

EXPLORING INTERSECTIONALITY IN AMERICAN AND BRITISH FICTION

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Abstract

*This thesis analyzes representations of transgender and non-binary identities through a transnational, comparative literary analysis of *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo, and *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides. It investigates how the experiences and identities of trans characters in British and American literature are shaped through the lens of intersectionality, particularly at the intersections of race, class, gender, and national context. The study pays particular attention to the distinct narrative frameworks established by each text. *Middlesex* constructs trans identity within a model that is medicalized, binary, and biologically deterministic, where gender transition and transformation are normalized as a journey defined by genetics and sanctioned by institutions. In contrast, *Girl, Woman, Other* addresses self-definition, gender fluidity, and identification, situating trans and non-binary identities within a broader socio-political post-colonial context. Finally, the close reading of these texts demonstrates that *Girl, Woman, Other* promotes disruptive narratives in its representation of marginalized gender identities, particularly those of Black and working-class individuals, while *Middlesex* reinforces and engages with a dominant ideological position in Western narratives that characterize trans identity as white, middle-class, and legitimized by medical establishments.*

INTRODUCTION

The representation of transgender identities in literature has a long, uneven history. Early representations generally depicted trans and gender nonconforming figures as tragic, deviant, or mentally ill, fulfilling the dominant medicalized and psychiatric discourses of the 19th and early 20th century. From Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) and obscure pulp fiction emerging in the 1950s, trans figures were tragically cast as pathology or pity. With the LGBTQ+ rights movements of the late 20th century, along with advances in feminist and queer theory, early depictions started to evolve; however, the representation of trans bodies, which were contested by more intentional cisnormative narratives and intersectional identities, only began to surface in the 21st Century (coinciding with the rise of trans authors, critics, and activists). This historical progression indicates the importance of not just examining what is depicted in trans literature, but also the manner in which it is presented and whose perspective is being highlighted. Arising from this ongoing history of misrepresentation, both *Girl, Woman, Other* and *Middlesex* provide notably distinct portrayals of trans embodiment and identity. Literature has significantly evolved in its portrayal of transgender identities. However, many contemporary narratives still

reinforce a medicalized, binary understanding of gender, suggesting it can be diagnosed, cured, or even determined through institutional power. Numerous Western literary traditions have historically framed trans identities along a trajectory of medical transition, which narrowly defines gender nonconformity as a condition that necessitates external validation, rather than recognizing it as a legitimate aspect of identity. This perspective has led to the erasure of intersecting lived experiences, particularly among transgender people of color, working-class individuals, and those with gender identities that challenge the male-female binary. This study examines how two contemporary novels, Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019) and Jeffrey Eugenides' *Middlesex* (2002) articulate transgender identity within their respective British and American literary traditions. While both novels grapple with questions of gender fluidity and the experience of being transgender, they operate under two distinct epistemologies. *Middlesex* frames gender as a medical and biological phenomenon that positions its intersex protagonist's transition as a process ultimately dictated by genetics and the authority of medical institutions. The representation of transgender identities in literature has evolved significantly; however, many depictions continue to prioritize a medicalized, binary understanding of gender. This perspective treats gender as a condition that must be diagnosed, corrected, or legitimized by institutional authority. Historically, various forms of Western literary tradition have portrayed trans identities as a linear path of medical transition, viewing gender nonconformity as an aspect of their identities that requires external validation. This perspective fails to consider the diverse experiences of transgender individuals, especially those who identify as people of color, belong to the working class, or are non-binary. This research examines how modern literature depicts transgender identity by exploring two recent novels—Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019) and Jeffrey Eugenides' *Middlesex* (2002)—within their cultural contexts in Britain and America.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The body of research on gender identity and transgenderism is growing quickly, incorporating ideas from queer studies, feminist theory, and postcolonial critique. As non-binary identities, intersectionality, and gender fluidity become more prominent in today's society, discussions, literature is essential for expressing, refuting, and expanding our knowledge of gender difference. Yaldora, a literature study written under a pen name, highlights Jeffrey Eugenides' *Middlesex* (2002) and Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* (2019) as important additions to the current body of knowledge, discussion of intersectionality, performativity, and transgender identity. This study intends to investigate how social narratives establish gender as a historically contingent and socially constructed category influenced by intersecting aspects, such as national histories, race, ethnicity, and class, through the analysis of these literary works, as well as sociopolitical circumstances. The discipline of transgender studies has emphasized the need for an intersectional perspective while analyzing gendered experiences during the last few decades. The intersectionality paradigm developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 serves as a basis for understanding how various axes of identity—such as race, gender, class, and sexuality—intersect to create unique experiences of oppression and privilege. According to Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality is a... “lens through which you can observe the origins of power, its collisions, and the ways it interlocks and intersects. This theoretical framework is particularly valuable in the field of literary studies, as it facilitates a more nuanced exploration of how gender identities are constructed in conjunction with other social differences. Butler argues that “There is no

