

**‘Bodies in New Territories’:
Mapping masculinity, gender performativity and FTM embodiment in Jamison
Green’s *Becoming a Visible Man*
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This paper examines the relationship between performativity, embodiment and transitioning in the context of a female to male (FTM) transsexual. Using the semi-autobiographical work of Jamison Green’s ‘Becoming a Visible Man’, I place Green’s phenomenological accounts of gender anxiety, masculinity, and transitioning in dialogue with Judith Butler’s work on performativity and Moira Gatens’ theorisation of the ‘imagined body’. In doing so, I examine the theoretical tensions and limits of using performativity in accounting for the how gender dissonance is experienced by transsexual bodies. Instead of using gender theories which limit the transsexual body to either a position of sexual indeterminacy or rigid dichotomy of gender, this paper teases out the positionality of the FTM body in order to produce a corporeally specific understanding of gendered subjectivity.

Keywords

FTM; masculinity; transsexual; performativity; embodiment; transitioning

[1] *Becoming a Visible Man* by Jamison Green explores the question of transsexual embodiment by positioning assumptions of masculinity within the dimensions of performativity, phenomenology, sociality and biology. Using Green's semi-autobiographical account and his theorisation of the transsexual body, this paper will critique performative and social constructionist positions on FTM transsexual embodiment.¹

[2] Green acknowledges that genitalia, such as the penis, do not function as the basis for our gender identity, but he also examines the corporeal significance of the body itself in producing the experience of particular gender consciousness, and complicates the relationship between the social, bodies and 'performativity'.

[3] By positioning the body, sex and gender as performative categories, Judith Butler in *Gender Trouble* (1990) collapses the sex/gender distinction and rejects ontological claims which 'seize' the body as sexed in dichotomous (biological) terms (36). According to Butler gendered discourses are embodied so that they become to appear as natural and come to define bodies as sexed. Gender is a mechanism through which sexed bodies are produced. Here, Butler draws upon Michel Foucault's (1977) theorisation of discourses as historically specific productions of knowledge produced through social forces, and how bodies and feelings/affects do not have an 'outside' existence beyond these discursive practices which define them (19).

[4] The popular discursive process tends to come at this relationship the opposite way, whereby sex is understood as the cause and not the effect of gender. Since sex is not the cause of gender, but actually a discursive effect, there's no gender proper to one sex. As the feminist sociologist Anne Witz puts so succinctly, 'gender precedes sex' (7).

[5] Green extends Butler's formulations of performativity and its relationship with gendered discourses and bodies. Green's experiences of 'becoming an intelligible man' implies an increased acknowledgement of the historical, interactive and psychic weight of the corporeal. However, in doing so he also posits a problematic view in light of Butler's deconstruction of gender and sex by situating masculine identity within a traditional developmental or essentialised context.

[6] Utilising this experiential and theoretical tension in Green's work it is possible to consider the important dimensions of bodily visibility and history that lack 'weight' in Butler's theorising. I argue that there are limitations of current Butler influenced theoretical approaches when reflecting on the

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morphology and experience of the transitioning FTM body. Given this, this article considers Green's text in dialogue with Butler's work on performativity to ask questions about the celebrated 'subversive' nature of performativity, as well as explore tensions such a discussion can raise about masculinity as a site of subjectivity, belonging and privilege as a body becomes 'a visible man'.

Performative genders and bodies

[7] In *Gender Trouble*, Butler sought to symbolise the constructedness of gender/sex. Butler argues that gender normativity is a 'deception' constructed by the heterosexual matrix which creates dual categorical bodies of male/female (22). She contends that the physicality of the body and its matter is only delineated through the cultural norms which make bodies 'intelligible'.

[8] By deconstructing the innate basis of one's gender identity, Butler considers gender as expressed through repetitive utterances – linguistic, acts, habits, gestures – that express gendered identities that are actually 'fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means' (136). Repetition and recitation establish some of these utterances as 'proper', but they are not fixed. Performativity is not about the actual gestures or acts but about the discursive process that presents them as male or female, masculine and feminine. In this sense, masculinity is no longer presented as a fixed and essentialised construct for men who possess particular physiologies.

