Fig. 1. Virginia Prince giving Service Club lecture. *Transvestia*, 30: 4, 1964. Reproduced with the permission of University of Victoria Libraries.

Virginia Prince, Robert Stoller and the Trans Feminist Intellectual History of the Sex/Gender Distinction

by Emily Cousens

On 30th March 1964 the UCLA psychiatrist Robert Stoller wrote to his colleague, a pharmacologist named Dr Prince, to ask for her continued support with his research.[1] Prince at this point had been giving lectures titled 'Sex and Gender' to Stoller's UCLA medical school students for two years. Her lectures developed John Money's 1955 concept of a 'gender role' and applied it to her own life as a self-identified heterosexual transvestite occupying two distinct gender identities: Virginia and Charles. Four years after this letter was written Stoller went on to

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achieve widespread acclaim for his theorization of 'gender identity' as a psychological phenomenon distinct from biological sex with the publication in 1968 of *Sex and Gender: On the Development of Masculinity and Femininity*; the second volume, subtitled *Sex and Gender: The Transsexual Experiment*, was published in 1975.[2] In genealogies of the sex/gender distinction, it is Stoller's arguments which are generally credited as distinguishing these terms for the first time.[3] However, reading the exchanges between Prince and Stoller from the beginning of the 1960s in the Virginia Prince records at the University of Victoria Transgender Archives, alongside extensive additional archival research and Prince's own overlooked yet mammoth output of published gender theorizing from 1957 onwards, indicates that Prince was an unacknowledged influence on Stoller's intellectual development.[4] Not only were Prince and Stoller colleagues, they became close friends and intellectual sparring partners. In addition, Stoller interviewed Prince twice a month for twenty-nine years, until his death in 1991, in what amounts to 'one of the most detailed records of research interviews ever to be acquired'.[5] That despite this long connection Stoller never acknowledged his longstanding relationship with Prince supports Susan Stryker's contention that 'because she was openly a transvestite, Prince could speak "only" as a transvestite, and not as a medical expert whose professional knowledges and competencies were respected by her professional peers'.[6]

In addition to being significant in the intellectual history of the sex/gender distinction, the Prince-Stoller correspondence opens up a series of important questions for the history of feminism, liberalism, sexual science and trans history. It foregrounds the misogyny and transmisogyny that legitimizes the theft and erasure of women's ideas, it restores trans individuals as agents in the development of sexual science and feminism, and it highlights the simultaneous appeal and shortsightedness of pursuing liberal respectability for those who live outside of the cisgendered norm. Most importantly, however, re-establishing Prince's pivotal place in the heuristic's history clarifies the strategic currency of separating sex from gender, and offers cautionary insights into the political violence conducted under the veil of the conceit's seductive simplicity today.

Prince has a fraught relationship to the categories of 'trans' and 'feminist'.[7] She despised umbrella terms, preferring her own categories – femmiphile (FP – meaning lover of the feminine) and transgenderal, which later became transgenderist (having the best of masculinity and femininity, without changing 'what's between their legs' or being 'happy in "doing your own thing"').[8] She reproduced misogyny (rating wives on an alphabetical scale), transmisogyny (distancing herself from transsexual women) and transmisandry (denying trans masculinity, because 'women' could already wear masculine clothing). Yet as one of the most prolific theorists of sex and gender in the twentieth century, who lived as a 'full time woman' from 1968 until her death in 2009, she deserves consideration under that label.[9] Prince was a member of the National Organization of Women (N.O.W), understanding the battle for Women's Liberation and FP liberation to be linked;[10] and she engaged with the

emerging white feminist literature, recommending Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* to readers on the basis that Friedan's argument that 'living half a human life is frustrating and irritating and results in many psychic, psychological and social symptoms and disturbances' is as relevant to transfeminine transvestites as to those we would now call cis women (Prince's term was 'genetic girl').[11]