gender identity behind the expressions of gender; rather, that identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are considered its results.” This is just one of several valuable lenses used to examine the portrayal of transgender characters in literature, particularly in works that challenge binary constructs and explore gender as a fluid concept. It is just one of many useful lenses to examine how transgender characters are portrayed in fiction, especially when it challenges these binary conceptions and examines gender as something flexible rather than set. Although there is a growing academic interest in the study of transgender representation in literature (Stryker 2006, Serano 2007, Halberstam 2005), and in how discourses surrounding culture, history, and medicine shape transgender narratives, there is limited engagement with a diverse array of popular texts. Stryker (2006) argues that we should analyze transgender literature through a lens that encompasses more than just the representations of gender transition; we must also consider the social structures that influence and construct gender identity. Similarly, Serano (2007) critiques the oversimplification of transgender lives in popular culture and emphasizes the need for authentic, nuanced accounts of trans experiences. Halberstam (2005) contributes to these discussions by examining transgender masculinity as a means of resisting hegemonic masculinity. This theoretical perspective gives us a prism to examine how *Girl, Woman, Other* and *Middlesex* engage with transgender identity, performativity, and intersectionality. This study is purposefully focused on *Girls, Woman, Other* and *Middlesex* because they offer both complementary and contrasting perspectives on gender identity. Evaristo’s *Girl, Woman, Other* is a revolutionary work that traces the lives of twelve characters, many of whom explore queerness, gender fluidity, and non-binary identities within the broader contexts of race, migration, and British history. An intersectional approach to storytelling is embodied in the novel’s innovative narrative structure, which interweaves many voices and views. On the other end of the narrative spectrum, however, is Eugenides’s *Middlesex*, which tells the story in the first person through the voice of Cal Stephanides, an intersex protagonist who grew up in a Greek-American family in the US. In addition to offering a deeply intimate reflection on gender, Eugenides challenges the ideas of medicalization, gender ambivalence, and self-realization in this book. In addition to receiving accolades for its literary merit, *Middlesex* has drawn criticism for its portrayal of intersex identity, which heavily relies on medico-scientific discourses (Somerville, 2019; Prosser, 1998). With the two of these novels, this literature review helps advance those discussions by organizing, elucidating, and contributing to the discourse of current literature about transgender and non-binary identities. Lastly, this study emphasizes the necessity of a cultural and national framework that deeply influences how transgender people are portrayed. The literary treatment of gender nonconformity has historically differed between American and British literature, informed by their distinct social, political, and legal histories. Sally Hines (2018) interrogates the ways in which British literature positions gender nonconformity according to colonial and postcolonial discourse and Estates of the subject, whereas Paisley Currah (2020) analyzes how American transgender narratives map medical and legal cartographies. *Girl, Woman, Other* is anchored firmly in Britain’s colonial history and how it shapes present Black and queer selves.

Intersectionality and Representation in Transgender Narratives

A critical intersectionality lens is increasingly a necessary method of study when looking at transgender representation in literature.