[9] Hausman explains that within a Western heteronormative framework the concept of gender is supported by an essentialist matrix which implies that the body is a 'mirror of identity' (191). Butler argues that heterosexuality becomes the structuring force of gender relations, as this compulsory matrix produces dichotomous and hierarchically defined sexes (99). Masculinity and femininity are coded antithetical oppositions formed through the binary of male/female. In *Bodies Matter* Butler implies in later work that these forms of masculinity and femininity are imposed on matter (16). In *Undoing Gender* Butler traces the ways in which bodies are subjected to gendering discourses in order 'sex' the body. Butler recounts the life of David Reimar, a child who was socialised as female due to a penile accident at birth. David, however, was subject to various apparatuses of scrutiny and began to question whether he was 'female'. Such questioning stemmed from his particular desires towards 'masculine' behaviours: playing with trucks/guns and climbing trees rather than dolls (60). David began to question whether he was a 'girl' as particular structures of gender were used to normalise the 'sex' of his body. David was produced as a 'male' subject through his negotiation of discourses of consumption, masculinity and heterosexual desires.

[10] Butler understands David as being constituted by cultural norms which operated to regulate the desiring body and were subsequently used by the body to make sense of its 'self' ("Gender Trouble" 45-50). Gender is not outside the domain of discourse, but a form of subjectivity implicated within it. Butler re-asserts that gender is 'performative' to illustrate that the body has no gendered fixity but is a 'stylized' set of acts and expressions which attempt to give meaning to the body. The material or 'natural' body is allegedly 'constant' in Butler's theorisation.

[11] Responding to this, Pheng Cheah asks a pertinent question: what is the causal connection between the intelligible form and the matter which materialises (117)? If gender is something that is defined through a series of 'compelling' acts of recitation, then what are the ontological conditions (the subject) which allow this identification to take place? Extending Cheah's question, Jay Prosser is deeply critical of Butler's performativity argument, which 'vanishes' the body (and its desiring capacities) and reifies gender as the discourse that governs sex (486). Elliot and Ruen argue that Butler undermines the psychical or historical weight the body may possess (287).

[12] Given Butler's logic, bodies are also never simply 'materially' existent. Butler does, however, clarify that discourses are lived in bodies (Meijer and Prins 280). There is no dichotomy between discourse on the one hand and a 'lived' body on the other. Butler notes the interaction between performativity and desire which acknowledges the ways in which the self is constituted relationally through interactions with other bodies but the discursive world is used again to push aside the visceral 'messiness' and materiality of bodies ("Account of Oneself" 23).

Formulating transgender embodiments

[13] Historically, transgendered bodies have occupied a space of gender anxiety: having been rendered 'abject' because they allegedly violate the sex/gender binary. Whilst Butler's work has provided a means to contest the gendered processes which govern 'bodily life', her performative arguments have been appropriated in transgender theories in a problematic way.

Sexual indeterminacy in performative theory has a tendency to locate transgender experiences within a queer subjectivity and subversive framework. Tina Chanter explains that 'transgender' has become a phenomenon which is often equated (by queer theorists) as the epitome of gender subversion or by gender critics of succumbing to biologically determinist connotations of sex/gender (5). In terms of 'subversion' it often becomes a romantic narrative of sexual indeterminacy. Butler's emphasis on the social constructedness of gender/sex examines gender as an artifice which can never be 'truly'

embodied because it is not fixed and can be contested. But how can transgendered bodies stake their claim without reinscribing the classic sex/gender determinacy?

