sup>1</sup>

—URSULA LE GUIN

“Which bodies can choose visibility, and which bodies are always already visible perhaps even hypervisible — to state institutions?”<sup>2</sup>

—TOBY BEAUCHAMP

**Borders as we know them today** — rising from the development of the nation-state in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and from imperial and capitalist violence — were founded on the basis of exclusion and inclusion. But 9/11, which brought about the founding of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), was a turning point for exclusionary practices at borders, particularly at airports, as they were “securitized” like never before.<sup>3</sup> While most travelers could attest to superficial differences before and after 9/11, such as longer wait times or not being able to bring liquids onto airplanes, experiences of crossing through airport security are by no means equal. With the TSA’s heightened use of biometrics, the introduction of gender ID programs, and an investment in visual risk assessment,<sup>4</sup> expressions of nonnormative sexuality and gender have become particularly scrutinized at the airport.<sup>5</sup>

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1 Ursula K. Le Guin. *Changing Planes* (New York: Ace, 2005) 2.

2 Toby Beauchamp, “Artful Concealment and Strategic Visibility: Transgender Bodies and U.S. State Surveillance after 9/11,” *The Transgender Studies Reader 2*, eds., S. Stryker and A. Z. Aizura (New York: Routledge, 2013) 52.

3 Beauchamp.

4 Paisley Currah and Tara Mulqueen, “Securitizing Gender: Identity, Biometrics, and Transgender Bodies at the Airport,” *Social Research* 78.2 (2011): 557–582.

5 These nonnormative identities include, but are not limited to, trans, genderqueer, and intersex individuals, whose bodies reject traditional and essentialist notions of the body, that is, bodies that are obviously straight or gay, male or female, and appropriately categorized and presented as such.



In particular, transgender and nonbinary passengers in many publicized cases have been the target of intensified surveillance at the border. The TSA paired safety and belonging with what disability scholar Rosemarie Garland Thomson calls the “normate” or the “the corporeal incarnation of culture’s collective, unmarked, normative characteristics.”<sup>6</sup> The “non-normate” was thus paired with terror and suspicion as a means of intercepting threats to the nation-state. By examining the surveillance of non-normate bodies at airport security, this paper works toward the following question: How can the expanded powers of border security be regulated so that bodies, regardless of their outward presentation or status, can flow freely, without facing harassment or violence?

This project was inspired by my experience travelling back from Canada to the U.S. at twenty years old, when I had just begun to explore what it means to be part of the queer community. At that time, most of my family did not yet know I was queer. Cushioned by intersecting privileges, such as being white and Canadian, I could easily pass through airport security. I knew this was not the case for many, having read about the case of Robert Dzieka ski, a Polish immigrant who was killed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police at the Vancouver Airport after being tasered five times.<sup>7</sup> For most of my life, it was easy to be intellectually and abstractly critical of border practices but still appeal to them for admittance, drawing on the most “normate” qualities of myself, reinforcing oppressive and opportunistic practices that exclude others.<sup>8</sup> It was, in essence, a performance of privilege and normality. Yet at twenty, as I removed my shoes and jacket, waiting to be screened at airport security, the parts I could keep hidden for much of my life — such as queerness or ability status — felt pressingly close to the surface, leading me to examine the fraught structure of airport security, which trans people have long known is a space of invasion and risk.

While the airport security apparatus is one manifestation of the larger border system, it is an important contested space for study as it makes public the individual and collective negotiations of inside and outside the nation-state. Not only marking physical boundaries, the airport dramatizes who belongs and who does not. Even in the early history of the nation-state border, the dividing lines between inside and outside national territory were never purely about geographical space but also about ideology. Through who they chose to include or exclude at their borders, nations sought to establish coherent identities. For example, the U.S.’s long history of excluding non-Western immigrants at the border was part of an effort to reify the claim that the country was built on “Anglo-Saxon” Protestant values, rather than on indigenous land.<sup>9</sup> Scholars have long theorized the imaginary and material preoccupations of the border, describing it as both “ideologic” and socialized.<sup>10</sup> For Gloria Anzaldúa, the Chicana poet and writer,

borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge .... Los atravesados live here: the squint-eyed,

6 Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies* (New York: Columbia UP, 1997) 8.