This research looks at how various social identities—such as race, gender, class, and sexual orientation—intersect to shape individual experiences. Intersectionality was originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 within Black feminist theory before it was adopted by queer and transgender studies. It considers how systems of oppression interact together instead of separately. One must take into account how oppressive systems of race and gender are more than just the addition of one kind of oppression to another, as Crenshaw (1989) explains, "because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism." This ignores the ways in which oppressed identities change in parallel with more extensive oppressive institutions and structures that function along various interconnected oppressive axes. The interaction of these axes is highlighted by the fact that gender oppression is founded on race and class. Intersectionality highlights the various ways trans and non-binary persons experience their identities within specific cultural and historical settings, rather than seeing transgender identity as a monolithic or one-size-fits-all experience. According to scholars like Susan Stryker (2006) and Julia Serano (2007), transgender narratives need to be examined within the broader framework of society rather than being restricted to the story of a transition. According to Stryker (2006), trans literature has to go beyond discussions of self-discovery and medical transition to address issues of race and class, colonial pasts, and sociopolitical constraints on trans lives. Serano (2007) also criticizes a lot of popular literature for portraying transgender experiences in ways that tend to depict them as either tragic or medicalized (pathologizing trans identities). She creates narratives that illustrate the complexities of transgender existence and clarify the ways in which gender nonconformity connects with more general social injustices.

When reading Jeffrey Eugenides's *Middlesex* and Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*, two books with the specific goal of challenging racial, class, and gender structures, it is especially helpful to bear this in mind. By combining the lives of twelve distinct people, Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* employs an intersectional storytelling technique to convey the interconnected connections between migration, race, gender, and sexual orientation. Morgan, a Black non-binary figure, is one of those who is essential to the investigation of racial identity and gender fluidity. The book itself also contains an intersectional structure; rather than being confined to a single, sparse narrative voice, it features several voices that muddy ideas about identity and sex. Ahmed (2020), Harris (2021) and other type of desist scholars argue that Evaristo presents transgender identity de-linked from models that traditionally locate transgender identity where dominant tropes track typically as the trans body undergoes transition alongside privileged identities and experiences such as race, colonial baggage, and queerness. Evaristo further contemplates experiences rather than representing transgender identity as separate or apart from the other interlocked forces that influence a character's lived experience as say, a Keisha, or a Yazz, or an Amma. *Middlesex*, on the other hand, tells the life story of trans character Cal Stephanides, an intersex character who grew up in a Greek American family. Although commonly classified as transgender literature by virtue of its emphasis on gender uncertainty and identity construction, critics debate whether *Middlesex* is a genuinely intersectional work. Although the novel goes into an enormous amount of detail about intersex identity, its focus for the most part is on Cal's experience in the medicalized and scientific past. Critics including Somerville (2019) and Prosser (1998) contend that Eugenides's focus on medical explanations serves to bolster essentialist notions of gender by framing Cal's identity as a biological deviation as opposed to a fluid, socially constructed experience. Furthermore, the novel's focus on a white,

Greek-American protagonist means it engages in intersectionality based on class and race only intermittently, leaving some to question which narratives of trans identity receive the most literary spotlight. Reading *Girl, Woman, Other* alongside *Middlesex* reveals the starkly different representations of transgender and non-binary identities and how they operate within 13 distinct cultural constructions. Like Evaristo's book, British literature is increasingly utilizing intersectional and collaborative narrative strategies that highlight underrepresented identities within broader socio-historical frameworks. *Girl, Woman, Other* scraps the Eurocentric literary canon in favor of one inclusive of racial and postcolonial discussion and expansive views on gender identity (Younge, 2022). However, *Middlesex*, As an American novel, it upends the way that novels often depict gender identity through individualistic and medicalized tales, following the literary heritage of the United States. Though it follows the U.S. trend of saying, as transgender literature tends to do, "this is what I went through to become me personally," rather than "this is how us, showing up in this way, keep being in spite of others' gender nonconformance," the book does the work of exploring intersex identity, nuanced in its class- or place-based interpolation" (Taylor, 2022, p. 243). Intersectionality is also a major factor in how transgender literature gets received. As Snorton (2017) notes, mainstream literary criticism has historically canonized white, middle-class transgender narratives while treating transgender people of color as a peripheral sub-aggregate. This omission has played a role in generalizing and sometimes limiting what is viewed as a "real" trans experience. Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* actively subverts this trend by foregrounding the experiences of Black, non binary, and queer characters and ensuring we hear their stories. Likewise, although while *Middlesex* may have pioneered the representation of intersex identity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses two significant pieces of modern literature—Eugenides' *Middlesex* and Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other*—to provide a thorough framework for comprehending transgender experiences. This study examines how race, class, gender, and sexuality interact to influence the struggles and lives of transgender characters by fusing ideas from several academic fields. The Intersectionality Theory of Kimberlé Crenshaw (Crenshaw, 1991) serves as a major source of inspiration for the framework, which is also strengthened by the theories of Judith Butler (1990), Susan Stryker's contributions to Transgender Studies (2006), and feminist viewpoints (Collins, 2000).