Exploring the distinctiveness of Prince's trans feminist philosophy is thus illuminating for intellectual histories of the sex/gender distinction. She was one of the most widely read authorities on sex and gender in her time, and one who benefited from embodied knowledge and a resistance to inherited scientific and disciplinary orthodoxies. Yet these insights were combined with her ideological commitment to 'heterosexual transvestism' as a potentially respectable, normative, liberal gendered subject position. In centring Prince's authorship, the politics, morality and racialized overtones of a rhetorically concise division between sex and gender become apparent. Moreover, it is Prince's distinctly ideological commitment to establishing the category of gender as free from the taint of the category of 'sex' (which included both those marginalized by embodied sex difference – transsexuals and intersex people – and those marginalized by 'deviant' sexual preferences) which informs the construction of this story as an intellectual history rather than a genealogy. Whereas for Michel Foucault, 'a genealogy is an attempt to desubjugate historical knowledges, to set them free', or in the words of Kadji Amin, a means to expose identities or knowledges as 'the outcome of a slow avalanche of historical accidents', such multiplicity and contingency is not my focus.[12] Rather, my claim is that cissexuality is a deeply ideological construction, and that engaging with it as such is necessary for queer, trans and feminist scholars seeking to recognize the sex/gender distinction's enduring appeal and fundamental violence.

Prince has been recognized within North American trans histories as an influential yet divisive figure[13] and she generates strong emotions – from respect to pain and anger – in those who knew or were touched by her.[14] Yet she has received no acknowledgement in recent genealogies of the sex/gender distinction. She remains one of the most prolific, well-connected, yet understudied influences on the development of sex/gender knowledges in the US. The intensity of the Prince-Stoller relationship in particular, and his lack of public acknowledgement of her influence, makes it important to historicize their story.[15] Revisiting the relationship between Virginia Prince and Robert Stoller, I argue, offers a vital entry point into the intellectual influences and conditions of possibility behind the sex/gender distinction as it became formulated in both clinical and feminist settings in the second half of the twentieth century.

In introducing Prince's motivations, through letters and unpublished articles in her archives, alongside her published arguments, it is not my intention to reproduce dismissive interpretative frames whereby marginalized people are only able to speak to and from a position of identity. Prince's transness did give her an epistemic advantage that other researchers of sexuality and gender

lacked. She challenged the authority of experts (at the same time as she recognized and relied on their social standing and perceived authority) and argued against the automatic pathologization of transfemininity (while arguing against the idea that surgery should be an unexceptional part of self-determination).[16] Nor am I proposing that her peers in the field of trans medicine like Stoller and Harry Benjamin were in any way more objective in their research. To the contrary, both held deeply compromised positions that were inseparable from their own positionalities and ideological investments. Benjamin was 'actively involved with eugenics research and institutions',[17] while Stoller built on the mother-blaming discourse common to 1920s and 1930s psychology, according to which children risked being 'mollycoddled' into homosexuality and 'sissiness', in order to present transfemininity as a 'problem' of mothers smothering their 'boys'.[18] Stoller believed 'transsexualism' in children was treatable, thus providing justifications for the UCLA conversion therapy practices which were publicly funded during the 1970s to prevent 'sissiness', and which remain influential to this day.[19] Benjamin and Stoller's own arguments are equally reflective of their politics of location, their investments in specific European notions of normative individuation, and, as with all scientific research, financial backing and options for career progression. In restoring Prince to the historical record in this way, my purpose is both to counter trans exclusionary hierarchies of knowing, and to enquire into what Prince's own rationale for separating sex and gender can tell us about political appeals to the sex/gender distinction today.

VIRGINIA PRINCE, SEX/GENDER THEORIZING AND TRANSVESTITE COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

By the time of her introduction to Stoller in 1962, Prince had gained a reputation as an authority on transvestism both within the US medical establishment and the burgeoning national and international trans community. Having made a reasonable contribution to the scholarly literature in pharmacology by the end of the 1930s,[20] it was during her post-doctoral employment at University of California San Francisco (UCSF) at the beginning of the 1940s that she began to take advantage of the books in the medical school library to better understand her own gender. As Prince recalls, 'my white lab coat got me into the medical library and my education in the fields of sex and gender began', and she quickly became amongst the most well-read academics in the US on the available clinical, historical, and fictional literature on sex and gender diversity.[21] Her bibliographies reflect this, demonstrating an engagement with the writings of Magnus Hirschfeld, Wilhelm Stekel and Havelock Ellis, as well as an eclectic, exoticized appreciation of gender diversity in different cultures.

