

In Transit: Being Non-Binary in a World of Dichotomies

Dianna E. Anderson

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Dianna E. Anderson's *In Transit* troubles the idea of “transgender” as an umbrella identity and “transition” as synonymous with bodily alteration. Rather, through the recursive application of theoretical frameworks around gender, the book encourages a lexicon of self-definition for gender-diverse people that’s as expansive, flexible, and self-generative as the community it describes.

Academic and introspective, the book seeks to “explore and explain the linguistic and social problems we encounter when we try to lump all parts of a broad, diverse community” together. Personal experiences meld with theoretical frameworks in ways that challenge creating something universal out of a specific experience, while also holding space for imperfect understandings as part of a necessary response to a lack of adequate cultural representation.

One of the main issues the book endeavors to tease apart is the homophobia and transphobia inherent in how people talk about gender, and the idea of physical transition as a definitive aspect of the transgender experience. Legally, most current understandings of transgender identity tie together understandings of gender with the physical body and bodily performance. But within the gender-diverse community, there are many groups that overlap in hard-to-define ways; Anderson clarifies that a personal experience of dysphoria with the physical body and dissonance with the way a person’s gender is performed and perceived are not the same thing.

Moreover, when conversations about transgender people promote limited narratives, it “leads to people thinking they know about us without knowing us.” The ramifications of limited, secondhand “knowing about” affects the culture at large with devastating legal, psychological, spiritual, and representational consequences.

Despite the pitfalls, *In Transit* insists that gender diverse people claim space and become stakeholders in their own narratives, even if all the certainty they have access to is that they belong in an “Other” space, beyond what current culture and language describes.

LETITIA MONTGOMERY-RODGERS (July / August 2022)

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