Intersectionality as the Basis

This study contends that social categories like race, gender, class, and sexual orientation overlap and form interrelated systems where privilege and oppression are entwined. It is based on Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality theory (Crenshaw, 1991). In reality, this study suggests that transgender identities must be seen via a complicated web of overlapping elements in order to be properly understood. "Political intersectionality," a key idea in Crenshaw's paradigm, studies how people who are at the intersection of several marginalized identities encounter more severe forms of discrimination. For instance, as a Black trans person in postcolonial Britain, Dominique in *Girl, Woman, Other* faces the dual issues of racism and transphobia. Her story demonstrates how colonial pasts and ingrained social biases sustain inequality, demonstrating that her challenges are both profoundly systemic and personal (Evaristo, 2019). Cal's journey in *Middlesex* also illustrates the conflict between his intersex identity and his typical Greek-American family's expectations. In a nutshell, his narrative demonstrates the difficult balancing

act between individual identity and the cultural requirements of an immigrant community trying to maintain its legacy in this new environment (Eugenides, 2002). By turning its attention from personal hardships to the larger historical and societal structures that influence and limit transgender lives, this study expands on these experiences.

Cal's story, for instance, is strongly related to the larger immigrant narrative of cultural heritage preservation and integration into a dominant culture. His story serves as an example of how these factors can obfuscate and even impede the development of an individual identity. It is feasible to illustrate how deeply ingrained systemic racism and gendered subordination still exist in modern British culture by using Dominique's story to underscore the legacy of colonialism (Spivak, 1988). By using an intersectional approach, researchers can examine how transgender identity is developed socially, culturally, and historically through a variety of experiences, moving beyond a cursory depiction. The study will look at the ways that gender, race, and class interact with institutions like family, healthcare, and education to affect the lives of transgender people (Arondekar, 2006). More than that, however, medicalization makes the relationship between gender and culture more difficult for Cal. He faces societal unease with a body that defies binary conventions. Dominique focuses on the intertwined impacts of gender and racial discrimination in a country that is still unsure of its colonial origins. Through the prism of this theoretical paradigm, identity can be viewed as dynamic and ever-changing. Transgender identities are influenced by the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which they are found; they are not distinct occurrences. The study demonstrates how individual experiences mirror more general trends of oppression and resistance through various layers. These structures are criticized in works like *Girl, Woman, Other*, and *Middlesex*, which likewise emphasize themes of survival, resiliency, and the investigation of otherness while speculating about potential futures. This intersectional perspective contends that race, gender, class, and sexual orientation must interact rather than just mix, challenging reductive interpretations of transgender identity. As a result, it demands a deeper interaction with the systems that mold the forces affecting a person's story. From both an American and a British standpoint, this method highlights the growing complexity of personal identity.

Decolonizing Gender and Sexuality

Jeffrey Eugenides examines the lives of transgender person Cal in *Middlesex* while taking into account Western medicine, which is sometimes perceived as lacking an understanding of the complexity of gender identity. The medical system, which was established on Western, Eurocentric standards, frames Cal's experience in terms of two categories that only place biological sex. The medical system, which was established on Western, Eurocentric standards, frames Cal's experience in terms of two categories that only place biological sex. The real transgender experience, particularly for those who are not easily classified as such, is not well represented by this, though. It centers on Cal's experiences and utilizes Eugenides to criticize the one-size-fits-all viewpoint since it ignores the true diversity of gender identities. This is consistent with postcolonial criticism of Western systems that intentionally exclude or misinterpret the experiences of people outside of the Western world, fixing transgender persons in the process. In this sense, the novel aims at challenging the Western Medicine narratives and theories as universal truths while urging consideration of the shaping of these ideas in colonial history and its power plays (Eugenides, 2002). In direct opposition to this ideology of gender documented with reference to the meaning of colonial histories and cultural traditions is

Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* (Evaristo, 2019). Evaristo's Characters in this novel include women of African descent, all of whom navigate through their partnership with gender and sexuality against an immensely complex backdrop of legacies of colonialism and their personal histories. A potent critique of how colonialism influenced their identities and, consequently, their lives may be found in the ways that race, class, and gender intertwine. These figures demonstrate how gender and sexuality are always shaped by history, culture, and the colonial power systems rather than just by nature or personal preference. Despite being decolonial, this book shows how colonialism continues to influence how minority identities are formed. The theories of intellectuals like Gayatri Spivak (Spivak, 1988) and Anjali Arondekar (Arondekar, 2006) can support this approach. Spivak's idea of the subaltern highlights how people who have been marginalized by colonial history or gender norms are all too frequently silenced and have their voices excluded from prevailing discourses. These encounters could be seen as an illustration of this kind of silencing in *Middlesex* (Eugenides, 2002), both through medical discourse and through more general cultural conceptions of gender. 42 Arondekar is able to summon the diversity of ways that many Western, Christian-influenced societies have altered even gender and sexuality, even as she identifies a critical feminist and postcolonial viewpoint on the union of sexuality and colonialism (Arondekar, 2006). Creating Intersectional Unity Both *Girl, Woman, Other* and *Middlesex* show how intersectional solidarity may be used to provide resistance and speak out against oppressive systems. The LGBTQ+ and black feminist communities in the book *Girl, Woman, Other* give Dominique a sense of acceptance and inclusion, giving her strength. These locations allow her to exercise and resist social institutions that have been working to marginalize her in addition to protecting her from the interwoven forces of racism, sexism, and transphobia (Evaristo, 2019). In the same way, Cal in *Middlesex* finds refuge in gay communities; he finds empathy and support in his efforts to overcome the challenges of his intersex identity, his cultural background, and the rigid medical language surrounding gender (Eugenides, 2002). This analysis will use Anna's relationality notion, which holds that solidarity is based on the interconnectedness of struggles. The foundation of solidarity then shifts from a common identity to an awareness of the connections between oppressive systems like racism, misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia. The characters in these books demonstrate how solidarity can upend these structures and allow members of oppressed groups to find power in both group actions that challenge social conventions and in their own personal struggles.

Identity Formation and Space

Both *Girl, Woman, Other* (Evaristo, 2019) and *Middlesex* (Eugenides, 2002) offer a rich background for analyzing transgender identities, allowing us to examine how people's physical and cultural surroundings actively shape their identities. This study uses cultural geography and Doreen Massey's idea of relational space to examine how various types of locations—rural, suburban, and urban—interact with the process of self-discovery and impact transgender encounters. According to Massey's thesis, space is a dynamic, relational reality that is constantly impacted by and influencing the people who live there rather than merely serving as a static background for individual lives.

CONCLUSION

An understanding of how different American and British literary traditions impact the representation of transgender people in literature may be gained from this comparison between

Middlesex and *Girl, Woman, Other*. Both stories show how our perceptions of gender identity, the medicalization of gender, and societal social justice concerns are always changing. The medicalized, deterministic framework in which Eugenides's story is set views gender as biologically predetermined and subject to medical authority. This includes the institutionalization of gender medicalization, medical diagnoses, and the stigma attached to non-normative presents. Evaristo, however, frames human agency through a variety of strategies of resistance against the majority, center, and whiteness of institutional power, demonstrating that gender is fluid, self-defined, and intersectional. Evaristo recognizes the text's inconsistent trans representation, which makes it easier to challenge prevailing ideologies. According to them, this offers a structural opportunity to recognize a new period of representation and acknowledgment that does not require a focus on medical viewpoints or a binary understanding of gender—concepts that have shaped and limited Western thought for centuries. This is not to argue that it is without flaws, such as Eugenides's use of medical terminology to specify Cal's gender identity.

