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Transability

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"Transability" denotes the persistent desire to acquire a physical disability and/or to seek the actual elective transition of the body from abled to disabled. It can be understood as the cultural translation of the diagnostic category BIID (body integrity identity disorder), which, albeit not currently listed in the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases or in the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, frames the desire for disability as a mental disease. Relevant biomedical literature on the condition was inaugurated by John Money (Money, Jobaris, and Furth 1977), who reported two case studies of individuals desiring amputation.

Transability is an umbrella term developed within the community of individuals who identify as transabled. It mirrors the term *transsexuality*. In particular, the term is meant to echo the “wrong body” metaphor and what is perceived to be a trajectory of successful recognition, one that transsexual individuals gained after obtaining regulated access to medical technologies of sex reassignment. Transability thus constructs a narrative of transsexuality, one that understands the goal of transition as passing, accepts a prediscursive origin of trans desire, and defers to a regulated process that proceeds from medical diagnosis to legal name change. Although it is currently deprecated in favor of a more counternormative model of transgender embodiment, transsexual narrative as constructed by transability is naturalized as the figural model of transition from deviancy to normality, from suffering to reconciliation, and as an exemplary history of social acceptance and cultural recognition.

An analysis of transabled narratives (Arfini 2010) demonstrates how regimes of justification (Boltanski and Thévenot 1999) and autobiographics (Gilmore 1994) are carefully orchestrated in order to achieve a similar naturalization of transabled desires. The struggle for recognition of transabled politics rests its modern and liberal claims on the right for self-determination (Stryker and Sullivan 2009). The goal of this politics thus relies on constructing an autonomous and *compos mentis* subject rather than on the construction of a certain body.

Transabled agendas can be evaluated in terms of antagonism and/or conformity to normative discourse. However, a deconstructive reading can also expose how transability reveals crucial processes regulating the binary opposition between ability and disability. If, despite its assimilationist goals, transability remains a desire for malfunction, aberration, deformity, this is due not to the nature of transabled desire but to the social construction of body standards. Normative body standards, in fact, construct sovereign subjects by conflating difference with lack and integrity with autonomy. Legitimate membership in the class of able bodied is thus revealed as a highly policed social determination.

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Transbutch

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The vast possibilities for gender variance manifested by the category of transgender have been precluded by a dominant narrative of crossing from one clear gender to another (Meyerowitz, 2002). As the categories "transman" and "transwoman" become increasingly stable, other transgressive gender identities are obscured and separated from the category of transgender (Feinberg 1996; Stryker and Whittle 2006). "Transbutch" signifies a gendered embodiment that is both butch and trans, not tied to any singular definition of butch or trans but rather falling somewhere in between. Transbutch marks a liminal space that embraces both the historical legacies of the category of butch and the more expansive possibilities created by the transgender rights movement for recognition, community, and empowerment.

The category of transbutch is a response to the hostility and misunderstanding displayed by some butches and lesbians toward transmen (Halberstam 1998). As many lesbians mourned the alleged loss of the butch and felt they needed to defend the boundaries of their "woman identified woman" communities, butches became increasingly reappropriated with an emphasis on their sex (female) rather than their gender (masculine). Some have promoted the use of the phrase "butch women" to emphasize that butches are not transgender and love being women (Bergman 2010). Transbutches embody a third space (with others) between the uncritical celebration of "womanhood" and its rejection entirely.