

Invisible Lives: The Erasure of Transsexual and Transgendered People

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Publisher: University of Chicago Press

ISBN: 0226568105

Format: Softcover

Publication Date: 2000/12

Pages: 320

Through combined theoretical and empirical study, this work argues that transgendered people are not so much "produced" by medicine or psychiatry as they are "erased", or made invisible, in a variety of institutional and cultural settings. An analysis is made of two theoretical perspectives on transgendered people - queer theory and the social sciences - displaying how neither of these has adequately addressed the issues most relevant to sex change: everything from employment to health care to identity papers. Namaste then examines some of the rhetorical and semiotic inscriptions of transgendered figures in culture - including studies of early punk and glam rock subcultures - to illustrate how the effacement of transgendered people is organized in different cultural sites. This text concludes with research on some of the day-to-day concerns of transgendered people, offering case studies in violence, health care, gender identity clinics and the law.

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About the Author

Viviane K. Namaste has a Ph.D. in semiotics from the Université du Québec à Montréal. She coordinates a community-based transsexual health care project of CACTUS- Montréal, and is involved with different advisory committees and research initiatives related to prisons, transsexual health, HIV, prostitution, and harm reduction. From the Inside Flap

Invisible Lives is the first scholarly study of transgendered people-cross-dressers, drag queens, and transsexuals-and their everyday lives. Through combined theoretical and empirical study, Viviane K. Namaste argues that transgendered people are not so much produced by medicine or psychiatry as they are erased, or made invisible, in a variety of institutional and cultural settings.

Namaste begins her work by analyzing two theoretical perspectives on transgendered people-queer theory and the social sciences-displaying how neither of these has adequately addressed the issues most relevant to sex change: everything from employment to health care to identity papers. Namaste then examines some of the rhetorical and semiotic inscriptions of transgendered figures in culture, including studies of early punk and glam rock subcultures, to illustrate how the effacement of transgendered people is organized in different cultural sites. Invisible Lives concludes with new research on some of the day-to-day concerns of transgendered people, offering case studies in violence, health care, gender identity clinics, and the law.