Cal's transition to intersex continues to play a significant role in the story. Rather than being driven by a sense of personal autonomy, Cal's search is impacted by a number of outside influences, such as biology, genetics, the medical profession, and family expectations. The book upholds the Foucauldian idea of the "medical gaze," which views scientists and physicians as gender gatekeepers who use biological indicators to diagnose and validate trans identities. This idea draws attention to the lengthy history of transgender identity medicalization in the West, which sees gender variation as a disease that needs to be identified, treated, and managed. According to Susan Stryker (2006), people who do not fit into the conventional medicalized transition processes—such as those who identify as non-binary or have gender non-conforming identities—are marginalized by these narratives. *Woman, Other* from this paradigm, which emphasizes self-identification without the necessity for institutional validation, enhances the depiction of gender identity, whereas Cal's identity is based on a medicalized framework. Morgan's portrayal in *Girl, Woman, Other* marks a significant shift away from the medicalized identities sometimes featured in trans narratives. Morgan declares their identification without seeking medical confirmation and opts not to take hormones or have surgery, in contrast to Cal, who "discovers" their gender through medical intervention. They contest the widely held belief in the West that medical procedures are inevitably associated with transness and transition. This change in viewpoint is consistent with the way that the conversation about trans identity is developing today. Transgender identity claims are increasingly being made through self-identification rather than medical procedures. Evaristo breaks down the binary restrictions that have excluded non-binary, genderqueer, and agender identities from representation and the mainstream by promoting gender as fluid and self-identified. The drawbacks of binary trans narratives are brought to light by the parallels between these two books. Instead of being viewed as a changing, continuous lived experience, transitioning is frequently viewed via a binary framework in Western and American traditions of transgender representation, as a change from one fixed category (male or female) to another. In the end, these binaries reinforce exclusionary frameworks that diminish all other trans experiences by obscuring the subtleties of gender fluidity and non-binary existence. By depicting Cal's shift as a single incident rather than a complex path of self-discovery, *Middlesex* demonstrates the limitations of a binary viewpoint. *Girl, Woman, Other*, on the other hand, views gender as a flexible spectrum that allows for self-definition and ambiguity that goes beyond conventional dichotomies. Furthermore, *Middlesex*

does not examine intersectionality in transgender life, which is a crucial topic that merits consideration. As Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) has argued, the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, and other forms of oppression are significant before, during, and after an individual's experience of gender identity. These issues are collectively represented by the term identity cannot be fully understood without examining how it is interconnected with race, class, and sexuality. Evaristo's novel explores the intersection of identities, illustrating how Morgan's transgender identity is intertwined with their Blackness and working-class background. The challenges they encounter encompass not only transphobia but also racism and economic marginalization; additionally, they face the erasure of Black voices from feminist and queer spaces. This intersectional approach challenges the longstanding narratives of white, middle-class individuals that have historically dominated Western literature about transgender people and their interconnected struggles. In contrast, *Middlesex* tends to overlook identity through the lens of intersectionality and trans identity, predominantly portraying trans experiences from a white, Eurocentric perspective. Cal's trans experience is primarily shaped by medical discourse that exists outside the intersections of race, class, and culture. While it is important to acknowledge that Cal does encounter the intersectionality of their race and familial customs during their transition, a close reading of *Middlesex* reveals a significant lack of representation regarding race and intersectionality in discussions of trans identity. Similarly, in trans literature, the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) who are trans are often marginalized or ignored. There must be a greater diversity of trans narratives and representations that encompass the various ways in which trans individuals experience their lives, including their interactions with race, culture, and socio-economics.

This diversity is necessary for literature to question the idea of identity just from the perspective of trans identity and to authentically depict the complexity of trans reality. Another important difference between Bernardine Evaristo's *Girl, Woman, Other* and Jeffrey Eugenides' *Middlesex* is agency.

Cal's gender is diagnosed rather than self-defined in *Middlesex*, meaning that outside factors mostly impact his identity. Medical discourse, which might be viewed as another universal or imposed interpretation of gender identity, is necessary for Cal to understand and express his gender identity. This implies a self-discovery process that is mediated by professionals and impacted by an individual's perceived diagnosis. While Cal relies on a particular type of social validation created by specialists and lacks the agency to subjectively grasp his own identity, Morgan, on the other hand, has complete agency over their identity in respect to gender. A cultural change that highlights the autonomy of trans identities is represented by the transition from external validation and representation to self-definition.

This change entails a rejection of the covert, dominating effect that organizations have over trans identities and bodies.

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