It was also during Prince's employment at UCSF that she first encountered other trans women. Attending 'psychiatric grand rounds' at the Langley-Porter Clinic, Prince was introduced to 'case histories' of trans women.[22] The second of these was a Bay Area trans lesbian named Louise Lawrence.[23] Prince recalls how she 'loitered' at the end of the session to get a chance to speak to Mr Stuart, who

had presented the 'cases'. Stuart happily engaged in a professional and friendly conversation with Prince as they walked out to the parking lot, and eventually showed her his scrapbook full of pictures of crossdressers.[24] When she saw the photograph of Lawrence, Prince, who was at the time still living under her birth name, made a mental note of Lawrence's contact details and visited her a few weeks later. Lawrence was already working alongside leading sexologists Harry Benjamin, Alfred Kinsey, Karl Bowman and others to educate them about transvestism and transsexuality.[25] She had also developed a social network and mail list of crossdressers and transvestites which would form the basis of Prince's own initial trans community. When Prince turned up at Lawrence's front door in 1941,[26] their encounter would eventually provide the stepping stone for what was perhaps Prince's most significant achievement: turning *Transvestia: Journal of the American Society for Equality in Dress* – a collectively-produced 1952 newsletter developed by Prince, Lawrence and others, which had run out of finances and stopped publishing after two issues – into a financially viable enterprise headed by Prince alone in 1960.[27] Under Prince's editorship bi-monthly issues were typically ninety-six pages, and the journal achieved an international readership, with several hundred subscribers across Europe, Australia and North America. Issues were distributed via Chevalier publications, the publishing house Prince set up to distribute both *Transvestia* and her books on gender and crossdressing.[28] Taking some inspiration from homophile organizations' magazines such as *One Magazine* (est. 1953), *The Mattachine Review* (est. 1955) and *The Ladder* (est. 1956), yet maintaining a presence throughout the 1970s after these publications had folded, Prince served as editor for 100 issues until 1979, when she sold Chevalier Publications and *Transvestia* to Carol Beecroft.[29] Two years after re-launching *Transvestia*, Prince also organized its readership into the first chapter of what would become a nationwide sorority style social group, the Foundation for Full Personality Expression (FPE), which grew to have chapters nationally and internationally, and exists to this day under its subsequent name Tri-Ess.

Transvestia provided the platform for Prince's evolving philosophies of sex and gender; Robert Hill summarizes that across a hundred 'Virgin Views' editorials, 'Prince spent the better part of her life exploring the contours of normative and non-normative masculinities and femininities'.[30] She also authored three books, which were widely circulated amongst the trans community, and reached more extensive trans audiences via her international speaking tours to the UK, Australia and Europe.[31] The largely user-generated aspect of *Transvestia*, which included lengthy letters to the editor sections, and columnist Susanna Valenti's regular theoretical contributions throughout the 1960s, meant that Prince was in dialogue with those members of the trans community who shared her values. It was Valenti who coined the concept of 'the girl within', for example, which Prince then made central to her philosophy.[32] However, Prince styled herself as an icon and a spokesperson for heterosexual transvestites. She was not interested in compromising with those

who disagreed with her, and had an unshakeable conviction in her own authority and expertise. As she writes:

> there is an old saying, 'don't judge others by yourself' but for years I have been aware of how false that saying is. Actually, yourself is all you have to judge anyone else by. Thus I find myself extracting conclusions about other people and their lives from looking at development in my own.[33]

Whilst Prince was far from the only mid-twentieth century trans person to shape the development of sex/gender knowledges, over her twenty years as an intellectual and activist she achieved an influence over both the scientific and 'lay' gender communities which few others managed. Therefore, it is to her place in the genealogy of the sex/gender distinction that this article now turns.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SEX, GENDER AND THE SEX/ GENDER DISTINCTION

