In Transit: A Photographic Autoethnography on Travel as a Meaningful Transitional Time

by

Abbie Schenk

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Recreation and Leisure Studies

Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation

University of Alberta

© Abbie Schenk, 2020

Abstract

When we think of trans people and photography, we often think of selfies, transition timelines, or stereotypical images like trans women trying to put on makeup. We don't often think of trans photographers themselves. My research is an autoethnographic reflection from behind the lens rather than in front of it, using photography to explore how travel can be meaningful in relation to gender transition. Travel can serve as a transitional time for anyone, providing an escape from social pressures that allows us to build a sense of self, confidence, and empowerment. A transitional time is especially important during a literal gender transition, allowing for self-reflection and an escape from the discomfort of local stresses. The need to reconstruct and rediscover the self came with a need to reevaluate my photography — returning to a more physical process aided in this as it allowed for a greater material connection to the pictures. The autoethnography explores these themes in the context of passing, surveillance, and learning to navigate LGBT communities and experiences.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my supervisor Dr. Danielle Peers for giving me a chance to write this, and all of the support, edits, and discussions that helped me understand what I was trying to say. Thank you also to Dr. Zac Robinson and Dr. Judy Davidson for their insightful comments and willingness to be on my committee, and Dr. Donna Goodwin for chairing the defence.

Thank you to my parents for their love and support that put me on the path to writing this thesis and completing this degree. Thanks to Chen Chen for the late-night discussions until the restaurants closed. Thank you to An Nguyen for the coffee work sessions, without which I might still be trying to write this. And most of all, thank you to my wife Elaine Yip for always being my travel partner and pulling me into doing yet another level of education together.

I also acknowledge that this thesis is supported in part by funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council through the Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction: Needing to Get Away

Figure 1 - View from the plane from Edmonton, AB to Vancouver, BC, June 2019

Growing up with the internet, I became an expert at scouring cyberspace for information, searching every corner of the web for resources on “am i trans,” “how to be trans,” “do you have to move to california to be trans,” etc. But countless medicolegal requirements and overextending metanarratives prevented me from actually transitioning until 26. A common part of the transitioning metanarrative was that I would have to move away from home in order to start a new life where nobody recognized me — “a journey to have surgery and then a second journey to disappear and hide one’s newly visible gender from neighbours and acquaintances” (Doan, 2016, p. 239). This was one of the many reasons I assumed I could never transition, as I was not willing to move away from my family. The assumption that trans people must move largely faded over the next decade, and was no longer on my mind by the time I did finally transition. But over time, I became more aware of why such a desire would exist. Because I wasn’t yet in a position to move, I found myself drawn to travel to fulfil the need to get away.

Travel comes in many forms, whether we take a plane, train, or automobile to get there. The travels I will discuss are all periods of time that I left my home city for longer than one day and that I found meaningful with regard to transition. Meaningful travel experiences can come from leisure travel but also other contexts, such as for work or conferences (Wilson & Harris, 2006). Wilson and Harris state that meaningful travel can build a sense of self, confidence, and empowerment. Desforges (2000) describes how the decision to travel is often linked to moments where self-identity is questioned. I believe that travel can be highly desirable for trans people for this reason, as it was for me.

When we think of trans people and photography, we often think of selfies, transition timelines, or stereotypical images like trans women trying to put on makeup. We don't often think of trans photographers themselves. My research is an autoethnographic reflection from behind the lens rather than in front of it, using photography to explore how travel can be meaningful in relation to gender transition, where travel itself can serve as a transitional time to self-reflect and escape the discomfort of local stresses. The need to reconstruct and rediscover the self came with a need to reevaluate my photography — returning to a more physical process aided in this as it allowed for a greater material connection to the pictures. The autoethnography explores these themes in the context of passing, surveillance, and learning to navigate LGBT communities and experiences.

Literature Review

This autoethnography will cover two major themes: travel as transition and travelling as trans. To contextualize this work, I will first introduce how I will engage with trans identity, and then discuss the meaningful role of travel and travel photography in life transitions. I will then broadly cover some of the literature on inequitable access to travel. I will finally discuss the limited literature that discusses trans travel, and in particular, my two key themes of travel as transition and travelling while trans.

Conceptualizing Trans

"Trans" can have different meanings to different people, communities, and contexts. The word is often used interchangeably with trans*, transgender, or transsexual. Trans refers to people who present or live genders not assigned to them at birth (Bettcher, 2014). In most trans communities I have interacted with, this further extends to identifying as a gender not assigned at birth, as not all trans people can safely present or live as their gender or gender identity. A non-binary gender is one that is "not strictly a woman or a man" (Dennis, 2017). This can mean belonging somewhere in between, a third gender, no gender, genderfluid, or something else depending on how the person describes their identity. Many non-binary people identify as both trans and non-binary, while some identify only as non-binary and not trans. Cisgender, or cis, refers to someone who identifies with their gender assigned at birth and is generally used as the opposite to trans (Stryker, 2017).[1]

Bettcher uses trans as "a functional term… not intended to invoke a shared category

[1] To learn more about trans and non-binary terminology, see Bettcher, 2014 and Stryker, 2017.

among diverse individuals," stating that "the use of trans should not be understood to impute an identity or a shared political vision" (para. 11). I will be using the same approach with my own research; although I am a binary trans woman, there are many who define themselves as "trans" entirely differently. Bettcher (2012) further states, "accounts that take for granted singular, fixed meanings of gender terms cannot plausibly provide a liberatory theory" because they fail to acknowledge that these terms "are used in trans contexts in multiple and contested ways" (p. 247). To Bettcher, this means "*recognizing* the multiplicity of resistant meanings rather than *acquiescing* to the dominant culture's erasure of them" (p. 247, emphasis in original). I am also making an axiological decision to not use phrases like "the trans community," or "trans people do x" uncritically, as I believe statements like these ascribe a metanarrative that universalizes all trans experiences as one singular trans experience — and my experience should absolutely not be seen as a typical trans experience.

A major part of this discussion will be on passing. Passing is often used interchangeably to mean passing as the appropriate gender (in my case as a woman), or passing as cis (not being perceived as trans). Passing can play a major role in how we navigate the world and how we experience being trans. Passing is fundamentally binaric, as it is understood as either a cis male or cis female gender presentation (Bettcher, 2007). Not passing can be met with discrimination, violence, and other forms of harm because trans people "'misalign'… genital representation and thereby opt out of the mundane, daily disclosures made by most people" (p. 54). Because it is not always possible or even desirable to pass, many of us learn to navigate which spaces are safe for us in the cities we live in. Travelling opens us up to new spaces and new risks in places we may not be familiar with. Trans

people can "find themselves shifting from invisible to visible on a regular basis" in order to avoid an "exposure effect," that is "a transperson must either consistently pass, fail to pass, or explicitly (and repeatedly) come out" (p. 51).

Trans experiences are often framed through modernist approaches focused on rights, barriers, or even financial opportunity. Some nations, including Canada, have implemented policies to add human rights protections for trans and non-binary people, gender identity, and gender expression (Bill C-16, 2016). Corporations have added trans-inclusive policies, and many proclaim support at LGBT Pride events—see Appendix A for an example of Shaw Communications and various political parties at the 2016 Edmonton Pride Parade. In 2017, Fort Lauderdale began a tourism marketing campaign targeted specifically at trans people (Jones, 2017). When discussing my own research, people are often quick to assume I will be solely discussing barriers, or that my findings could be used to inform some form of tourism marketing or entrepreneurship. But policies do not necessarily translate to real change for trans and non-binary individuals. As post-structuralist trans theorist Dean Spade (2011) argues, these laws only narrow the definition of discrimination rather than eliminating it entirely while "all the daily disparities in life chances that shape our world… remain untouchable and affirmed as non-discriminatory or even as fair" (p. 43). This focus also constructs trans experiences as inherently negative, reproducing us as passive and needing support from a benevolent state. As such, my work will focus less on policies, rights, or travel barriers, and more on how I actively construct, visually represent, and story my travel experiences during and as a result of my transition.

Following Spade, and various other poststructuralist trans (e.g. Stryker 2014, Aizura 2010, Currah & Mulqueen 2011) and leisure studies scholars (e.g. Hollinshead 1999, Aizura

2010), I will instead take a poststructuralist approach to trans travel research. Poststructuralism "understands the 'self' as constructed… within the intersections of individual, power relations and knowledge" (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 52). It is concerned with critiques of universal metanarratives, observing "multiple meanings" whose interpretations of reality "become valuable only when reflected against the social and historical context of the knowledge making" (p. 47). Dominant individuals or groups "have arrived at their positions through the strategic use of discourses" (p. 49). Therefore, a poststructuralist autoethnography about trans travel demands an examination of the discourses that shape the ways I construct myself in relation to the world I travel in, how travel is itself constructed, and the ways we can construct meaning out of our experiences. Rather than essentialising a singular trans experience of travel, I consider how I construct my own meanings through the travels and the photos I take, and how dominant discourses affect the individual truths that led me to them.

I consider gender and trans identity as complexly negotiated subjectivities within power relations, rather than inherent, authentic, and often medicalized and psychiatrized identities. These power relations are regulated by biopolitics, "the combination of disciplinary and excitatory practices aimed at each and every body, which results in the somaticization by individuals of the bodily norms and ideals that regulate the entire population to which they belong" (Stryker, 2014, p. 38). In other words, biopolitics describes the practices and technologies that inform what is acceptable or normal in order to optimally manage populations "for state or state-like ends" (p. 38). Although Foucault describes biopolitics in terms of sexuality, Stryker argues that gender is "commensurable with a Foucauldian perspective on biopolitics" (p. 39). Gender-based biopolitics are

inherently mobilized to police trans people's bodies as long as they continue to deviate from what is considered acceptable or normal, also informing our own negotiations of ourselves as trans. Uncritical resistance discourses about biopolitics can construct another universalizing metanarrative of trans experience as being inherently about rebelling against gender and living beyond-the-binary, constructing the experience of binary trans people like myself who desire to pass as "being in some ways political retrograde" (Bettcher, 2015, p. 414). But the inversion of an "appearance/reality contrast" by binary trans people that leads to "reality enforcement" (Bettcher, 2015, p. 422) is itself resistant to the biopolitics of gender. Although some trans people may desire a return to their relatively "normal" lives prior to transition, the construction of our experiences as abnormal by dominant, gender-binaric metanarratives means even those of us who do achieve some semblance of normalcy are always at risk of having it disrupted.

Spade (2006) discusses how the medical invention of a transsexual identity led to the regulation of gender expression — I would extend this to the overarching trans identity. A critique of this invention and regulation would require "the promotion of self-determination of gender and sexual expression, including the elimination of institutional incentives to perform normative gender and sexual identities and behaviours" (p. 319). These incentives are not restricted to medical institutions, as similar discourses that regulate trans bodies circulate around the experiences and industries of travel, compelling us to perform in normative ways.