[14] The Australian feminist philosopher Moira Gatens offers up an interesting extension of the critique of the sex/gender distinction beyond social constructionist leaning performative arguments of gender. She targets the conceptualisation of gender as quantitative behavioural differences which are acted by an individual subject. She is sceptical, much like Butler, of conflating the masculine/feminine dichotomy of culture with a sexed body. That is, because gender is invested in particular bodily capacities, it has different relations of signification depending on the specific (situated) body. By focusing on behaviour as quantitatively different, there is a risk of abstracting the embodied subject, and failing to account for the qualitative differences in feminine/masculine characteristics interacting with and producing female/male bodies (12).

[16] Much of the social constructionist proposal, which Gatens challenges, stems from the assumptions that in order to alter one's lived experience one must consciously alter the material practices of a culture. This supposes that one has rational agency over one's actions and that material practices are tenuous and easily rearticulated. Gatens critiques the prioritisation of such ahistorical accounts of gender and the body. She refutes their validity by arguing for the corporeal specificity of the body. Bodies are mapped, coded and embodied historically, materially and culturally in particular locations (7).

[17] Such historical coding complicates how gender congeals through discourse as the body assumes a particular material weight. Subjectivity is not simply negotiated through performativity but is embodied. This extends the argument in a different direction to Butler's emphasis on discursive formation. Gatens is also critical of the recent social constructionist feminist scholarship that emphasises 'gender' as a problem of conflating the body to outward modes of behaviour. Such a 'degendering' argument is problematic because to see gender as a 'symptom' of the body to be treated or a norm imposed on the body fails to account for its corporeal realities and lived interactivity with the body (13).

[18] Both Butler and Gatens argue that terms such as 'body' and 'gender' are unstable in their construction – so to posit a feeling of 'wholeness' to one's gendered personhood is problematic. If gender is not reducible to performativity then Gatens' monist assumptions problematise the idea of a coherent gender by including the histories and capacities of materiality. Despite the tensions with Butler, her argument seems to echo the Butlerian assumption that gender is a phantasm, one which
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can never be fully internalised or embodied in a 'coherent' way. Gatens implies that to disassociate the body from one's personhood is to reify the mind/body dualism. Bodies are not reducible to organic processes or culture in isolation – it's a dynamic of discourse and corporeality which produce the body and its capacities. Biology produces specific ways of 'knowing' and experiencing gender (14).

[19] Extending the work of Gatens and Butler, the transsexual body has the capability of articulating creative languages around the body because it can produce varied gender discourses and experiences. This intertextuality and merging of gender codes draws attention to the complexity of the transsexual phenomenon and 'situated' nature of experience. Butler's argument implies that transsexual bodies can rearticulate discourses on gender. However, the danger of such an argument is the tendency to romanticise the plasticity of gender. It introduces a new essentialism – a crossing vs. passing dichotomy, where 'crossing' is privileged above 'passing'.

[20] This also brings to the fore the tensions between examining the transgender body as either subversive, abject or normative – depending on whether it 'crosses' or 'passes.' Where Gatens is useful in this discussion is challenging such romanticism of performativity. She can be used to trace the quantitative embodied differences in 'passing' or 'crossing' genders in less abstract behavioural terms.

Masculinity, visibility and Jamison Green

[21] In negotiating these complex theoretical positions, Jamison Green's *Becoming a Visible Man* traces the fractured experience of transitioning into a 'man'. In a semi-autobiographical account supplemented with intellectual theorising, Green queries what the experience of being an FTM entails. Green moves through a fragmented patchwork of his experiences with gender dissonance. He moves from discussions about sexual relationships with women; intimacy with other transmen; experiences with hormone therapy and his decision to undertake anatomical surgery.

[22] The text starts with the rhetorical problem of naturalising sex: 'You know what sex you are, right?' (Green 1). Green emphasises the difficulties and surprises in transitioning and 'passing' as a female for a male and 'passing' as a male. For Green, there are important distinctions for the FTM: between masculinity, maleness and the male body. He explores these distinctions in terms of his childhood and dissonance with performing a 'female' social role. His experiences of dissonance transform his personal relations and intimacies.