7 Thomson 8.

8 Thomson 8.

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10 Bridget Anderson, Nandita Sharma, and Cynthia Wright, “Editorial: Why No Borders?,” *Refuge* 26.2 (2009): 5–18.



the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato, the half-breed, the half dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the “normal.”<sup>11</sup>

This differential status of belonging, however, is not permanent or fixed. Rather, borders to Anzaldúa are always undergoing change.<sup>12</sup> As ideological constructs,<sup>13</sup> borders are, as scholar Tugba Basaran writes, “multiple, shifting, and fluid and their location depends on the population to be governed.”<sup>14</sup>

Literacy and language tests were one way of differentiating those on the inside from those on the outside. For example, after decades of attempts, the U.S. Congress passed a literacy test in 1917 designed to restrict immigration to able-bodied and literate populations, which often meant excluding immigrant groups deemed “unfavorable” by lawmakers.<sup>15</sup> Immigration laws continue to undergo intense political negotiation as symbolic sites for a party and populace’s vision of the country, with colossal material consequences for those who seek entry into the United States.<sup>16</sup>

Not only have borders long been ideological constructs, intertwined with national identity, the State has long been preoccupied with non-normative bodies at the border. In the nineteenth century, as Beauchamp shows, scientific studies “helped to designate particular bodies — typically those that were racially or sexually mixed — as *degenerate* threats to Western norms and security.”<sup>17</sup> For example, biometric security was first widely implemented by colonial governments, such as the British in India, to control their subjects through the use of fingerprinting and facial recognition to identify “criminals” and “criminal” phenotypes. Anthropologists designed facial recognition technology to recognize “criminal” faces, often relying on racist and gendered stereotypes.<sup>18</sup> This early implementation of biometric security for the control of marginalized bodies in society set the stage for security measures imposed after 9/11.

Stemming from these early histories of borders as sites of control, especially against the perceived invasion of non-normative bodies, the TSA introduced the Secure Flight Program (SFP), which focuses on calculating risk on the level of identity.<sup>19</sup> This program is one of the changes that has made trans and gender-nonconforming (GNC) people — because they do not conform to the TSA and other travelers’ conceptions of gender — more visible, and thus, subject to harassment and violence. As explained by TSA administrator Steve Sadler, the SFP emerged from the 9/11 Commission Report, the official report on the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, released in 2004.

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11 Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012) 25.

12 Anzaldúa 25.

13 Anderson, Sharma, and Wright.

14 Tugba Basaran, “Security, Law, Borders: Spaces of Exclusion,” *International Political Sociology* 2.4 (2008): 339–354.

15 Claudia Goldin, “The Political Economy of the Immigration Restriction in the United States, 1890 to 1921,” *The Regulated Economy: A Historical Approach to Political Economy* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994) 223–258.

16 Gabriel J. Chin and Rose Cuisson Villazor, *The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965: Legislating a New America* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2015).

17 Beauchamp 357.

18 Mark Maguire, “The Birth of Biometric Security.” *Anthropology Today* 25.2 (2009): 10.

19 Benjamin Muller, “Borders, Risks, Exclusions,” *Studies in Social Justice* 3.1 (2009): 67–78.



He explained that the program allows the TSA to

adapt quickly to new threats by accommodating last-minute changes to the *risk categories assigned to individual passengers*. Passengers ... are required to provide *their full name, date of birth, and gender* .... TSA matches this information against the TSDB [the Terrorist Screening Database] ... so they may issue or deny passenger boarding passes.<sup>20</sup>

This program particularly affects trans and GNC travelers, as a TSA agent might construe a difference between their presented gender and the gender on their ID. Considering that it is extremely difficult to change one's gender on a government ID and that the current State Department is making it harder for trans individuals to receive or renew passports matching their gender,<sup>21</sup> the experience of gender confusion is rampant, which often results in further scrutiny and limited mobility for these passengers.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, many trans people choose not to fly out of fear they will be harassed at the airport due to the new level of security.<sup>23</sup>