Travel as Meaningful Activity

White and White (2004) describe how travel can serve as a "transitional time" for any traveller, allowing an escape from social pressures and the ability to explore "new or different responsibilities and roles" (p. 201). In my case, travel not only served as exactly this sort of transitional time during a gender transition, but it was the main reason I wanted to travel in the first place. Although there is literature that discusses travel with the goal of transitioning, which will be discussed in the section on Trans Travel, there is a lack of writing that applies this theme of travel as a transitional time to gender transition. My autoethnography builds on White and White's theme of travel as transitional time by applying it to gender transition. Beyond this transition, I found that each trip started a new chapter in life, including new approaches to the self, photography, and how I travelled.

The histories of tourism and photography are intertwined, emerging and growing together around a similar time (Crawshaw & Urry, 2002). A "productive desire" emerged around 1800 which culminated in "modern regimes of surveillance and in the extraordinary promiscuity of the photographic eye" (p. 182). The majority of research on travel and photography is written with regards to travel photography, a specific style of photography that seeks to recreate popular tourist images as proof of travel (Garrod, 2009; Hillman, 2007) and to construct memories about their experiences (Crawshaw & Urry, 2002; Haldrup & Larsen, 2012). Photography can also act "as mirror, as ritual, as language, as dominant ideology, and as resistance" in the ways it can disrupt normal tourist imagery (Crawshaw & Urry, 2002, p. 184).

This does not resonate with how I take photographs when I travel, which is not much different from how I take photos when I am at home. I use photography as a form of self-

expression to capture how I see the world, and with intent to create a specific style. My photography is heavily influenced from working as a photographer for three years with a focus on making photojournalistic, documentary-style images, and my own navigations of photographic ethics from running a street photography club. How I express myself through photography has shifted during transition for both internal and external reasons as will be discussed in the autoethnography, but my overall reasons and ethos for taking photographs has not. Travel is a very useful lens to look at my photography through, as I typically take many hundreds more images on a trip than I would in months at home.

Although I do not take 'travel photography,' how I travel is influenced by my identity as a photographer. Bond and Falk (2013) identify how identity-based motives can "directly impact the consumption and production of certain types of tourism experiences" (p. 430), especially considering identity beyond the "relatively stable, core aspects" of an individual like gender, race, etc., and viewing identity more as a "changeable, dynamic aspect" (p. 431). They find that identities, such as being a photographer, impact where people travel, how they travel, and what they do during their travels.

Inequitable Travel Experiences

Not all people have the same access to safe and meaningful travel. People of colour are often racially profiled, leading to disproportionately more intensive screening when going through airport security, leading to greater feelings of embarrassment (Lum et al., 2013; Gabbidon et al., 2009). Racial prejudice and discrimination can inform different travel preferences for people of colour and white people (Philipp, 1994). Stryker (2014) notes that trans people are bifurcated along racial lines, where trans people of colour are more

likely to experience "death-dealing, 'necropolitical' operations of biopower" (p. 40). Travel also often requires the financial ability to access transportation to go someplace and to find accommodation, creating a class-based barrier to access. Scott (1991) notes that "when class becomes an overriding identity, other subject-positions are subsumed by it, those of gender, for example" (p. 785). Travel is possible with little to no income, such as by borrowing a tent and hitchhiking, couch-surfing, or travel work programs. But time can be a major class-based constraint, such as for people working multiple jobs or on shift schedules. People with disabilities face multiple barriers to accessing travel, and the economic barriers "endemic to the whole notion of travel" affect them in "a more pronounced way" (Darcy & Daruwalla, 1999, p. 42). I am white, non-disabled, and a middle-class Master of Arts student, so I do not encounter these and many other barriers. Most of the inequitable barriers to travel I have experienced are from LGBT-related issues. This again is a reason why my experiences do not represent those of many other trans people.

There is much research on gay and lesbian tourism seeking to mitigate barriers to travel (Hughes, 2006; Southall & Fallon, 2011; Weeden, Lester & Jarvis, 2016). Gay and lesbian travellers often consider "gay-friendliness, gay space, or at least the absence of homophobia" as important issues for choosing a destination, making the choice carry "more risk than that experienced by the rest of the population" (Hughes, 2006, p. 71). Risks can include physical violence, verbal abuse, discrimination, and less favourable treatment; hotels, for example, may refuse to book gay and lesbian travellers into double rooms or refuse service entirely. Aside from these barriers, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT)-focused tourism often includes travel to gay neighbourhoods or key historical sites, such as the Stonewall Inn in New York (Southall & Fallon, 2011). Gay and lesbian travellers

have also been targeted by advertisers, with the term “pink dollar” gaining popularity in the 1990s. However, research and advertising still largely focus on a sexuality-based subset of LGBT communities, leaving gender-based identities behind.

Trans Travel

The breadth of LGBT travel research does not generally extend to travel for trans people (Hughes, 2006; Southall & Fallon, 2011), around which there are few publications and resources aside from transition-related medical travel (e.g., Aizura, 2010; Enteen, 2013). Although part of the LGBT umbrella, transgender travellers face unique barriers, such as encountering generally less favourable attitudes compared to sexual minorities, which place us at heightened risks for prejudice, discrimination, and violence (Norton & Herek, 2013). Olson and Reddy-Best (2019) found from interviewing 15 trans travellers that all felt fear or anxiety at least once in their travels, and all experienced “at least one instance of mistreatment most often in the form of microagressions (sic), yet verbal harassment was also a frequent experience” (p. 258). I have become aware through my transition of how different relationships to trans identities and embodiments may have a significant impact on travel experiences. That is, it is important not to overstate unity or similarity when studying trans people, as many of us view transition in entirely different ways. I have also found that some of the discourses that do exist around trans travel have actually created more anxiety for myself than was necessary.

For example, there has been a focus on airport body-scanners when discussing trans travel. Currah and Mulqueen (2011) examine how the securitizing of gender through airport body-scanners has led to greater gender-based interrogation by airport security,

which has led some trans people to choose not to fly. Having read this, I experienced a great amount of stress lining up for the TSA body scanners — and assumed it would lead to content for this autoethnography. But I had no issues. This absolutely does not mean trans people never experience issues with the body scanners and as discussed above, that my whiteness was not a protective factor for me, but it does suggest there may be more to discuss about travel than these specific, securitizing machines. Although it is important to discuss the barriers we may face, we also need to discuss the highly valuable experiences and meanings we can create by travelling so as not to paint travel only as an extremely dangerous situation to be avoided. And we also need to place these barriers within the context of the everyday barriers we can experience to our transitions that can be surmounted or avoided by travelling somewhere else.

Olson and Reddy-Best (2019) found that their trans traveller participants felt more stress when not conforming to male or female gender expressions (e.g., not "passing'"), leading them to avoid certain situations. This could lead to them trying to conceal their gender identity which, although leading to uninterrupted travel experiences, caused them to experience negative internal experiences. And even if one desires to pass, it is also an issue of intersectionality. As Bettcher (2007) points out, passability can depend not just on gendered appearance, but also class, race, proximity, social interactions, and other factors. Ultimately, "the possibilities of visibility and invisibility are not always within our control, and can shift from one to the other in complicated ways" (p. 52). Lewis and Johnson (2011) provide a narrative of a trans woman who is not only worried about her own safety, but also others' discomfort. This led her to, for example, coordinate evenings out to make sure there would be private restrooms—and if not, bring a friend to make sure nobody would be

uncomfortable. I have found this situational avoidance heightened in my own experience while travelling, especially in the context of bathrooms and especially earlier in my transition. On the other hand, I have found it easier to challenge my own anxieties while travelling than at home.

Beyond passing, trans people also face challenges to travel due to the legal name and gender requirements of many flights and hotel chains. United Airlines recently became the first airline to allow gender neutral gender prefixes and the title "Mx." (Chen, 2019). They are currently working on preferred pronouns and changing some gender norms. But this is just one airline out of many companies in many travel industries, and these changes are limited to what is listed on a person's passport rather than their gender. If a person cannot change their gender marker in the place they reside, they cannot access these changes. I resonate with the barrier that these identity requirements create, as I waited until my hormones had enough effect to change my name and legal sex, and then to update my documents, preventing me from travel during this time. I also chose to travel within Canada by car for the first trip in order to avoid border control, and did not travel out of the country until I was 1.5 years on hormones and into transition.

Leisure travel can be viewed as a complex web of power relations. With this autoethnography, I aim to challenge barrier-focused trans tourism narratives that persist through dominant academic, industry, and public discourses. Hollinshead (1999) asks, "what do we repeatedly and systematically priviledge (sic) in tourism representations, and what do we... systematically deny and frustrate?" (p. 15). Considering that — from my own perception — the trans-related tourism research, travel resources, and stories that do exist focus largely on barriers, I would argue that the current metanarrative about trans travel

constructs it as a negative, perilous experience that denies how we can create meaning through travel and through the ways we navigate through those barriers.

Also, even though these barrier-based narratives exist, there have anecdotally been multiple times after sharing my research that people have told me that they did not realize there was anything different with trans travel. This creates an assumption that trans people's experience of travel is defined exclusively by the barriers that may exist, that we do not travel at all, or that we travel solely for the same reasons and experiences as cis travellers would. This regulates our experiences by the "preformulated limits which institutional truths, collective power-knowledge, and assumed communal rights quietly and cumulatively impose" (Hollinshead, 1999, p. 12). Instead of internalizing these narratives, we need to critically examine the current ones, and create more nuanced and diverse narratives that present a range of experiences.

Hollinshead is primarily speaking about the way tourism creates "self-deceptive regimes-of-truth" of the "host populations" by tourists and the tourism industry, leading to universalizing gazes with which they are regarded (p. 16). I would argue that these regimes-of-truth also affect travellers who are placed outside of the dominant tourism discourse. The universalized gaze does not necessarily encompass trans travellers, making it difficult for us to construct meanings that fall into typical tourism narratives. As such, my research aims to analyze the meanings I have constructed from my own travels through photography to unravel the universalized deficit-based discourse of travel and to focus instead on what has been meaningful for me with regards to transition.

I will use Hollingshead's Foucault-inspired notion of the tourist's gaze as a primary theory through which to construct my research. Hollinshead (1999) states that Foucault

saw the power of a "found gaze" to be the social cohesiveness behind the gazer, the "unspoken warfare which is waged silently and secretly through the language and the actions of that body's everyday routine and seemingly unspectacular enactments" (Hollinshead, 1999, p. 13). How trans and non-binary travellers are regarded by people in places we travel, including both hosts and other travellers, can impact our travels in both major and minor ways. Our perceptions of the gaze upon us may impact where we choose to travel and how we navigate the places we do travel. This also ties back into our relationships with passing. I aim to understand how truth statements about travel can be "transmitted under surveillance," leading to a "form of panopticism" that "becomes internalized and self-regulating via the sensation… which always lie in the target of the operating gaze" (Hollinshead, 1999, p. 14). As trans travellers, we carefully choose where we travel. We limit where we travel, and how we do so. We internalize the experiences of other trans people and assume ours will be the same. Hollinshead states that under these "conditions of unfreedom, the society of the institution/discipline/agency/culture becomes carceral," (1999, p. 13), contributing to barriers to trans peoples' safe and meaningful travel. The barriers to travelling by plane, the potential discrimination and anti-LGBT legislation, the lack of familiarity with the place, and more all contribute to creating a system that ultimately restricts most trans people to a strict set of places and ways we can travel.