[23] For Green, gender is introduced as a 'private matter that we share with others...a language' with different 'dialects' (191-2). Primarily, these shared experiences include his social support groups, romantic and sexual relationships. His experiences as an adult highlights the longing for a gender 'comfort' which he translates into a quest for 'visible maleness'. Green writes

Gender is a private matter that we share with others; and when we share it, it becomes a social construction, thus it requires, like a language, a 'speaker' and 'listener'. It is between the two of these actors that gender is defined, negotiated, corroborated, or challenged. But to say that without this interaction there is no need for gender is like saying that if a tree fell in the forest and no ear is there to hear the sound, then there was no sound, or perhaps no tree actually fell! (191)

[24] Working through the analogy of the 'tree' Green posits that gender has an ontological status outside discourse. Gender links this to bodily affects. This is central to his process of gender negotiation and performativity. Fear and ambiguity are posited as co-constituted affects in the process of changing sex. For Green, the 'intensity' of a sex change operation was both attractive and fearful.

[25] Green's experience implies there are bodily qualities which crucially shape the production of 'maleness' (12). It also draws attention to Butler's unanswered question as to what 'compels' the recitation of acts which produce gendered identities. There is dynamism to the body that cannot be fixed – it is a centre of 'perspective, insight, reflection, desire and agency...not inert, they function interactively and productively' (Grosz 17).

[26] Bodily influences on gender are traced further through Green's account of his friend Michael. For Green, Michael's transition had placed upon his body the constant fear of being 'outed' as not male. His fear was produced in public space: his back would 'stiffen', when the gaze of others sought to query his identity. Rather than examine the body as a biological, social or cultural site, this examination of Michael by Green, like the work of Gatens, considers the specificity of morphology. Bodily identities and responses become mediations between sensory experience, psychic perception, and discursive effect.

[27] Importantly, Green implies that hormonal changes (taking testosterone) do not result in a social female transforming into a social male

One thing is certain: taking testosterone will not make a social female into a social male. It will change some sex-differentiated characteristics that are interpreted socially as male, but it won't make a man out of anyone. Being a man is more than looking like one. It requires knowing what is expected of a man, and choosing how to go about meeting or not meeting those expectations at any given moment. (94)

[28] Whilst it will change sex characteristics to some extent, 'being a man' involves attaining a comfort with the body and meeting the expectations of what a man is or should do in a specific moment (Green 94). Yet, what constitutes the strength of manhood (and womanhood) is the capacity for unexpected acts, ones which are based on negotiating identifications at that moment rather than adhering to gendered utterances.

[29] Changing his body was, for Green, a quest for visibility of the body, a 'male' body that would communicate the masculinity being repressed by the possession of a 'female' body

I began to struggle consciously with what I called a lie in my existence: if people perceived me as male, I had to worry about whether they might find out that I had a female body, and then would feel betrayed or deceived and entitled to punish me for it. But if people perceived me as female and treated me the way they treated women in general (even if it was polite, respectful or deferential, I felt invisible, as if I didn't exist). It was hard enough living with this myself and with my partner, but to inflict this on children, to ask them to carry the burden of the dichotomy that was my physical being, was asking too much. (21)

[30] For Green it was the confusion of having a daughter and being labelled a mother, rather than a father, which facilitated a choice to reassign sex. Yet it was affects of desire, anxiety and frustration that were also brought to bear on the question of transitioning. Being interpellated as both a male and female was an affective anxiety that needed to be overcome. As a result, Green underwent a full sex reassignment surgery which involved both a mastectomy and metoidioplasty.²

[31] The phenomenon of the transsexual body is that it is searching for gendered ontology yet this 'ontology' is constantly transforming (Grosz 19). The transitioning body, therefore, can be conceptualised in its temporality. It is a dynamic process of change, a 'becoming', which makes Green's experience personal, unpredictable and irreducible to either a social construction or biological explanation of the body.

Experiencing 'maleness'

[32] Green's experiences with masculine embodiment and subjectivity align with Gatens' conception of the 'imagined body'

Observing the men in the Sons [of Orpheus], most of whom seemed comfortable in their bodies, at a time when I was realising how my own new body 'worked' with respect to how it reflected me in the world, was instructive (37).