Another change that brought further scrutiny on non-normate passengers was the introduction of Homeland Security's post-9/11 slogan "If You See Something, Say Something."<sup>24</sup> According to Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, subjects of the nation-state are taught to internalize structures of power.<sup>25</sup> They impose the State's gaze upon themselves, and preemptively censor their actions. As Foucault writes, "There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze ... which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point where he is his own overseer."<sup>26</sup> This slogan does just that, as travelers sense the eyes of both the State and other travelers upon them. "If You See Something, Say Something" also encourages passengers to do the work of the State and search for visual signs of suspicion.<sup>27</sup> This slogan prioritizes individual definitions of what suspicion looks like, and invites all manners of bias. An ostensibly benign phrase, it is fixated on the seemingly "fraudulent" or "deceptive" people, and because of this, trans scholar Tony Beauchamp argues, "gender-nonconforming people — culturally constructed as concealing something — disproportionately feel their effects."<sup>28</sup> This concealment is read as threatening, as it could, in theory, hide a threat, such as a weapon.

It is far too simplistic, however, to group TSA employees into the category of some singular Foucauldian State apparatus who move without agency in the system. Largely, these employees are

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20 Steve Sadler, Statement before the House Committee on Homeland Security, Subcommittee on Transportation Security, 18 Sept. 2014, <<https://www.tsa.gov/news/testimony/2014/09/18/tsa-secure-flight-program>>. Emphasis mine.

21 Ariel Sobel, "State Department Revoking Trans Women's Passports," *The Advocate*, 30 July 2018, <<https://www.advocate.com/transgender/2018/7/30/state-department-revoking-trans-womens-passports>>.

22 Currah and Mulqueen 561.

23 Currah and Mulqueen 565.

24 Currah and Mulqueen 561.

25 Beauchamp 52.

26 Michel Foucault, "The Eye of Power," *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977) 155.

27 Peter Adey, "'May I Have Your Attention': Airport Geographies of Spectatorship, Position, and (Im)Mobility," *Society and Space* 25.3 (2007): 515–536.

28 Beauchamp 52.



poorly paid and marginalized themselves; the TSA workforce has a much higher proportion of people of color than in the general U.S. population.<sup>29</sup> As of 2018, the starting salary for agents was between \$29,422 and \$44,134, depending on location.<sup>30</sup> It is easy to make the TSA agents themselves the scapegoats for these changes and locate all blame upon them. As the first interaction travelers have with airport security, the public-facing TSA agents hold immediate power to determine who is sent for further scrutiny behind closed doors. Yet they should not be vilified in the process of critiquing the State apparatus.

Risk assessment's preoccupation with visibility means that some travelers are, to borrow a term from Beauchamp, hypervisible; they are seen, surveyed, and suspected more intensely than other travelers at the airport.<sup>31</sup> Those who go unseen and pass through the airport without the lingering eyes of the State are "invisible," benefiting from their "neutrality" at the airport. This neutrality, or normativity, is derived from what queer scholar José Esteban Muñoz calls "cultural logics" that "undergird state power," the systems of "heteronormativity, white supremacy, and misogyny."<sup>32</sup> To be white, cis, male, Western, and heteronormative is to be read as nonsuspicious and "legible" to the State.

Historian James C. Scott argues that the State prioritizes legibility for control over its subjects. To produce legibility, the State constructs strict categories, such as male or female, immigrant or citizen, similar to the processes of biometric security. These categories do not allow ambiguity or nonconformity, limiting or even eliminating subversive or elusive subjects.<sup>33</sup> Those who are not legible to the state, such as genderqueer individuals, are hypervisible. Some bodies, as Beauchamp encourages us to recognize, are forced into hypervisibility,<sup>34</sup> which means that while one can actively identify with a non-normative identity, people seen as non-normative still cannot escape targeting by the airport security apparatus.

This hypervisibility is compounded by racialization, as queer bodies of color are even further scrutinized and marked suspicious. Their perceived "risk" factors are multiplied, creating "multiple minority stress,"<sup>35</sup> resulting in mental and physical impacts, such as depression, anxiety, or worsening health. Racial profiling is institutionalized at the TSA just as it is in structures of law and order. Where white GNC persons' whiteness acts as a protective shield of (relative) invisibility, queer people of color experience a doubled hypervisibility and are associated with both terror, threat, and anomaly. Joy James made

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29 Transportation Security Administration, "TSA Recognized for Diversity" [Press release], 3 Feb. 2011, <<https://www.tsa.gov/news/releases/2011/02/03/tsa-recognized-diversity>>.