My own research will utilize the tourist's gaze described by Hollinshead by using photography in my autoethnography to examine how I negotiated my own surveillance to find meaning in my travels. I have also used travel as a way to escape the surveillance and the gazes I feel at home. The use of photography is further discussed in my Methods

section.

I will consider experience and storying as social constructions and active processes, rather than empirical fact. Scott (1991) states “it is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience” (p. 779). They describe how “making visible the experience of a different group exposes the existence of repressive mechanisms, but not their inner workings or logics” (p. 779). To dissect the inner workings, we need to understand the historical processes and discourses that have led the person to construct their experience in the ways they have. Rather than just collecting experience, it is vital to explain it, as that is how critique can be produced. To study experience, we need to focus “on processes of identity production, insisting on the discursive nature of ‘experience’ and on the politics of its construction” (p. 797). That is, we should not just reproduce and transmit knowledge, but analyze the production of that knowledge itself. This self-reflective analysis will be woven into my autoethnography and placed into context with dominant discourses of travel and trans identities where they exist.

Methods

Methodology

This thesis consists of a visual autoethnography written on my travel experiences as a trans woman and photographer. The writing and photographs focus on various trips taken since coming out as trans, and my negotiations with this new identity and my existing identity as a photographer. Visual autoethnography allowed me to interrogate the processes of surveillance and self-surveillance, and how they influenced the meanings created through travel and travel-related photography.

Scarles (2010) describes visual autoethnography as a method that fuses visual elicitation and autoethnographic encounter, serving as "an opportunity for accessing and mobilising deeper, nuanced insights into the embodied performances, practices and processes of the tourist experience" (p. 909). Although he discusses visual autoethnography in terms of participant-based research, I suggest this also holds for autoethnographies written by researchers themselves. Scott (1991) states that "knowledge is gained through vision," making the visible privileged and writing "put at its service" (p. 775). Much of the discussion in the autoethnography is on how I perceive surveillance as a trans woman, but I also question it as I'm never certain that I actually am being surveilled by anyone but myself. While the images seem to juxtapose the panoptic mood I describe in writing because of the absence of human subjects, it also reveals the general anxiety of drawing any attention as a trans woman; in notable contrast to the photography I did before transitioning, which was almost entirely of human subjects. I chose to use autoethnography as a method because it "acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and

the researcher's influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don't exist" (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 274).

Jones et al. (as cited in Sparkes, 2020) define four characteristics of autoethnography: “purposefully commenting on/critiquing of culture practices; making contributions to existing research; embracing vulnerability with a purpose; and creating a reciprocal relationship with audiences in order to compel a response” (p. 290). My autoethnography comments on the culture of travel within my own context as a trans woman which comes with its own social constructions around a perceived trans culture, as discussed in the literature review. I aim to contribute to and diverge from existing research on travel as a transitional experience, and also on trans-specific travel that is often barrier-based. Writing about, or even discussing, my transition inherently requires a degree of vulnerability because of the constant re-evaluating of the self that I went through, as is discussed in the autoethnography. And to create a reciprocal relationship with the (likely primarily not trans) audience, I aim to challenge notions that trans people’s experiences of travel are either entirely barrier-based, or that they are otherwise the same as cis travel. I also look to challenge dominant metanarratives of trans experience that rely on an essentialised trans identity, which readers may unintentionally hold. Jones et al. (as cited in Sparkes, 2020) also consider the difference between autobiography and autoethnography to largely rely on whether the author reflects on the experience and writes intentionally to “show how the experience works to diminish, silence, or deny certain people and stories” (p. 291). To do so, I write in what Chang (2008) calls an analytical-interpretive style, using experience as a “springboard” (p. 146) to connect to a broader societal context ; this is in line with the previous discussion as per Scott (1991), connecting experience to the historical processes

and discourses that led to its construction. This allows me to examine how I socially constructed various aspects of trans identity, especially in relation to travel, and how travel then impacted those constructions. To create more engaging writing to form that reciprocal relationship with the audience, I braid in (Sparkes, 2020) more descriptive evocative autoethnography.

The photographs also function as a form of evocative ethnography through visuals. I then discuss the photographic process in a written analytic deconstructive part of the autoethnography on editing the photos after the trip. For this visual autoethnography, I employ techniques from visual narrative inquiry. Bach's (2007) chapter on visual narrative inquiry begins with the question, "what use is research without image and story?" (p. 2). This question broadly outlines my reason for choosing to write my autoethnography in the style of visual narrative inquiry. Visual narrative inquiry is described by Bach as "an intentional, reflective, active human process in which researchers and participants explore and make meaning of experience both visually and narratively" (p. 3). This fits the purpose of my research for finding meaning in trans travel experiences. Similar to feminist post-structuralist engagements with experience (see Scott 1991), Bach describes experiences as being "shaped by the social, cultural, and institutional narratives in which individuals are embedded," which influences how individuals tell stories through the photographs they take (p. 3). Photographs are specifically of interest to me because they can have an "'everyday ordinariness' to showing how [photographers] are composing their storied lives and stories of those lives" (p. 4). Photographs are also particularly useful in travel-related research because they can give greater access and opportunities for knowledge creation, and can allow us as researchers to convey our findings in ways that text alone cannot (Rakić

& Chambers, 2012). Further, as discussed in my literature review, "much of tourism is about images" (Rakić & Chambers, 2012, p. 4).

Data Generation and Analysis

Much of the data used for this autoethnography comes from my personal memory. Chang (2008) outlines some issues with memory recall, such as how memories can “trigger extreme emotions: aversion with an unpleasant experience and glorification of a pleasant one” (p. 72). I planned the experiences I wanted to write about by creating what Chang calls an autobiographical timeline, plotting trips I took as “border-crossing experiences” (p. 73), then selecting experiences from memory of those trips that corresponded to the themes of surveillance, passing, travel as transition, and finding meaning through those. To help recall these memories, I referenced photographs, a journal, and my calendar. Most data was self-reflective rather than self-observational (Chang, 2008), resulting from “introspection, self-analysis, and self-evaluation” (p. 95), as I was not travelling for the purpose of writing an autoethnography. I also did not want to focus too much on this writing while travelling as that may have led to experiences designed to convey some specific point.

Ellis et al. (2011) state that the personal experience discussed in an autoethnography is often compared and contrasted with existing research, with other members of a group that would have similar experiences, or by "examining relevant cultural artifacts" (p. 276). My autoethnography is placed within my own understanding of trans representations in pop culture. I do not explicitly place my experiences into conversation with existing literature, as I did not (at first) travel with the intention of writing an autoethnography, nor was I familiar with the existing literature when I set out. But the autoethnography has been

written and edited reflexively as I developed an understanding of the literature in tandem with writing the Literature Review section, and should be read with that in mind to understand how my experiences fit into theoretical contexts.

Quality

Personal narratives are often the most controversial forms of autoethnography, especially when no traditional analyses using scholarly literature are provided (Ellis et al., 2011). My autoethnography is accompanied by a more traditional analysis as part of the literature review, appearing before the autoethnography rather than after in order to frame the story. The autoethnography itself should allow readers to provide validation by "comparing their lives to [mine], by thinking about how our lives are similar and different and the reasons why" (p. 283).

My autoethnography may resonate with some trans people that do not feel fully encompassed by purely barrier-based writing on travel. I hope that some trans people reading it can understand that travelling can not only be meaningful in spite of these barriers, but can be extremely desirable as a way to accelerate processes associated with transition. At the same time, this autoethnography should not speak for all trans experiences of travel, so my analyses are grounded in a "reflexive self-awareness" (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, p. 182) to interrogate my own standpoint.

Markula and Silk (2011) state that post-structuralist research needs to contribute substantively to the understanding of social life and "to advancing academic knowledge" (p. 221). This autoethnography adds to the existing LGBT travel literature by discussing less researched trans-specific travel, and travel literature in general by further discussing travel

as transition. I also hope to add to literature on surveillance as it relates to trans people, particularly regarding self-surveillance and surveillance in the context of passing.

And finally, I would hope that any readers that are not trans or academics in these fields would find it interesting to learn about how trans travel experiences do not stop at the TSA security scanner. Sparkes (2020) describes good autoethnography as presenting personal stories to "express a tale of two selves,… a believable journey from who the author was to who they are now, and how a life course can be reimagined or transformed by the experiences they have encountered along the way" (p. 297). My autoethnography is structured chronologically in order to demonstrate this. Post-structuralist research also provides "not only a sense of lived experience, but a cultural, social, individual, and communal sense of the 'real'" (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 222). I hope that my writing resonates with any reader who has travelled and found themselves to have changed when they came home, who have felt a difference from when they first left to when their plane landed back home, or they drove back into town.

Ethical and Political Issues

Political issues are intertwined with ethical issues: for example, my research requires a particular level of economic, nationality, and race-based privilege simply by virtue of having the resources and freedom to choose to travel. I do touch on some barriers, and I focus on surveillance and the anxieties that come with it, which could make trans people reading this hyperaware of potential dangers as such writing made me. I also do not experience some of the common barriers that others have written about, such as the airport security scanners. This could be used both to perpetuate a belief that trans people who do

experience barriers are over exaggerating their experiences, which is also not my intent. Ultimately, and as discussed before, this means my autoethnography should not be read as a universalizing experience of the way trans people travel. Instead, it provides just one counter-narrative to the barrier-based writing that often dominates discussions of us.

Autoethnography raises issues when interpersonal ties are mentioned, which will come up as I almost always travel with my wife Elaine—making no mention of her would be an inaccurate representation of my experiences. Elaine is part of this autoethnography through her name and likeness, and being part of the stories I share. As she is not the subject of the research, I did not go through ethics for her to be included. But I did gain full informed consent through a signed consent letter after she read the final version. Tolich (2010) also outlines ten foundational ethical guidelines for autoethnography. I checked in with Elaine at various stages, having her read various drafts as "process consent… checking at each stage to make sure participants still want to be part of the project" (p. 1607). She also signed an informed consent letter, attached in Appendix B.

I continue to have issues with how this autoethnography will out me as trans to anyone who searches my name on the internet and the many immediate stereotypes that come with this. Tolich's (2010) seventh guideline states that one should "treat any autoethnography as an inked tattoo by anticipating the author's future vulnerability" (p. 1608). But on the other side of outing, my autoethnography is specifically about how "trans" is not some overriding identity that subsumes all other aspects of one's life. I believe that this autoethnography could instead work against some stereotypes that I may otherwise be subjected to, whether I chose to out myself or not.

