

Perry Zurn, Andrea J. Pitts, Talia Mae Bettcher & PJ DiPietro (Eds.) *Trans Philosophy*. University of Minnesota Press 2024. 320 pp. \$120.00 USD (Hardcover 9781517917036); \$00.00 USD (Paperback 9781517917043).

Last year, I took a graduate seminar in “Transgender Philosophy”. On the first day, the instructor announced that, although this topic was both highly interesting and personal to him, he did not have any particular knowledge of transgender philosophy and therefore our work in the class was for the five of us to struggle together across this unfamiliar terrain. We had no real map and, as of that point in the semester, no semblance of familiarity to moor ourselves to a home-base of literature. About 6 months later, *Trans Philosophy* was released.

Trans Philosophy is the first collection of its kind, gathering a broad yet highly interconnected selection of philosophical works about, by, and for trans people. Who are trans philosophers, and what is trans philosophy? In this work, the term ‘trans’ is understood to encompass most “gender disruptions,” though recognizes the often colonial and anti-intersex sentiment of insisting that “trans” captures *all* gender disruptions (x). ‘Philosophy’ is understood as similarly capacious and refers “to a range of incongruous communities of praxis” (x). These communities explicitly include “Africana philosophy; Asian and Asian American philosophies; feminist philosophy; Indigenous philosophy; Afro-Latinx, Latinx, Latin American, and Caribbean philosophy; LGBTQ and queer philosophy; philosophy of disability; and postcolonial and decolonial philosophy” (x). In a calmly-written introduction, one of the book’s stated primary goals is to more firmly establish “trans philosophy” as a subfield—one which takes its project to be simultaneously critical, grounded, and collective (x). Amidst a time in which trans people and communities face increasing exclusion and violence, both in academic philosophy and in wider socio-political environments, Zurn, Pitts, Bettcher & DiPietro express a priority for philosophers to re-establish the parameters and expectations of conversations about trans experiences and trans issues. Redrawing these parameters (which, notably, are not hard borders but rather permeable guidelines) involves a shift from thinking about trans people from the outside, to “highlighting the wisdom already generated in trans and gender-variant communities and the wisdom still to be gained through philosophical work accountable to those communities” (viii). It is a significant strength of the volume that it recognizes the importance of the knowledge, tools, histories and approaches already present and emergent in the trans community.

This edited volume offers a sensible fourteen essays, thirteen of them original and one a reprint



of an earlier [Hypatia article](#) (Bettcher, 2019, 34(4), 644-67), presented in four themed sections. In Part I, the first four chapters (Bettcher, Dembroff, Kapusta, Marvin) present an analytical consideration of the concepts and categories pertinent to trans philosophy, Part II (Gustafsson, DiPietro, Gossett) offers analyses and phenomenologies of trans embodiment and aesthetics, Part III (Malatino, Burke, Pitts, Kimoto) theorizes temporalities and disjunctions in the medicalization and technologization of trans experience, and Part IV (Zurn, Draz, Wayar) calls attention to trans political resistance to trans-exclusionary policies and institutions. The book feels like the Goldilocks length—enough packed in for readers to get a sense of how much work has already been and is currently being done in trans philosophy, but not so much that it feels bloated. That being said, the volume could have benefitted from a brief introduction at each new section; although the parts were briefly explained in the introduction, a tone-setting piece at the start of each new grouping would have helped readers to refresh their memory about what was to come and get a guiding sense of the threads to pay particular attention to.