30 Federal Law Enforcement, "What Is TSA," n.d., accessed 26 Mar. 2019, <<https://www.federallawenforcement.org/tsa/>>.

31 Beauchamp 52

32 José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, Vol. 2 (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1999) 5.

33 James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1999) 11.

34 Beauchamp 52.

35 Kimberly F. Balsam, Yamile Molina, Blair Beadnell, Jane Simoni, and Karina Walters, "Measuring Multiple Minority Stress: The LGBT People of Microaggressions Scale," *Cultural Diversity Ethnic Minority Psychology* 17.2 (2011):163–174, doi: 10.1037/a0023244.



this point in 1996: “Some bodies appear more docile than others because of their conformity in appearance to idealized models of class, color, and sex; their bodies are allowed greater leeway to be self-policed or policed without physical force.”<sup>36</sup> Gender presentations are read through the lens of white supremacy, exacerbating the torment of airport security for trans and GNC individuals of color.

### STRATEGIES AND PROBLEMS OF INCLUSION

These historic institutions of control, implemented on the body and at the border, have only accelerated into the present, fueled by politics of fear, racism, xenophobia, and heterosexism. How can this site of mobility be made more just? How can the expanded powers of border security be regulated to allow bodies, regardless of their outward presentation or status, to flow freely, without facing harassment or violence?

One route is to make claims on the State, at the risk of further ingraining queer subjects within it. Those claims can be made on its institutions, such as the TSA. Activists working in the LGBTQIA community — and those who act in solidarity with them — can demand the introduction of a non-binary category on travel documents and increase the ease with which those IDs are issued. This strategy has now been pursued successfully by activists in nine countries, including Canada, Austria, and Thailand, as well as in the state of California.<sup>37</sup> As travelers currently have little legal recourse, another avenue of improvement could be creating better systems of redress, such as allowing victims of the TSA to sue, thereby increasing the perceived (legal or financial) costs of the TSA’s actions.<sup>38</sup> In the summer of 2018, U.S. Representative Kathleen Rice, a Democrat from New York, brought forward the Screening With Dignity Act. The act states that it would “improve the screening of transgender persons at airport security checkpoints, and for other purposes.”<sup>39</sup> To achieve that goal, the act would mandate new training for TSA officers, limit their access to screening images, and give travelers more say in the screening, such as being able to specify the gender of the officer who would conduct a pat-down.<sup>40</sup> These proposed changes would improve — however limitedly — the experience of airport security for trans and GNC travelers.

Further, the TSA could also scale back the programs mentioned earlier, such as the most invasive elements of the biometric security apparatus, the Secure Flight Program, and the slogan “If You See Something, Say Something.” In their article “Risk-Based Policies for Airport Security Checkpoint Screening,” Laura McLay, Adrian Lee, and Sheldon Jacobson characterize these changes at airport

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36 Joy James, *Resisting State Violence: Radicalism, Gender, and Race in U.S. Culture* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996). Cited in Beauchamp, 26.

37 Christine Quinan, “Gender (in)Securities: Surveillance and Transgender Bodies in a Post-9/11 Era of Neoliberalism,” *Security/Mobility: Politics of Movement*, eds. Matthias Leese and Stef Wittendorp (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2017) 154.

38 Katelyn Burns, “Traveling While Trans: Airport Security Sees Your Genitals as Cause for Alarm,” *Rewire.News*, 5 May 2017, <<https://rewire.news/article/2017/05/05/traveling-trans-airport-security-sees-genitals-cause-alarm/>>.

39 H.R. 6659, 115th Congress, 2nd Session, 7 Aug. 2018, <<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BILLS-115hr6659ih/pdf/BILLS-115hr6659ih.pdf>>.

40 H.R. 6659.



security as “piecemeal and reactive,” resulting in minimal gains in security and maximal increases in “costs and inconveniences to travelers.”<sup>41</sup> The changes have not, in their estimation, contributed to large-scale security improvement. While the majority of focus and budget is spent on the screening process, the most substantive and effective changes have occurred in making the cockpit more secure.<sup>42</sup> Thus, activists can pursue a variety of evidence-backed tactics to show that these new, punitive policies — ones that primarily affect non-normate bodies in society, such as trans and GNC people — have not meaningfully improved security, but only serve as theatrical showpieces for the safety of airports.