Blee and Currier (2011) identify issues with research on representation, as research

may jeopardize certain movements if it shows them in a negative light (p. 409). A common theme in my autoethnography is the Pride festival, with Vancouver Pride serving as a climax of sorts. I critique the queer capitalism on display, but my focus is on the structures, discourses, and systems that exist to construct us in specific ways.

In Transit

1. Preparations

Figure 2 - Suburban Sunset, Edmonton, July 30, 2018

It's Monday evening at my parent's suburban Edmonton townhome. The golden hour sun melts over row after row of identical houses. I'm staying here for the night to save 20 minutes on tomorrow's seven-hour drive to Revelstoke.

I double-check my bags and run through tomorrow's process for the $(n+1)^{th}$ time: wake up at 05:00; shower; get dressed; put the bags in the trunk; grab a McDonald's breakfast; take a bad selfie hiding behind the steering wheel; drive out to Banff to meet Elaine[2]; avoid stopping at all costs.

Elaine and I planned this road trip for close to half a year. She was already in Banff for work, so I was driving the 400 kilometres from Edmonton alone. Then we'd drive to Vancouver Island and back, hitting up Vancouver Pride along the way.

This wouldn't have been an issue if my last year wasn't spent hiding in our apartment.

Before we depart, let me explain where my mind was at.

Ten months ago, I committed to confronting the long dark shadow over my otherwise normal life. The shadow that made me hit a wall whenever things were looking up, no matter how much I tried to hide it. Hide from it. It drove my depression, killed my motivation, and cast a general anxiety over everything I did.

I committed to transitioning from male to female, medically and socially.

Society finally seemed to have gained a surface-level acceptance of trans people. The open malice and ridicule that came with any mention of a sex change just a few years earlier had simmered down.

But changing gender is still not easy. Societal progress isn't linear. The last ten months had been a lot less 'valid, rainbow, community' and a lot more 'terrified, hiding in apartment, alone.'

What made it bearable was Elaine. We started dating in high school ten years ago, and had been married for four. Our best memories were of travel: our first trip in the safe hyperreal America of Disneyland; our month-long inexperienced stumble through Europe; our two-month journey through geographic China; and most recently, two weeks in Tokyo. As typical millennials and first-generation Canadians, we both considered being a

[2] Real name and likeness used with permission. Please see the Ethics section for more information.

"traveller" as one of our primary identities, placing it at the top of both our Instagram profiles.

But "traveller" didn't mix well with "terrified, hiding in apartment, alone."

Tomorrow was the start of the end of this anxiety-ridden phase of my transition and life. I needed to get out of it. I was starting grad school in two months, and although I was nowhere near as far transitioned as I thought I'd be, this was going to be my first time meeting people who didn't know me as [redacted].

I wanted to transition since before I found out it was possible, sometime in my teens in the early 2000s. I have fuzzy memories of hearing vague whispers about an aunt's shemale ex-husband, scrolling through obscure webpages on transsexuality stuck in Web 1.0, and seeing an ancient cable TV documentary on trans kids. Finally in the late 2000s, a more relatable depiction hit mainstream TV on *Ugly Betty*[3]. It took another ten years for me to make the final decision in the summer of 2017 while listening to *Flower Boy*[4]. Three months later and about a year sooner than expected — thanks to informed consent — I was on hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

When I got on HRT, I expected to be fully transitioned in about six months or so. But eight months in, I didn't know what I looked like, gender or otherwise. My sex was now legally female, my name was now legally Abbie, and I knew I was a trans woman. But when I looked in the mirror, I neither passed nor looked like I was trying and failing to pass. Friends and family were asking questions like, "when are you going to transition?" I was also taking high-level gender studies courses that theorized "trans" in ways far beyond the Reddit[5] process I knew: get on hormones, laser off facial hair, get surgery if you want, alleviate your dysphoria as best as you can, and then go on with your life. Instead, the readings and courses theorized trans as a broader, socially constructed phenomenon, which I didn't fully understand yet and seemed at odds with the very physical process I was going through. The readings rarely touched on dysphoria, as even one of the few that did noted

---

[3] *Ugly Betty* (Horta, 2006) featured a main character, Alexis Meade, who had her own story arcs and motivations beyond being a trans woman. She was also played by a cis woman, rather than a cis man, as was common in the past.

[4] *Flower Boy* is an album by hip-hop artist Tyler the Creator (2017) with coming out as a major theme.

[5] Largely on the /r/asktransgender subreddit (asktransgender, n.d.)

about the field in general: “trans and most feminist scholarship rarely engages with the details of the biological body.”[6]

I understood that trans women could look like whatever we wanted to because (and if you’re an ally, feel free to repeat it out loud): “Trans Women Are Women!” But that chant means a lot less in the real world where looking like you’re in the wrong place can get you in real trouble[7]. And the same corners of the internet chanting “Trans Women Are Women!” were filled with posts about the extreme levels of violence trans people face just for being trans. What I didn’t realize was that this violence mainly impacts trans people of colour, living in poverty, engaging in sex work, living with disabilities, or who are part of other marginalized communities. So I stayed safely socially isolated inside where I didn’t have to worry about how I looked.

Edmonton wasn’t the worst place to be visibly trans, but it wasn’t even close to the best. Even when I was a man, being harassed and threatened wasn’t uncommon. I’d had knives pulled on me for no reason and random people screaming in my face. I didn’t want to find out how those situations would have changed if I looked in in any way queer.

I also didn’t want to run into someone I knew from before transition. Imagine running into someone you hadn’t seen since they were calling other kids faggot in high school. Now imagine meeting them while wearing makeup for the first time as a 26-year-old. I get that some of us are secure enough to deal with this, but in case you haven’t noticed, I was absolutely not.

Compound that with the stares. I stayed indoors as much as possible, but I still had to walk 20 minutes to school a few days each week for class and work. I still had to go grocery shopping. But for the last ten months, I felt like there were more and more people staring at me.

Were they really? Was the guy with the leafblower going to stop anyways? Did that other person only look up when I looked at them? Why did that person double-take in the cereal aisle? Why was that guy smiling at me?

Was it all in my head?

---

[6] (Lane, 2009, p. 136)
[7] See for example Namaste (1996) on “Genderbashing”

I needed to get away from here. Away from these people. Away from Edmonton.

I searched online for info on how to travel as a trans person, but most of the results on LGBT travel revolved around gay hookups. Not what I was looking for. A few dozen noted that the American body scanners could be a concern. If we drove, we could avoid those.

We decided on a road trip. Back to Vancouver.

I searched some more: trans travel Vancouver; trans travel BC; trans acceptance BC; trans road trip safety. Google dumped out shitty search-optimized results on the best gay clubs, the top gay tour companies, and the most unaffordable gay-friendly hotels.

I had better luck asking trans people directly on Reddit. The answer was always, “It’s good, but watch out for…”

With these thoughts running through my mind, I fell into a restless sleep, dreaming uncomfortably of the next two weeks of people, driving, and the hidden dangers that lurked behind every door.

2. En Route

Figure 3 - On the road between Edmonton and Vancouver, August 1, 2018.

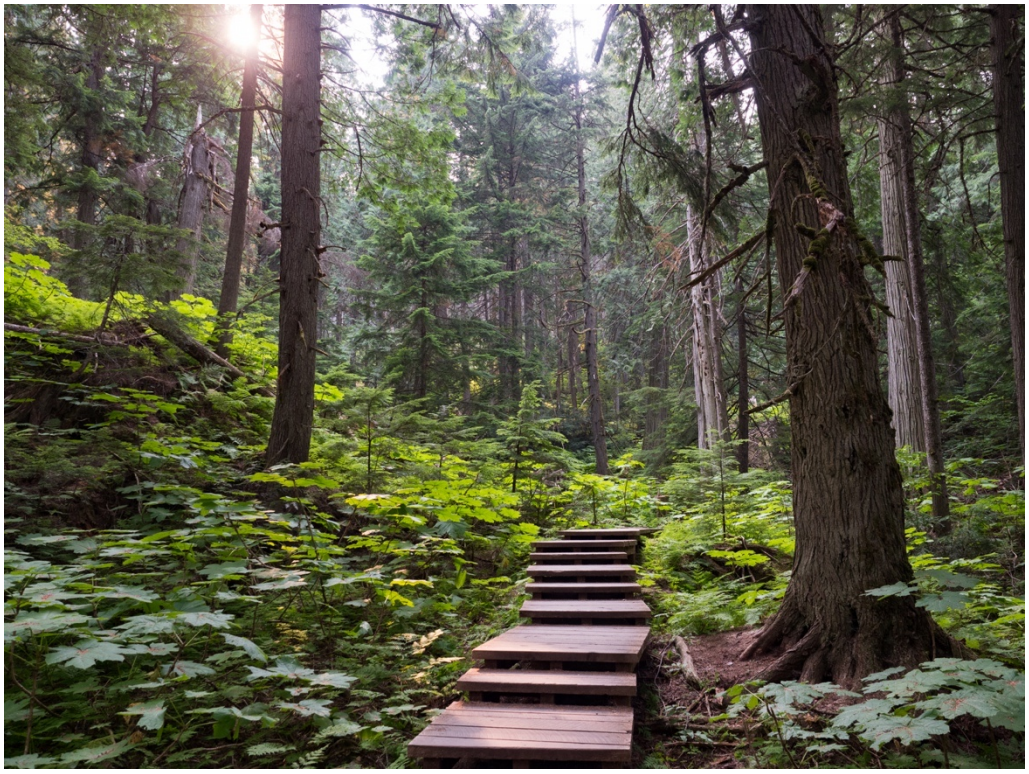

Figure 4 - Giant Cedars Boardwalk Trail, July 31, 2018.