The strengths of this collection lie in its willingness both to provide a home for those who feel unmoored by philosophy's often repressive, conservative approaches, and to simultaneously complicate the feeling of being *too comfortable* in that home. Feeling unwelcomed in what should be a home is often a sticky, alienating source of tension for trans philosophers – in writing the email to the editor of *Philosophy in Review*, for instance, I said that I was struggling to find a 'home' for the review of *Trans Philosophy*. This is something that Gustafsson (81-98) takes up in the chapter "Thinking Trans Embodiment: On Contingent 'Home' and Trans Fatigue," arguing that the common association of trans experience with feeling like one is "in the wrong body" usually suggests that there will eventually be a body in which one feels "at home". However, this common refrain configures such homeliness as "a futural, static home to which we are oriented and for which we strive" (84). Gustafsson (88) wants to resist this particular idealized notion of being at home in one's own body and instead, building on Mariana Ortega's concept of "hometactics," advocates for a recognition of contingent, "meanwhile" home, which is "historically situated, porous, and (re)made in relation with others and the norms of the social world in which it is located." It is not out there in the future, separated from one's current state – it has been, is here and is yet-to-come, not rested on a notion of the individual as sovereign, and does not necessarily have a telos. Much of this chapter's success lies in its pointed yet forgiving challenge to the idea that trans experiences can be flattened to the narrative of "being trapped in the wrong body," a

challenge that is particularly apposite for cisgendered readers who might tend towards describing trans experience(s) in such ways. However, the unsung brilliance of this chapter is how deftly it weaves together the key aims, directions and tensions of *Trans Philosophy* itself. Gustafsson's contingent/"meanwhile" home is picked up, made, and maintained by the collection, as is evident in the dazzling commitment of all its contributors to citing one another extensively. Home is also contingent upon what built it and came before it, and almost all contributors in this volume do excellently at citing those whose thinking they inherit—many mention Sandy Stone and Susan Stryker, Wayar (265) traces transvesti experiences through early 90's collectives such as Association for the Struggle toward a Transvesti Transsexual Identity, and Andrea Pitts emphasizes the importance of foregrounding trans of color activists such as Major Griffin-Gracy and Sylvia Rivera (171-192).

Outside of the lack of section-specific introductions, my only distraction from this otherwise very well-edited work was that a couple seemingly large concepts and questions were given attention in the introduction and could have been further expounded upon by contributors or practiced by the organization of the book itself. For instance, the introduction states that nothing about the rootedness of trans philosophy "requires the university, and in fact everything about this rootedness requires breaking from the university's centrality to theory" (xi). According to the contributors page, only one contributing author – Marlene Wayar – is not currently working from a university, and the book itself is published on a university press. Of course this is also necessary in many ways, and the neoliberal institution of academia demands such publication methods for recognition. But in future conversations surrounding the strengths and shortcomings of trans philosophy as a subfield, I would encourage further exploration as to how the field of inquiry could engage with non-university rootedness.

Trans Philosophy suits a variety of readers thanks to the diversity of its contributing essays. Most certainly, it can provide a welcome sense of homeliness for trans philosophers and academics, many for whom the world of academia has been (and, in many cases, is still) hostile to their works and livelihoods. That being said, this isn't a text solely for a trans audience, and its brilliance and importance should be taken up by philosophers more broadly interested in and attuned to philosophies "rooted in experiences of marginalization" (xvii). Many of the essays, particularly in Parts I and IV, are written clearly and with enough accessible language or conceptual explanation to be suitable for undergraduate classes in transgender philosophy, or

philosophy of gender more broadly. The breadth of work in this volume also lends itself well to integration in most traditional philosophy classes – aesthetics, ethics, social-political, etc. – and its ability to represent a swath of philosophical traditions and approaches in a relatively short page count is one of its most impressive qualities.

I wish greatly that we could have had *Trans Philosophy* when I took the “Transgender Philosophy” seminar last year. Not because it would have made our lives easier or to offload the difficult and processual work of navigating a map of a new and emerging field, but because this book is emblematic of that exact struggle; a new field can be tough to navigate, sometimes contradictory, pleasantly surprising, often collaborative, a little in the weeds, and most of all, without borders. This book puts its finger on a center to trans philosophical life without outer margins (Dembroff, 29) and both makes and is made by a home that is “emergent and generational,” one that we have already been to and will return to, move, and remake again and again (Gustafsson, 88). The challenge and promise, for trans philosophy as a subfield, will be how to practice not “merely what trans philosophy is but what it could be,” both in and outside of the university (Bettcher, 22).

Sara Louise Tonge, University of North Texas