All of these proposed changes still configure the State as a central arbiter of mobility and identity, hardly a visionary transformation.<sup>43</sup> As scholar Christine Quinan argues, these strategies of inclusion and tolerance, such as the introduction of broader gender categories on IDs, hardly do enough to target the wide-scale system of exclusion at the border. She wonders if these changes can “be considered ‘progress’ or if they are merely performances of transgender acceptance that obscure a neoliberal focus on profitability and surveillance.”<sup>44</sup> By this, Quinan means that incremental changes aimed at inclusion, such as changes to gender ID categories, might not be as holistic or transformative as credited. Rather, so-called performances of transgender acceptance, she argues, might work to veil larger systems of control. Performative inclusion at the border, which reifies the supremacy of the nation-state, makes subjects vulnerable to later administrative changes and does not liberate other hypervisible travelers. Further, Basaran has shown that airport security’s “legal exclusions” are produced “by legal means,”<sup>45</sup> as a part of “liberal democracy.”<sup>46</sup> Democratizing the border, she argues, “requires not only legal, but institutional changes to the structures of the liberal state.”<sup>47</sup> Just as the TSA’s piecemeal and reactive changes failed, so, it seems, would parceled out inclusion tactics that could be easily reversed, as they have been under the Trump administration.<sup>48</sup>

Yet how can one change a practice of border security and bodily surveillance that has been intensifying for more than two hundred years? One answer is to more closely consider philosopher Jacques Derrida’s concept of “unconditional hospitality,” which relates to inclusion on both grand and minute scales.<sup>49</sup> As Derrida points out, the notion of hospitality is necessarily premised on power relations. To be hospitable is to exercise one’s power over another. Often, hospitality is a discourse that manifests not only

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41 Laura McLay, Adrian J. Lee, and Sheldon H. Jacobson, “Risk-Based Policies for Airport Security Checkpoint Screening,” *Transportation Science* 44.3 (2010): 333–349.

42 K. Jack Riley, “Flight of Fancy? Air Passenger Security Since 9/11,” *The Long Shadow of 9/11: America’s Response to Terrorism*, eds. Brian Michael Jenkins and John Paul Godges (Santa Monica; Arlington; Pittsburgh: RAND Corporation, 2011) 147–160.

43 José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York UP, 2009).

44 Quinan 154.

45 Basaran 352.

46 Basaran 351.

47 Basaran 352.

48 National Center for Transgender Equality, “The Discrimination Administration: Trump’s Record of Action Against Transgender People,” n.d., <<https://transequality.org/the-discrimination-administration>>.

49 Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (London: Routledge, 2001).



in terms of the domestic sphere but also in the political sphere, where leaders can decide whether or not to allow refugees entry. Because of this power dynamic, Derrida advocates for unconditional hospitality, whereby one has no mastery or ownership. This concept translates to the borders of the nation-state, where the power of inclusion or exclusion is not decided by the apparatus of the TSA, for example.

Further, the mobilization by queer artists and scholars for a transnational world without borders provides one direction. Their politic does not seek recognition from the state, but rather rethinks the state's monopoly on belonging. It manifests in such forms as academic thought, community organizing, and art practice. Rather than working from the question of what is practical, it works from the question of what is ethical.

Melissa Autumn White, who has extensively investigated these “queer no-borders imaginaries,” deems this strategy “imminently practical” as it challenges the “ongoing legacies of colonialism and empire building that the nation-state system holds in place.”<sup>50</sup> One prominent organizing model of no borders has been *Queeruption*, in existence for two decades.<sup>51</sup> This group holds yearly gatherings where activists, artists, and scholars join in cities around the world to collaborate, organize, network, and assert self-representation. As Autumn White writes, the gatherings are also designed “to produce, actively, queer multitudes that [are] organized around the desire to live and love beyond the inherent violence of borders.”<sup>52</sup> Autumn White cautions, however, that the burden of organizing cannot fall solely on undocumented migrants, just as GNC, trans, and queer people cannot singlehandedly dismantle “the violences of the gender/sex system.” According to Autumn White, often these gatherings that celebrate transnationalism require a high degree of mobility and privilege — such as white or economic privilege — for their attendees to be able to organize together.<sup>53</sup> Yet one of the “most radical challenges to borders and immigration regimes,” Autumn White argues, “would be a mass-scale refusal of citizens themselves to continue to identify as such.”<sup>54</sup> Thus, this no-borders strategy requires those to act who are not primarily targeted at the border, such as the invisible and legible, using their own privilege to push for structural transformation.<sup>55</sup>