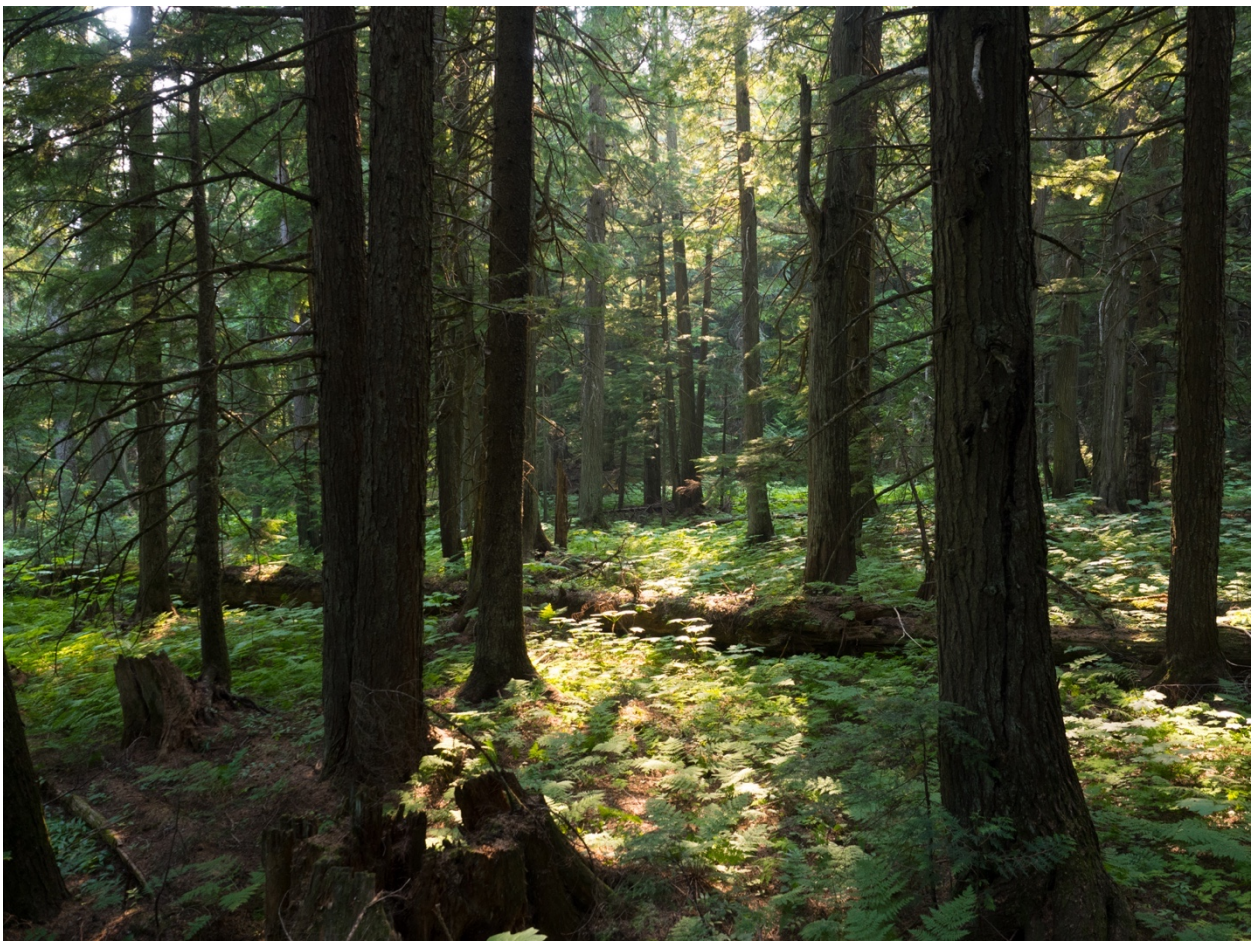

Figure 5 - Hemlock Grove Boardwalk, July 31, 2018.

Figure 7 - Elaine looking up into the giant cedars, July 31, 2018.

Figure 6 - Smoke from a fire burning just outside Revelstoke, July 31, 2018.

The next few weeks are a blur of endless roads through the BC interior, winding through spectacular nature, forest fire smoke, and small towns that always seem to have a Starbucks.

We stop many times, as you do on a road trip. We have to whenever my migraine auras start.

They always follow the same pattern. Visual fuzz creeps across my field of view. Parts of my vision disappear completely — they're not dark, just gone. A tingling feeling spreads from my face down into my arms. Sometimes I start slurring. Not ideal in general, dangerous while driving. Ibuprofen and blue Gatorade help the symptoms, but the key to preventing them is to drink lots of water.

The auras disappeared sometime after I turned 16, but returned when I started Spironolactone. Spironolactone, or spiro, is a testosterone blocker commonly used by trans women. It's also a potassium-sparing, diuretic, blood pressure drug. It makes your body need more salt, more water, and more trips to the bathroom. Something I was trying to avoid.

I found that Starbucks consistently had gender neutral bathrooms, and their corporate policy trended towards LGBT-inclusivity so if there were issues I might get a gift card out of it. By all means, support local coffeeshops! The coffee is almost always better, especially on the West Coast, and they can all use more business to stave off the all-consuming multinational mega-chains. But for finding gender neutral bathrooms in rural BC, Starbucks was a consistently reliable source and a necessary evil.

There are many things I wasn't prepared for when transitioning, but the bathroom situation may be the one thing I was overprepared for. When I started my transition, I received basically a welcome package from my gender therapist. Along with various pamphlets and legal forms, I got an official-looking card that proclaimed: "This individual is going through a transformation from being a (male to female) under psychiatric/medical supervision… Please extend this individual all the courtesies that you would extend to any other female." I tucked it into the back of my wallet, mortified that I would ever have to use it (I didn't).

Also right around when I started transitioning in 2016, a culture war started brewing in the US, debate quickly spreading online.[8] Four years later, the debate still hasn't ceased even in Canada.[9]

We're stopped beside a major highway, over an hour away from the next town. The rest stop bathroom is bustling, a steady stream of people going in and out. I take a breath in the car, steadying myself, and try to stop every minute detail about the bathroom debates from going through my mind. I look in the mirror and try to determine which side I should go into if there's no neutral stall: my ID is already marked F, but I'm still early in transition. Do I look more male or female today? Which side has a greater risk of conflict if I don't look like I fit in? What if I do still use the male bathroom but then have to show my ID with the F?

I try to block off my thoughts and start walking towards the rest stop. A strange calm sets in as I pass the enormous crowd of people — seriously, is everyone in BC coming by here today? Maybe some feigned confidence will help. It's my right to go to the bathroom! It's not a big deal! I'm just going in and out! It doesn't help.

After what seems like an hour, I open the door to the rest stop. The paths divert between Male and Female, but right there in the middle is a gender-neutral restroom. But it's also the only accessible restroom. Now the second dilemma starts: am I outing myself by using the gender-neutral bathroom instead of the ones everyone else is? Will someone get mad that I'm taking up space in the accessible bathroom? What if someone immediately needs the accessible bathroom while I'm only in it because I'm too scared to use the other ones?

Two large crowds of parents storm out from each gendered side and past the gender-neutral door, pushing past me with screaming children in tow. Kids are volatile enough, let alone their parents. I don't want to risk dealing with angry parents. I go for the gender-neutral option, slipping into the door as discretely as possible and trying to get back out as fast as possible.

I try to slip out again, but some kid is waiting for his parents in front of the stall thinking it's unoccupied. I accidentally hit him with the door on opening it. Shit. I mumble an

---

[8] See for example this explainer from Vox.com by Lopez (Lopez, 2017).
[9] Debate over support of a "bathroom bill" came up in the 2020 Canadian Conservative Party leadership race (Harris, 2020).

apology and speed-walk back to the car. When I make it back, I take a breath of relief and a long drink of water. Crisis averted. On to the next one.

On that same day, we stop at the Giant Cedars Boardwalk near Revelstoke. Standing among centuries-old trees, inhaling the fresh aroma of moss, cedar, and wood, and hearing nothing but birds, wind, and rustling leaves, I feel comfortable and at peace. No risk of angry parents, no risk of kids loudly asking why I'm here. The trees don't care. Even the few people who walk by don't care — they're enjoying it here, too, and we share friendly smiles and hellos. The only danger here is bears and cougars, but apex predators don't care what gender their dinner is. I don't have to worry about passing here.

3. Night Market

Figure 8 - A plane flies over the Richmond Night Market, Vancouver, August 4, 2018.

Figure 9 - New construction around the night market, August 4, 2018.

Figure 10 - The sun sets over the massive crowd at the night market, August 4, 2018.

The Saturday evening sun casts orange-yellow shadows over the Richmond Night Market as it sets behind the surrounding condo construction. White signs light up gold from the waning light as LEDs blink on around us, tinting the hissing pork bun steam shades of pink and green.

Tonight is our second last night in Vancouver. The night before Pride.

The Richmond Night Market runs every night on weekends and brings in a massive crowd. A long line was already snaking around the massive parking lot by the time I arrived. I generally avoid anything with lines but avoiding this one would mean another six years of hearing about how much I missed out. So I slowly trudged along with the line through the hot, paved desert.

When I finally get inside, I'm greeted by an endless sea of vendors hawking food, phone accessories, and more food. Dozens of stalls of delicious food send their aromas out into the night air, combining and then descending in the humidity to overwhelm anyone who happens to walk by. The most battered and fried East Asian cuisines come together in one large square on a parking lot in Metro Vancouver. I'm reminded of all the foods I'd had in Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, Japan, and closer to home.

The endless crowd also reminds me of Asia. I had manoeuvred sidewalks during Hong Kong rush hours and navigated the famous Shibuya crossing at all times of the day. As Elaine's uncle described Hong Kong to us when we arrived, it was a "people mountain, people sea." But there people actually moved, going from one place to another as fast as possible. Here they stood in line.

My eyes dart around the sea of people, looking for the usual watchers. But there's a certain anonymity in big crowds that I always loved in bigger cities. Busy places like this are filled with so many people that nobody is able to focus on me long enough to pay attention. Nobody's eyes linger longer than a moment. There's no time for them to make some sort of snap judgement that could lead to some malicious action.

After an hour of wandering and eating the Night Market, I feel the dreaded consequences of trying to stay hydrated. I'm disappointed but not surprised that there's only one set of bathrooms. Unlike almost everywhere else we've been in Vancouver, the Night Market doesn't have a non-gendered option. And these lines imitate the length of the entrance lines, before continuing up some stairs that put the next five or so people to get in

on a viewing platform for the hundred or so still waiting. They would provide ample opportunity for those in front and behind to judge whether I am indeed in the correct line.

Stressed out just thinking about standing in it, I decide to wait until we get home. I don't even wait in line with Elaine in case anyone thinks I would dare to go in, instead hovering beside the roasted corn-on-the-cob stand. Situation avoided.

The rest of the night passes by quickly. I avoid drinking any more water, which makes me wary of trying any more, usually salty, food. Maybe I'm risking long-term kidney damage, but at least I don't have to risk the unknown lying in wait in the bathroom lineup.

4. Pride

Figure 11 - Sunset Beach, Vancouver, August 5, 2018.

The atmosphere burns a deep red as the sun dips behind the mountains, turning them into one jagged blue-grey silhouette. Distant lights twinkle from massive cargo ships drifting lazily on the edge of the horizon. Red light shoots across the sky one last time and is reflected by the lazy evening ocean hitting the smooth rocks that make up Sunset Beach. The sounds of birds, sea, and far-off beach-partiers mix with city noise into one comfortable rhythm. The Sunday-evening air smells of salt-water, whatever noxious fumes seep out from under the rocks, and a hint of distant forest fire smoke. One of the many large barnacled rocks is our rough, grimy seat for the evening.

It's the first time in three days that Elaine and I aren't talking non-stop. We savour the last few moments of Pride in silence, and with that our last few moments in Vancouver. The last few moments of feeling normal for the first time in months.

It's a temporary normal, but at least it's *a* normal.