Green's discussion of identity is not typological: gender is not a 'psychosocial box into which we can place ourselves' (81). Bodies are understood through negotiating intersectional identifications of socially and historically constructed meanings such as race, class, sexuality, gender, age. Despite this, Green is searching for the similar comfortability in his body that he identifies in the other men.

[33] Possessing a history of being female bodied posed many challenges for Green about what makes a man (39). No longer classed as a 'special case' – a female bodied male – Green's socialisation with men embodies a space of ironic 'closeting'. His transsexual status was a 'secret'. If revealed, his body would pose a threat to his sociality as a man. No longer does masculinity operate as a basis of ridicule directed by others towards him, but a space of anxiety in seeking to avoid normalising gazes. It confers a privilege that resonates with Green, but also produces a burden that must be hidden. This is implied by the 'instructive' nature of men's group meetings such as the 'Son's of Orpheus': educating Green on how to 'become' a man.

[34] What is interesting in Green's account is the way in which the silence of being FTM and the refusal to speak shapes his particular subjectivity of being a man. His fear towards being recognised as 'different' within the 'male' forum forced a silence – to refuse being marked as 'other'. The elision between masculinity (as perceived maleness) and anatomical maleness is reinforced by Green who privileges a psychic account to his behaviour. What this implies is a self-regulation through normalising his body through the assumptions of 'reflecting' a coherent 'natural' masculinity.

[35] It is important to note, however, that masculinities are enacted differently on the FTM body. For example, Green felt an anxiety over attending men's group meetings for fear that his 'female bodiedness' would be uncovered (35–8). By recounting the ways in which he was met and befriended by the other men, there was no question of his 'true sex'. Rather, his ways of dressing, acting and speaking (in a low pitched tone) typified the ways in which the discourses around fashion and

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masculinity produced the truth of his 'maleness'. His quest was for a particular masculine belonging, which through his silence, was validated by 'passing' at the meetings.

[36] Green's experiences emphasise how Butler's position on performative gender while useful can also obscure the importance of historicising the lived body. Even if we accept that gender is an axis to approach critical analysis of bodily differences, it is problematic to over-assert that it is solely constituted in social terms. In Green's case, his masculine 'self' developed through a complex negotiation of performativity, bodily functioning and psychic identifications. By understanding the anxieties surrounding the men's group and Green's interactions we can observe the ways in which gender is 'compelled' by the way we live with our bodies and its histories.

[37] Further to this, it is interesting to note that Green's childhood was marked by what we would deem 'deception' by his family in order to repress the confessions (or psychic weight) of his masculinity (10-12). He mentions that 'although he had little choice in the matter', he felt deep discomfort when he wore female clothing. His behaviour was incongruous to the feminine demeanour signified by his dresses (10). Gatens' conceptualisation is useful here, as the body seems to reject the performativity of a certain gender. Gatens identifies that whilst bodies act as signifiers, there are characteristics that precede the (cultural) 'symbolisation' which implies the body has specific morphology that is not merely an 'expression' of discourse, as Butler would argue. Green only understood the dynamics of his masculine preferences by negotiating the ways his body was perceived and how it operated.

Dissonances and transitions

[38] It is also interesting to consider Gatens' argument of the lived body in terms of Green's experience

So many men worry about their masculinity as defining the quality of their manhood: with the right amount of masculinity, they expect to be accepted by others, but if they feel their masculinity is deficient, then they expect not to be treated well in the world. I was beginning to learn concretely that my own masculinity was not in question, that my masculinity (in this case, a quality of perceived maleness) preceded my male body. (35)

[39] In order to account for the dissonance between transgendered perception of gender identity and the body, Green uses a computer analogy. He differentiates 'sex' as the hardware and 'gender' as the software. Using the metaphor, he locates his experience as an 'operational confusion' or struggle between the physical body and manifested gender identity (7). In exploring the complexity of this, Green differentiates between masculinity and 'maleness.' 'Maleness' becomes perceived as a social construct which is signified by physical appearance. Masculinity is seen as a way of acting. Thus, Green's female body led to his feeling of 'incompleteness' (31). Being a man 'is gestalt, a wholeness of mind and body' (189).