But even though Autumn White sees a “mass-scale refusal of citizenship” as one radical way to challenge the supremacy of borders, many within the LGBTQIA community have aligned themselves with power, including the author of this text, relying on institutions to deliver them a liveable life, such as access to such institutions as health care, education, and justice. It seems that a refusal of their citizenship on behalf of the most marginalized — including the undocumented, the racialized, and the gender nonconforming — would be unimaginable.

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50 Melissa Autumn White, “Queer Without Borders? On the Impossibilities of ‘Queer Citizenship’ and the Promise of Transnational Aesthetic Mutiny,” *Transnationalism, Activism, Art*, eds. Kit Dobson and Aine McGlynn (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2013) 121.

51 Autumn White, “Queer Without Borders,” 121.

52 Autumn White, “Queer Without Borders,” 121.

53 Autumn White, “Queer Without Borders,” 121.

54 Melissa Autumn White, “Documenting the Undocumented: Toward a Queer Politics of No Borders,” *Sexualities* 17.8 (2014): 993.

55 Autumn White, “Queer Without Borders,” 121.



In more extreme examples of queer allegiance with power, white gay men were large supporters of the far-right Marine LePen in the 2017 French presidential election, and alt-right troll Milo Yiannopoulos weaponized queerness to further a racist, transphobic, and xenophobic agenda.<sup>56</sup> But in a more common example, when Black Lives Matter shut down the 2017 Pride Parade in Toronto, protesting the police's float in the parade, many older, white gays and lesbians were outraged over their tactics and for being so "disruptive," without recognizing or working against police brutality and racialized violence in their community.<sup>57</sup>

### CRITICAL IDENTITY MAKING

The term "queer community" is often understood as a stand-in for a socially and economically progressive group. Yet the continued prevalence of racism, transphobia, classism, and xenophobia within those spaces means that privileged queer people, who are white, documented, straight-passing, or cis, cannot inhabit their queerness uncritically, as if it is evidence enough of their resistance to structures of oppression. This proposal is an extension of the queer futurity José Esteban Muñoz daringly envisioned as well as of what queer thinker Jamie Heckert understands queerness to be, a constant becoming and "a refusal to *grant legitimacy to borders*." The proposal also builds on Heckert's acknowledgment that "their continual construction is utterly dependent on everyday forms of policing, conformity and obedience can be a part of learning to cross them, to bridge them."<sup>58</sup> This process is continuous, constantly reworking how one is bought into and perpetuates systems of power.

Becoming queer, Heckert writes, "I am learning to be 'comfortable with uncertainty,'" an uncertainty both at the border and in the body.<sup>59</sup> Reconfiguring belonging outside the State, and embracing ambiguity and uncertainty, will not change the fact that the most vulnerable GNC and trans bodies will — most likely — continue to be "policed and punished."<sup>60</sup> Trans women of color are being murdered across the country at a horrifying rate.<sup>61</sup> It is an epidemic. Thus, both short-term interventions, such as mandating training for police officers, health care workers, and TSA agents, and advocating for inclusion within systems is necessary, while still working toward dismantling those systems of control and putting pressures on the categories we demand in others.<sup>62</sup> ■■

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56 Will Chalk, "Why Gay French Men Are Voting Far Right," *BBC*, 19 Apr. 2017, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/39641822/why-gay-french-men-are-voting-far-right>>.

57 Janaya Khan, "Janaya Khan of Black Lives Matter on Building a More Inclusive Pride," *Flare*, 23 June 2017, <<https://www.flare.com/identity/janaya-khan-pride-is-evolving/>>.

58 Jamie Heckert, "Intimacy with Strangers/Intimacy with Self: Queer Experiences of Social Research," *Queer Methods and Methodologies*, eds. Kath Browne and Catherine J. Nash (New York: Ashgate, 2010)

59 Heckert 4.

60 Basaran 352.

61 Human Rights Campaign, "Violence Against the Transgender Community in 2018," n.d., <<https://www.hrc.org/resources/violence-against-the-transgender-community-in-2018>>.

62 Heckert.



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