I think back to our first time in Vancouver six years ago when our trip unintentionally coincided with Pride. That Pride festival was our first venture into anything LGBT: although we'd maybe admit to being bi in some way if pressed, we were ostensibly a straight couple. It didn't really matter to anyone except us where we fell on the Kinsey scale. Back then I thought I could manage my gender dysphoria by building an impenetrable wall between myself and the rest of the world. It was an entirely internal conflict, raged between whatever factors were causing it and the myriad of reasons I didn't want to deal with it. But even back then I was excited to see Jenna Talackova lead the parade as Grand Marshall — not that I care about Miss Universe, but she was at least a remotely positive trans representation for once.

Six years later, we were here, queer, and getting used to it.

Or trying to, anyways.

I woke up earlier that same morning with my first hangover in years.

The one beer I drank after coming home from the Night Market had not mixed well with walking around Vancouver in the hot sun all day, not drinking enough water, and the effects of spiro. Getting out of bed and on the bus in time for the parade was impossible.

We spent months getting excited for this. I drove 1200km for over two days straight to get here.

One average beer ruined those plans.

…

I think about the parade while lying down and rehydrating. Am I really interested in watching the usual long procession of brands and politicians? Will I really care which ones had the business savvy to advertise to a rapidly growing LGBT target market? Do I really believe I can vote with my dollar?

The parades were fine when I wasn't out. Despite the often-meaningless display of rainbow capitalism, seeing the number of brands grow was at least some indicator of where we were as a society.

But right now I still needed to get to the festival grounds. I wanted the Pride atmosphere. The feeling of safety in numbers. The sense of community, even though I didn't know anyone. The flags and rainbows. The local vendors. The free samples.

The whole reason I planned this stop in Vancouver for Pride 2018 was to safely — for lack of a better word — *present* as a woman. That's what some trans people call changing your outward appearance to match your internal identity. I'm here to get away from the type of recent ally who only six year ago would tell me about that time they spotted a tranny in their own travels.

We finally make it to Pride, but we don't stay long. We briefly check out the stalls, buy local hats and necklaces, try the newest flavour of Sprite, and eat some food truck pizzas. As fast as it all goes by, it's still our first time just walking around being the queer couple we are and feeling not only comfortable with it, but safe.

We're surrounded by people who seem much queerer than us. This is Vancouver after all. It's the first time I feel truly comfortable being in a public place in months. I let myself venture out of my comfort zone presentation-wise. I had realized that the comfort zone wasn't nearly as comfortable as it looked. But now that I was out of it, I didn't know where to go.

I stepped out of the comfort zone into ambiguity.

Looking back, I cringe at my — and I hate this word — *gender presentation*.

I painted my nails trans flag pink and blue, the blue clashing with my skin.

Now I never paint them, but if I did, I'd make sure the colours match warm undertones.

I used full coverage foundation that dried up in the sun and turned to powder.

Now I use a light CC cream that doesn't cake horribly after 20 minutes.

I did eye makeup that was too much to be normal but too little to be drag.

Now I don't use eye shadow at all because of the way it makes my eyes hooded and dark.

I wore a long skirt that looked like a pillowcase.

Now I rarely wear skirts, and donated that potato sack long ago.

In *Ugly Betty*, the trans woman character experiences temporary amnesia causing her to forget how to act like a woman[10]. It's very of its time, when snark was a thing. It's now infinitely problematizable. Yet it's also highly relatable as someone who's transitioned and has been fighting to shed 25 years of male socialization. Another character tries to help her and provides seven words of wisdom that I wish I'd remembered the morning before venturing out to Vancouver Pride: "You're a tranny, not a drag queen."

I was trying to go as far down the gender spectrum as I could. I didn't have enough experience to do it in a way that felt more comfortable than costume. But even though I now cringe at photos of myself from Vancouver, it was necessary. My presentation didn't fit me, but it was a move away from trying to not have any gender presentation at all.

Most women figure this out when they're in their teens and society expects them to be cringey — back in my day that would've meant emo bangs, black eye shadow, and Myspace-angle selfies. Maybe society largely deems those things cringey because they are done by teenage girls and not teenage boys. But unless we transition extremely early, trans people have to figure these things out later in life, when we're supposed to have shit figured out. We experience a second puberty, not only hormonally, but with all the other avenues for awkwardness and cringeyness that come with it.

I didn't go full emo in 2017, but I felt comfortable exploring my *presentation* — ok, stop. Here's why I'm uncomfortable with that term. When cis people "present" their gender, we just call it wearing clothes, or doing makeup, or cultivating an aesthetic, or finding a sense of style — even if it's a cringe-worthy sense of style. When we talk about a trans person's

---

[10] (Kucserka et al., 2007)

fashion, aesthetic, or look, we call it their gender presentation. It makes something earnest sound more like an affectation or even an achievement just because a trans person is doing it. Like we're trying to make a political statement, or having a go at playing dress up, or putting on a performance for the cis judges, hoping they'll score our passability with straight 10/10s!

But like I said, I'm a tranny, not a drag queen. I was just trying to figure out what worked for me.

This first attempt wasn't working for me. Despite being at Pride, I can feel the stares coming back. Is it just my own insecurity? Or is that person really looking at me, confused? Where are all the other trans people? Do they all just pass better than I do, and I can't even tell? Is this all in my head?

I need to get out and away from the crowd, so we leave for Yaletown to get tacos. But the farther we get from Pride, the more uneasy I feel. Is that person looking at me? What's with that guy's smirk? Why am I wearing this shitty skirt that I don't even like? Was this new hat a mistake? Are we drawing attention?

I keep my small Fujifilm X100 camera in a tote bag. I brought it because it's small and doesn't usually draw too much attention. Even so, it's stayed in its bag for most of the day. I'm already worried about looking weird. Add a camera to that and "man-in-a-dress" combines with "man-with-a-camera" to become a dangerous vector for chaos. I'm neither of those things, but I don't want to invite that extra drama into my life.

I don't take any photos. The camera stays safely tucked away, neither seeing nor being seen. Some odd looks, but nothing happens. We sit down at the taco place and the server greets us like usual. Maybe it is all in my head. The more nothing happens, the less anxious I feel. The worry starts to disappear.

After eating, we make our way back to the beach to find the Pride festival over. Workers clean up the barricades, trash, and porta-potties. The remaining festivalgoers have long wandered off to party at clubs, or gathered in small groups closer to the shore.

With nobody around, I finally take out my camera and take a few dozen photos of the sun setting behind the mountains. The ocean reflects the beautiful deep red light shooting across the atmosphere, contrasted by blue-grey mountain silhouettes. I can finally take a

moment here to take my time, breathe, and frame each photograph.

The sun finally disappears below the horizon. Neither of us wants to leave. Neither of us wants to go back to where we started. But we know we have to, at least until we can finally leave for good.

The waves get stronger as the tide rises. A breeze starts up and the air gets colder fast. We scramble off the rocks and back to safety, avoiding a couple loud groups.

We walk across the beach and across the park, quiet, ok with the world around us, for now.

5. Edits

Figure 12 – Fire burns above Horseshoe Bay Ferry Terminal, August 9, 2018.

Figure 13 - On the smoky road home, Somewhere in BC, August 10, 2018.

Figure 14 - The remnants of a forest fire from years ago, Near Nordegg, AB, August 11, 2018.

We stop in Vancouver again on our way back from Victoria and Nanaimo. The original plan was to head through the Okanagan, but the forest fires are spreading fast. We witnessed one just north of Vancouver from our ferry, just above the terminal. The smell of smoke grows every day.

Since we're heading back a few days early, we spend the saved money on a nicer chain hotel in central Vancouver instead of the cheaper, suburban, and somehow even less ethical Airbnbs we had mostly stayed at so far. The hotel is right on Davies Street, possibly the gayest place in Canada — at least historically. An array of rainbow flags welcomes us in.

The front desk staff looks up and smiles.

"Come over here, sir! I'll check you right in, sir. Thank you, sir. Please sign here, sir."

I normally don't care about these benign misgenderings. I doubt it was intentional, and I'm 90% sure I'm not passing as a woman anyways, so it's actually useful to have that 10% of doubt confirmed. Sir and ma'am seem antiquated anyways, a weird formality leftover from the 50s.

But this was the first overt "sir" this whole trip, right when the trip was almost over. And this hotel is flying the rainbow flag on Davies a week after Pride. Don't they know better? I'd be surprised if this chain *isn't* paying thousands for a diversity consultant. What if I'm the kind of angry transsexual that would make a big deal out of this, recording the argument with my phone and posting it online?

Luckily for all of us, I wasn't.

Instead I laugh to myself. At least now I know the hormones have more work left to do. But it does make me think back on the rest of the trip. Did I look out of place everywhere I went before this, too? That night, it takes me a while to feel ready to leave the safety of the hotel room.

The memories of the rest of the drive home from Vancouver are cloudy. Smoke engulfs the car as orange light flickers on the edge of mountain silhouettes. While passing the mountains of Glacier National Park, barely visible, I make a mental note to order N95 masks when we were back home.

A few weeks after we get home, I open Adobe Lightroom to edit the 2700 photos from the trip. In those few weeks since our return, I had already grown into someone different from the person who took those photos. I wasn't the person I was, again, and not for the last time. It was hard to try to look through the eyes of my past.

It doesn't help that most of the photos are uninteresting, average tourist shots. This might be acceptable for most travellers, but for me it was a deep disappointment.

Before I was a "trans woman," I was a "photographer." I needed to be ok with the baggage that comes with being a trans woman, because I didn't really choose to be one. It was frustrating, however, to have my identity as a photographer be not only subsumed but unravelled by this new identity.

Being a photographer comes with its own unique baggage and annoyances, but it's a choice. I cultivated my community of friends, my online identity, my local engagement, and even a few jobs around that identity. But I could always stow the camera in a tote bag if I didn't want to deal with people wondering what I was doing.

Being a trans woman is different. I wasn't choosing to be one, at least not a *trans* woman. Trans was just the label that came with transitioning, one loaded with dozens of stereotypes, none of them having even the blunted edge of positivity. Transitioning was something of a choice, but the only alternative was a life of dysphoric depression. All the steps I had been taking to transition were made in order to pass, essentially putting distance between myself and this newly ascribed trans identity.

It was a deeply personal experience, yet that trans identity seemed to take primacy in everything I did, and was immediately apparent to anyone if I didn't pass. I wasn't just a person anymore, I was a trans person. I wasn't just a photographer anymore, I was a trans photographer. Everything I did was suddenly viewed as being done in service of some omnipresent trans "community." Transition for me was always meant to be a temporary state. I wanted to just be a person again when things settled. To get there I had to face the trans identity head on. As a result, this was the first time I had ever travelled post-childhood without an underlying intent of photography.

The photographs were trash.

I think back to our first trip to Vancouver in 2012.