[40] Gatens arguments are relevant to extending how the body occupies intersensory space and spatial 'unity' (Weiss 10). This 'unity' is not achieved by a coherence of biological attributes. Rather, it is a structured identification that derives its meaning from the world in which a body is situated- the body in relation to other bodies. This relationality of the body is elaborated by Gatens who claims that the differences ascribed to bodies are understood in terms of capacities and affects rather than by ontological substances (12).

[41] By conceptualising Green's understanding of his body in relation to others, we come to see the ways in which masculinity and 'maleness' become negotiated through how we read our bodies and what they do. That said, Green's assertion of his masculine 'core' is problematic in that it unwittingly reinforces particular gender hierarchies of bodies and the 'deficiencies' he is critiquing. Female bodies are rejected (and abjected) by their quality of 'incompleteness' or 'lack' (of identity) for him. Furthermore, male bodies become privileged in his discussion as complete wholes, reinscribing the antithetical constructs of man/woman. In doing so, Green essentialises the quality of being a 'man' as something psychic and inner to his being that is abstracted (or exists) independently from his then female body.

[42] Green does note that his masculinity did not depend upon the possession of an anatomically male body. Rather, his masculinity was 'natural'. Drawing on the tenets of Lou Sullivan's *FTM Newsletter*, Green advocates that the body does not prescribe a fixed or 'correct' form of masculinity (28-9). Moreover, expressions of masculinity exist irrespective of the body which enacts it. Green does, however, recognise the different experiences of this masculinity when he was female as opposed to male bodied. By identifying that masculinity is the defining quality of 'manhood', he explains that being male bodied allowed him to enter public spaces without the normalising gaze which queried his androgyny, when he was female bodied (23).

Once Green transitions into a man, he seems to reverse his earlier position, as he notes the ways in which the body itself marks 'maleness'

I became acutely aware of women's fear of men in general, something that I had never understood until it was directed at me as a man when I inadvertently surprised a woman by running up behind her as we were both entering a subway station. I didn't mean to startle her, and I did apologize, but the fear in her eyes when she looked at me, apparently thinking I was about to accost her, was a painful thing for us both. (36)

[43] Green reflects upon the startled look she gave him, and then links the gaze to the discourse of sexual violence. The male body rather than masculinity is a weapon which perpetrates such violence (188). What such assumptions highlight is that Green internalises the norms around the male body as a penetrating object through the gaze of the woman.

[44] Romantic encounters are also central to the imagining of different bodily capacities. When Green had his first kiss, he accounts that he experienced the 'maleness' of his body through a particular sexual identification

I spent a lot of time driving around, listening to the radio, imagining a woman next to me who loved me, who would want to kiss me and stroke my body. I didn't think too much about genitals. I knew mine weren't right for me, and I didn't think it would ever be possible to make them right. I was eighteen before a woman ever kissed me and let me touch her breasts, but I was hooked long before that on the idea of taking a woman in my arms and ravishing her while simultaneously protecting her. When that first kiss finally came though, I knew I had a penis very much alive in me. (149)

[45] Despite Green's emphasis on gender variance and difference, this experience of bodily dissonance seems to stem from a heterosexual matrix. By suggesting that there was 'a penis very much alive in me' he derives a legitimacy and pleasure from that imagining (36). It is interesting to compare this position with Gatens' conception of the imaginary body. Green's imagined penis offered him a 'motility' to act as a man and mobilises his affective desires. 'In the beginning I marvelled at my penis...it was a lust that saved me' (152-3). Gatens elucidates that the 'imaginary' is a psychoanalytic phenomenon where investments in a 'narcissistic reality' produce an image of the 'other' which is

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internalized (8). Imaginaries structure our biological, interpersonal and social existence. Imaginary bodies, therefore, are manifested through images and ideas, which, as subjects, allow us to understand our embodiment. Green's body was understood in relation to other body images (intercorporeality) – it was not static. Extending intercorporeality, an individual's body image is mediated not simply in relation to perception but also the 'touch' (affectivity) of other bodies. It is the 'kiss' and the 'touch' that manifests Green's imagined penis.