I'm shooting with my newly purchased Fujifilm X100, but it's never hidden away in a tote bag. It's dangling proudly off my neck, screaming, "look at this guy, a Photographer who just landed a Photo Editor job at a student newspaper!" The X100 looks like a film camera but it's not. Only other photographers *in the know* can tell it's an awesome point-and-shoot with a full APS-C sensor and a unique optical viewfinder system reminiscent (but not quite!) of a rangefinder. Coming to Vancouver, I finally feel free to do street photography away from the eyes of anyone I know back home who might think it's weird that I'm walking around taking photos of random people. Of course, I try to be unobtrusive. I'm not walking around like Bruce Gilden or Eric Kim (although I do read his blog religiously like any good streettog)[11]. I'm more interested in the work of Garry Winogrand[12], Henri Cartier-Bresson[13], or the NatGeo photographers[14]. Or hell, I'm in Vancouver — why not take some shots like Fred Herzog[15]? I don't see it as taking shots of people specifically. I'm documenting history! I'm documenting *life*! How else will I make it into Eric Kim's next list of 23 Street Photographers Who Are Really Good? How else can I make this hobby I just picked up into an influencer career? Besides, it's entirely legal. People can call the cops if they're mad, then I can record it and send the footage to PhotographyIsNotACrime.com[16].

I come across the Pride Parade. Perfect! More stuff to shoot. I briefly wonder if posting someone's photo from here might out them, but we're at a public event in a public space.

---

[11] Eric Kim is a popular street photography blogger and vlogger who often uses the term "streettog" to refer to his online community of street photographer. Kim took a more confrontational, high-profile approach to photography inspired by controversial street photographer Bruce Gilden (Kim, 2013).

[12] Garry Winogrand took photographs of "sophisticated, chance observations of daily life" that drew on visual puns and an "absurdist appreciation for the visual world" (International Center of Photography, n.d.).

[13] Henri Cartier-Bresson was an influencial photographer known for coining the technique of "the decisive moment," where a photographer finds "a visually arresting setting for a photograph and then patiently [waits] for that decisive moment to unfurl" (The New York Times, 2016).

[14] National Geographic is a magazine with a prestigious legacy of photojournalism (Draper, 2013).

[15] Fred Herzog was a street photographer in Vancouver who started using colour film in 1957 when black and white film was still much more prominent to capture "faces of the city others often ignored" (Cheug, 2019).

[16] Photography Is Not A Crime is a news website that covers a perceived threat to photography and civil rights posed by police, using sensationalized headlines and storying to construct a "war on photography" (Photography Is Not A Crime, n.d.).

People should expect cameras if they're coming here. They're probably used to being photographed anyways, colourful as they are. And that's what the parade is for, isn't it? To be visible?

I wonder what people will say when I bring back photos of a Pride Parade. No one I know has ever been to one, at least not that I know of. I'm going to have to be careful how I present these, in case they start wondering why I was at a Pride parade, even if Elaine was here, too.

I sort of wish I could be part of it, but I'm not LGBT. At least not visibly.

Better to stay invisible, just hide behind the camera and shoot.

At Pride 2018 I didn't even consider taking photos of people. I sure as hell didn't want my photo taken by anyone to post on the internet, let alone a Gilden-esque street photographer, so why would anyone else want theirs? I read the comment sections. I know what (presumably) cis people with anonymity say about trans people. And I definitely didn't want the cops called on me now.

As I edit these new photos from Vancouver, I can't help but feel disappointed in them. The composition is uninteresting, the lighting is boring, and the framing is off. I clearly wasn't paying attention to what I was shooting, instead just rushing from place to place. I used to be better than this. Not necessarily in 2012, but in the six years I had grown as a photographer since then.

But I also can't just go back. My current situation means I need to shoot differently because I'm honestly scared. It makes me consider my subjects differently. And as much as I think those older photos were better, I have a hard time looking at them right now. It's like a wall went up between all those photos I took before and who I was now. I can't bring myself to do much with the old photos just like I can't bring myself to edit a stranger's photos and call them my own.

It ultimately feels oddly dysphoric to look through younger, more privileged, eyes and know that they were mine.

Epilogue / Conclusion

Figure 15 - Another sunset, Vancouver, BC, June 2019.

Figure 17 - Roads and overpasses, Vancouver, BC, June 2019.

Figure 16 - UBC Campus, Vancouver, BC, June 2019.

Figure 18 - A building looms up from behind a wall, Vancouver, BC, June 2019.

One year later, I'm back in Vancouver for a conference. I started shooting with film at the start of the year and decided to use it exclusively in 2019 to distance myself from the photographers I had been in 2012, 2018, and the years in between.

Film lets me slow down. Although I try to make each shot count, the unlimited nature of digital photography still means hundreds of frames to look through after each trip, thousands of gigabytes cluttering up memory and memories. With film, each shot has an associated cost: about $2 to develop, plus the time it takes to scan the roll. I can't afford to just burn through roll after roll. I can't just run through every environment I'm in, snapping as I go like some sort of tourist, trying to get back to safety as fast as possible to avoid the lookers.

Not that I was really noticing any lookers anymore. I'm still not sure if that was all in my head, just another product of the massive injection of anxiety into my life, but either they disappeared, or the therapy was working. They're gone, but I'm still worried about them coming back at any time.

I'm still not sure where I'm going with my photography, but at least there's a growing aesthetic to the aimlessness, along with some consideration. It's exciting to once again rediscover this hobby that had previously taken up so much of my life.

Slowed down with nothing to worry about, I stop and let myself breathe for once. I'm no longer interested in taking photos with people in them, but that lets my eyes wander my environment. They drift towards converging lines, intersecting shapes, and juxtaposed colours. I'm still not working towards anything specific at this point, but at least I'm noticing the basics of composition again.

For a few moments, the lack of random eye contact and double takes makes me forget that I'm still a transsexual and should probably be paying attention to my surroundings. I wonder if I'm in the clear. Do I pass? Or at least, pass enough? Is it just the extra year's worth of confidence? I can't tell and don't want to assume.

I was actually more worried about not passing this time than in 2018. Trans people weren't really in the zeitgeist last year, but a trans woman from Vancouver made worldwide news a few months earlier by suing immigrant businesses that refused to wax her

genitals[17]. Another from the US had gained internet fame after destroying a video game store because the cashier misgendered her[18].

The internet seemed to be rapidly shifting against us again which, along with our newfound visibility, meant a greater threat of being identified and targeted. I was worried that this would translate offline, but for me on this trip, it didn't.

I'm starting to find a new rhythm in life as I move beyond the liminality of transition. Being trans doesn't seem as obscure as it did even two years ago, with actual positive representations in media, like in *Pose*[19]. But with growing visibility comes a growing sense of oppositional forces swinging back even harder. As much as I want to get away from that trans identity and just be a photographer again, I can't really avoid it if people can tell I'm trans. Again, I'm not sure.

Walking around Vancouver, alone or with Elaine, I feel myself blend into the anonymity of the city but never let myself drop my guard. We still stick to Davies Street when we go out in the evening, looking for bars with gender neutral bathrooms to watch the Toronto Raptors in their winning playoff run. I still stash the camera in a bag when I'm not actively taking a photograph, and keep an extra eye on my surroundings when I do take it out.

Another year later and three years into transition, I'm now finishing this thesis. I travelled to more places in Canada and the US in 2019, taking more individual trips than any other year of my life. Each was its own experience, but a few things remained constant.

One, I am now always aware of being trans while travelling, whether I want to or not, and not always in a negative sense. In New York City for the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots[20], being surrounded by international LGBT people coming in for

---

[17] (Quan, 2018)
[18] (Heller, 2019)
[19] Pose is a TV series about the 1980s New York City ballroom culture (Murphy et al., 2018). For more on trans media representation, I recommend viewing the Netflix documentary *Disclosure: Trans Lives on Screen* (Feder, 2020).
[20] The Stonewall Riots occurred in 1969 when thousands protested a police raid of the Stonewall Inn, one of many raids on LGBT locations. It is considered a pivotal moment for the LGBT social movement, and Pride parades started as a commemoration of the event (Stein, 2019).

WorldPride 2019[21], I felt connected to a broader, global LGBT movement. In December, I visited my snowbirding parents in the Greater Palm Springs area in California, where most days were spent driving to nature parks. One day, a talk show host came on the car radio, ranting on and on about the dangers of men dressing as women, invading women's bathrooms and forcing children to transition. That stuck with me until I crossed the border back out of the United States of America.

Two, I continue to question whether I pass or not, which changes depending on the context. For example, visiting Montreal in November, I was repeatedly called "sir" (or more often, monsieur), a considerable blow to my self-confidence as everyone I had met for the last few months called me ma'am, she, etc. Crossing the border into the US, I was finally able to test out the TSA scanner. Having heard so much about them, I was less afraid and more curious. But the machine raised no anomalies, which makes me wonder: did they press the Male button or the Female button?

The fluid nature of passing means I continue to have to constantly re-evaluate the risk of the situations and places I find myself in. On another day in California, we drove to a semi-remote mountain area. A large group pulled up in ATVs flying Make America Great Again flags, disembarked, and wandered around. They were just having a good time with their families, but I was terrified they would notice that I was trans, view it through the lens of media like the previous day's radio host, and see me as some sort of threat.

Three, while there are many constants, each trip is also a transition in itself. These experiences shaped my transition, let me validate and question feelings I had at home but didn't have the time or space to examine, and renegotiate other identities — in this case, as a photographer. This autoethnography has examined these transitions through the lens of surveillance, both of myself and the surveillance of others through my photography. The perceived surveillance of myself was questioned, as I was never really sure whether I was drawing any attention despite trying very hard not to. Metanarratives around trans people give the impression that being stared at is a foregone conclusion, with a potential for harassment or violence. But those same metanarratives can contribute to anxiety and

[21] WorldPride is an international-level event hosted by the InterPride non-profit organization. WorldPride 2019 was the largest international Pride celebration in history, drawing five million people for the weekend (InterPride, n.d.).

situational avoidance. This autoethnography was specifically written in contrast to the metanarrative of trans travel spread by both cis and trans discourses that makes travel seem inherently dangerous when it can also be meaningful and provide moments of personal growth. For myself, this meant moving beyond my necessary and temporary focus on my newly acquired trans identity to regain a hold on the previously important photographer identity.

References

Aizura, A. Z. (2010). Feminine transformations: Gender reassignment surgical tourism in Thailand. *Medical Anthropology, 29*(4), 424–443.

asktransgender. (n.d.). *asktransgender*. Reddit. https://www.reddit.com/r/asktransgender/

Bach, H. (2007). Composing a visual narrative inquiry. In Clandinin, D. J. (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 280–307). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Bettcher, T. M. (2007). Evil deceivers and make-believers: On transphobic violence and the politics of illusion. *Hypatia,* 22(3), 43–65.

Bettcher, T. M. (2012). Trans women and the meaning of "woman". In Power, N., Raja, H., & S. Soble (Eds.), *Philosophy of sex: Contemporary readings* (6th ed., pp. 233–250). New York, NY: Rowan & Littlefield.

Bettcher, T. M. (2014). Feminist Perspectives on Trans Issues. In E.N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 ed.). https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/feminism-trans/.

Bettcher, T. M. (2015). Intersexuality, Transgender, and transsexuality. In L.J. Disch & M. Hawkesworth (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of feminist theory* (pp. 407–427). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bill C-16: An Act to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code. (2016). 1st Reading May 17, 2016, 42n Parliament, 1st Session. http://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Bills/421/Government/C-16/C-16_1/C-16_1.PDF

Blee, K. & Currier, A. (2011). Ethics beyond the IRB: An introductory essay. *Qualitative Sociology, 34*(3), 401–413.

Bond, N., & Falk, J. (2013). Tourism and identity-related motivations: Why am I here (and not there)? *International Journal of Tourism Research, 15*(5), 430–442.

Chang, H. (2008). *Autoethnography as method*. Walnut Creek, Calif.: Left Coast Press.

Chen, T. (2019, March 22). United Airlines announced it will be the first airline to offer nonbinary gender options for customers to book flights. *BuzzFeed News*. https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/tanyachen/united-airlines-transgender-non-binary-gender

Cheung, C. (2019, September 13). The life of Fred Herzog, Vancouver's beloved photographer. *The Tyee*. https://thetyee.ca/Culture/2019/09/13/Fred-Herzog-Vancouver-Beloved-Photographer-Life-Death/

Crawshaw, C., & Urry, J. (2002). Tourism and the photographic eye. In C. Rojek & J. Urry (Eds.), *Touring cultures: Transformations of travel and theory* (pp. 186–205). London, UK: Routledge.

Currah, P. & Mulqueen, T. (2011). Securitizing gender: Identity, biometrics, and transgender bodies at the airport. *Social Research, 78*(2), 557–582.

Darcy, S., & Daruwalla, P. S. (1999). The trouble with travel: people with disabilities and tourism. *Social Alternatives, 18*(1), 41.

Dennis, R. J. [Riley J. Dennis]. (2017, October 8). *What is a nonbinary gender? | Riley J. Dennis* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruST0GPi68s

Desforges, L. (2000). Traveling the world: Identity and travel biography. *Annals of Tourism Research, 27*(4), 926–945.

Doan, P. (2016). You've come a long way, baby: Unpacking the metaphor of transgender mobility. In G. Brown & K. Browne (Eds.), *The Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities*, (pp. 237-246). London, UK: Routledge.

Draper, R. (2013, October). The power of photography. *National Geographic*. https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2013/10/power-of-photography/

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: an overview. *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung 36*(4), 273–290.

Enteen, J. B. (2013). Transitioning online: Cosmetic surgery tourism in Thailand. *Television & New Media, 15*(3), 238–249.

Feder, S. (Director). (2020). *Disclosure: Trans lives on screen* [Film]. Field of Vision; Bow and Arrow Entertainment; Level Forward.

Gabbidon, S. L., Penn, E. B., Jordan, K. L., & Higgins, G.E. (2009). The influence of race/ ethnicity on the perceived prevalence and support for racial profiling at airports. *Criminal Justice Policy Review, 20*(3), 344–358.

Garrod, B. (2009). Understanding the relationship between tourism destination imagery and tourist photography. *Journal of Travel Research, 47*(3), 346–358.

Haldrup, M., & Larsen, J. (2012). Readings of tourist photographs. In T. Rakić & D. Chambers (Eds.), *An introduction to visual research methods in tourism* (pp. 153–168). Oxford, UK: Routledge.

Harris, K. (2020, May 1). MacKay accused of 'dog-whistle' politics after criticizing O'Toole for supporting trans 'bathroom' bill. *CBC News*. https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/ mackay-conservative-leadership-lgbt-transgender-1.5552430

Heller, S. (2019, January 15). A transgender woman says she was repeatedly misgendered by an employee at a video-game store. *Insider*. https://www.insider.com/tiffany-moore-says-she-was-misgendered-gamestop-employee-2019-1

Hillman, W. (2007). Travel authenticated?: Postcards, tourist brochures, and travel photography. *Tourism Analysis, 12*(3), 135–148.

Hollinshead, K. (1999). Surveillance of the worlds of tourism: Foucault and the eye-of-power. *Tourism Management 20*(1), 7–23.

Horta, S. (Developer). (2006–2010). Ugly Betty [*TV series].* Ventanarosa Productions; Silent H Productions; Reveille Productions; Touchstone Television; ABC Studios.

Hughes, H. L. (2006). *Pink tourism: Holidays of gay men and lesbians*. Oxfordshire, UK: CABI International.

International Center of Photography. (n.d.). *Garry Winogrand*. https://www.icp.org/browse/archive/constituents/garry-winogrand

InterPride. (n.d.). *WorldPride*. https://www.interpride.org/worldpride.html

Jones, J. (2017, July). Fort Lauderdale rolls out the welcome mat for transgender tourists in new ad campaign. *Dallas News*. https://www.dallasnews.com/life/travel/2017/07/20/fort-lauderdale-rolls-welcome-mat-transgender-tourists-new-ad-campaign

Kim, E. (2013, August 24). 5 Lessons Bruce Gilden has taught me about street photography. *Eric Kim*. https://erickimphotography.com/blog/2013/08/24/5-lessons-bruce-gilden-has-taught-me-about-street-photography/

Kucserka, S. (Writer), Becker, V. (Writer), & Gates, T. (Director). (2007, October 18). Grin and bear it (Season 2, Episode 4) [TV series episode]. In S. Horta (Developer), *Ugly Betty*. Ventanarosa Productions; Silent H Productions; Reveille Productions; Touchstone Television; ABC Studios.

Lane, R. (2009). Trans as Bodily Becoming: Rethinking the Biological as Diversity, Not Dichotomy. *Hypatia, 24*(3), 136–157.

Lewis, S. T., & Johnson, C. W. (2011). "But it's not that easy": Negotiating (trans)gender expressions in leisure spaces. *Leisure/Loisir, 35*(2), 115–132.

Lopez, G. (2017, February 22). Anti-transgender bathroom hysteria, explained. *Vox*. https://www.vox.com/2016/5/5/11592908/transgender-bathroom-laws-rights

Lum, C., Crafton, P. Z., Parsons, R., Beech, D., Smarr, T., & Connors, M. (2013). Discretion and fairness in airport security screening. *Security Journal (28)*4, 352–373.

Markula, P. & Silk, M. (2011). *Qualitative research for physical culture*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave.

Murphy, R., Falchuk, B., & Canals, S. (Creators). (2018–present). *Pose* [TV series]. Color Force; Brad Falchuk Teley-Vision; Ryan Murphy Television; Touchstone Television; FXP

Namaste, K. (1996). Genderbashing: Sexuality, gender, and the regulation of public space. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *14*(2), 221-240.

The New York Times. (2016, August 3). Not forgotten: Henri Cartier-Bresson, whose "decisive moment" shaped modern photography. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/cp/obituaries/archives/henri-cartier-bresson-photography

Norton, A. & Herek G. (2013). Heterosexuals' attitudes toward transgender people: Findings from a national probability sample of U.S. adults. *Sex Roles, 68*(11–12), 738–753.

Olson, E. D. & Reddy-Best K. (2019). "Pre-topsurgery, the body scanning machine would most likely error:" Transgender and gender nonconforming travel and tourism experiences. *Tourism Management 70,*(2019), 250–261.

Philipp, S. F. (1994). Race and tourism choice: A legacy of discrimination? *Annals of Tourism Research, 21*(3), 479–488.

Photography Is Not A Crime. (n.d.). *PINAC News*. News Maven. https://newsmaven.io/pinacnews/

Quan, D. (2018, August 23). 'Not for men sorry': Transgender woman denied a Brazilian wax by spa files human rights complaint. *National Post*. https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/not-for-men-sorry-transgender-woman-files-human-rights-complaint-after-being-denied-brazilian-wax

Rakić, T., & Chambers, D. (2012). Introducing visual methods to tourism studies. In T. Rakić & D. Chambers (Eds.), *An introduction to visual research methods in tourism* (pp. 3–14). Oxford, UK: Routledge.

Scarles, C. (2010). Where words fail, visuals ignite: Opportunities for visual autoethnography in tourism research. *Annals of tourism research*, *37*(4), 905-926.

Scott, J. W. (1991). The evidence of experience. *Critical Inquiry, 17*(4), 773–795.

Southall, C. & Fallon, P. (2011). LGBT Tourism. In P. Robinson, S. Heitmann, & P. U. C. Dieke (Eds.), *Research Themes for Tourism* (pp. 218–232). Oxfordshire, UK: CABI International.

Spade, D. (2006). Mutilating gender. In S. Stryker & S. Whittle (Eds.), *The transgender studies reader* (pp. 331–348). New York: Routledge.

Spade, D. (2011). *Normal life: Administrative violence, critical trans politics, and the limits of law.* New York, USA: South End Press.

Sparkes, A. C., & Smith, B. (2014). *Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product*. Routledge.

Sparkes, A. C. (2020). Autoethnography: accept, revise, reject? An evaluative self reflects. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 12*(2), 289–302.

Stein, M. (2019). *The Stonewall Riots: A documentary history*. NYU Press.

Stryker, S. (2014). Biopolitics. *Transgender Studies Quarterly, 1*(1-2), 38–42.

Stryker, S. (2017). *Transgender history: The roots of today's revolution*. Seal Press.

Tolich, M. (2010). A critique of current practice: Ten foundational guidelines for autoethnographers. *Qualitative Health Research, 20*(12), 1599–1610.

Tyler the Creator. (2017). *Flower Boy* [Album]. Columbia Records.

Weeden, C, Lester, J., & Jarvis, N. (2016). Lesbians and gay men's vacation motivations, perceptions, and constraints: a study of cruise vacation choice, *Journal of Homosexuality, 8*(63), 1068–1085

White, N. R. & White, P. B. (2004). Travel as Transition: Identity and Place. *Annals of Tourism Research, 31*(1), 200–218.

Wilson, E. & Harris, C. (2006). Meaningful travel: Women, independent travel and the search for self and meaning. *Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal, 54*(2), 161–172.

Appendix A: Edmonton Pride 2016 Photos

Figure 19 - A float from SHAW, a telecommunications company, in support of Fort MacMurray after it was devastated by wildfires.

Figure 20 - Rachel Notley, Alberta's premier and leader of the provincial New Democrat Party marches in Pride.

Figure 21 - Supporters of the Liberal Party of Canada march in Pride.

Figure 22 - The Edmonton Police Service also marched in Pride in 2016.

Appendix B: Consent

In Transit: A Photographic Autoethnography on Travel as a Meaningful Transitional Time
Thesis for Master of Arts in Recreation and Leisure Studies by Abbie Schenk

Consent for Inclusion of Name and Likeness

I (Elaine Yip) have read the final version of this thesis, and been made aware of any mentions of my name and likeness within it and any photographs I am found in. I approve of their inclusion in this thesis. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I know who to contact.

Signature

October 13, 2020
Date