Transitioning

[46] For Green, the tensions between masculinity and his female body culminate in a desire to undergo sex reassignment surgery. Due to the varied parental and romantic frustrations associated with being cited as a confused woman or imperfect man, bodily change becomes necessary to 'find' his masculine core. Transitioning, then, is an extension of performativity, which is characterised by Green in loose terms. It is an oscillation of experiences: internal 'fulfilment' as opposed to conforming to rigid gender standards or binaries (89–90). Green conceptualises transitioning as a case of self-authorship

There is also the inevitable fascination with our physical body as it changes right before our eyes into something to which we finally connected and of which we want to be proud. We may also share a sense of freedom in wearing clothing of choice, the ability to experience psychologically satisfying sexual interaction for this first time, being recognised at last as a member of the gender category in which we feel most comfortable, and the sense of doing something for ourselves rather than always trying to please others. (207)

[47] Transitioning is a case of critical agency, one which is limited in Butler's analysis. Whilst Green acknowledges that the body is subject to a system of binary classification, he argues that transsexual bodies (both pre and post transition) do not conform to normative male or female standards. Rather, transitioning becomes a means by which the transsexual is able to realise a psychological and bodily 'comfort' rather than a conscious attempt to reinforce binaries of sex/gender. Green emphasises that this process of transformation 'opens windows' along the somewhat rigid boundaries of gender. Butler's response to sex reassignment surgery implies that if bodily markers 'indicate' sex, then sex is different to the means through which it is articulated (90).

Conclusion

[48] Ultimately, the transgender experience illustrates the difficulty in simplifying masculinity in terms of a hegemonic or coherent discourse. Dynamism and contingencies associated with the body shape and inflect transsexual experiences of embodying masculinity. FTM embodiment is constitutive of a new territory in which masculinity is a trajectory of performativity cited through the unpredictability of the body. Questions of masculine gender identities vary: intersected by experiences of desire, belonging and imagined bodies. By positioning Green's *Becoming a Visible Man* within Butler's performative explanations, we observe the limitations of an argument that treats bodies as simply a discursive location, rather than a dynamic space in which matter and experience is produced. Affective dimensions of fear, shame and frustration work to produce particular experiences of the transgender account of masculinity.

[49] Green's subjectivity of being and becoming a 'visible man' must be located within a particular historical moment: cultures and natures of bodies operate on a locus with transformative capabilities. Discourses 'live' on and through bodies. Mapping FTM experiences and forms of subjectivity requires an acknowledgement that transsexualism is an affective dynamic of a particular gender/body morphology that can only ever be partially understood through negotiating theoretical positions on performativity and embodiment. Despite the limits of such theoretical approaches, performativity and phenomenology allow us the opportunity to ask new questions around bodily dissonance and desire in order to examine the limits and possibilities of the transgender body. Green's particular FTM morphology is characterised by gendered anxieties and questing for 'belonging' in conjunction to particular privileged notions around 'coherent' masculinity, bodily comfort and psychic subjectivity that are incommensurable to any singular theoretical account.

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¹ Differentiating between 'transgender' and 'transsexual' is essential to understanding the particularity of FTM embodiments. According to Green, 'transgender' is the broad term referring to individuals who display gender variation and non-conformism. That is, it is a self-identity category. 'Transsexual', on the other hand, refers to a medical condition whereby an individual seeks hormonal or surgical change to alter characteristics of the body to align with their preferred gender identity.

² Metoidioplasty refers to a surgery in which the skin around the vaginal walls is refashioned into a phallus like object. A mastectomy refers to a removal of the breast tissue.