According to Stella Sandford, 'for some, it was the sex/gender distinction that allowed second wave feminism to get off the ground and few feminist scholars would disagree on the fact, if not the nature, of its historical importance'.[34] As feminist scholarship became institutionalized in the US in the 1970s, thinkers following Kate Millett adopted the sex/gender distinction to present the argument, received as revolutionary at the time, that there is no evidence that 'the present social distinctions of patriarchy (status, role, temperament) are physical in origin'.[35] The notion of gender socialization became important among white women theorizing the cultural influences on observed differences between 'the sexes'. Binary accounts of sex derived from biology proceeded with relatively little scrutiny on such a framework, but … biology was not destiny! Sociology and socialization could be addressed independently from so-called facts about the body. Challenging the widely held notion that men were not only different, but superior, and that patriarchy was a universal and therefore unchallengeable natural order, Millett leveraged the – at the time little known – concept of gender. She explains:

> Important new research not only suggests that the possibilities of innate temperamental differences seem more remote than ever, but even raises questions as to the validity and permanence of psycho-sexual identity. In doing so it gives fairly concrete positive evidence of the overwhelmingly *cultural* character of gender, i.e. – personality structure in terms of sexual category.[36]

For Millett, conceptualizing gender as cultural provided the necessary scaffolding to argue for the equal treatment of women, on the grounds that observed differences between the sexes are most likely in the realm of gender and therefore social, not biological. Millett became among the first of many feminists throughout the second wave who 'increasingly borrowed the

language of gender and distinguished gender from biological sex and also from sexual desire' in order to build on de Beauvoir's famous assertion that observed differences between men and women were acquired not innate.[37] Millett draws directly on Stoller's newly published *Sex and Gender* (1968) in order to establish her claims. I quote at length because the turns of phrase she uses have strong echoes of Prince's argumentation, which I detail subsequently.

> Studies done in California under Stoller's direction offer proof that gender identity (I am a girl, I am a boy) is the primary identity any human being holds – the first as well as the most permanent and far-reaching. Stoller later makes emphatic the distinction that sex is biological, gender psychological, and therefore cultural: '*Gender* is a term that has psychological or cultural rather than biological connotations. If the proper terms for sex are "male" and "female", the corresponding terms for gender are "masculine" and "feminine"; these latter may be quite independent of (biological) sex'. Indeed, so arbitrary is gender, that it may even be contrary to physiology: '… although the external genitalia (penis, testes, scrotum) contribute to the sense of maleness, no one of them is essential for it, not even all of them together. In the absence of complete evidence, I [Stoller] agree in general with Money and the Hampsons who show in their large series of intersexed patients that gender role is determined by postnatal forces, regardless of the anatomy and physiology of the external genitalia.'[38]

Many feminists who gladly accepted the sex/gender framework as set out by Millett did 'not pay such close attention to the work of the researchers who studied transsexuality, and most accepted the categories of female and male as self-evident'.[39] Millett, for example, references the research of John Money and Joan and John Hampson, but fails to interrogate the fact that this research involved coercive surgeries on intersex patients. For John Money and his colleagues, the novel concept of 'gender role' provided a harmful justification for intersex surgeries. Millett uncritically accepted the concept's utility for such 'cases of genital malformation'.[40]

In the late 1950s, John Money and Joan and John Hampson had been working on white, anatomically indeterminate (intersex) patients, trying to answer the question of whether they should be raised male or female.[41] As sex had become an 'unwieldy biological category, now composed of genotype, gonads, hormones, genitals, internal organs, secondary anatomical features, and psychology, with none of them exerting what amounted to a deterministic influence',[42] Money and the Hampsons looked for an alternative to settle the question of how to raise the child. Their answer was 'sex of socialization' or 'gender *role*', and Money's advice to doctors working with intersex infants was to determine 'a *best* sex for each of their patients' and to ensure they were raised accordingly.[43] He understood children's responsiveness to postnatal gendering to be time sensitive, which provided a rationale for the urgency of imposing surgery on those too young to consent or inform the process.[44] However, the research of

Money and the Hampsons wasn't initially intended to inform broader understandings of gendering processes.

Recent accounts of the clinical origins of the concept of gender have traced the development from 'gender role' to the sex/gender distinction in the work of Robert Stoller over a decade later.[45] Offering a detailed overview of the development of Stoller's thought prior to the publication of *Sex and Gender* in 1968, Jennifer Germon traces how Stoller used the term 'gender identity' for the first time at a conference in 1963 'in order to talk about the psychological sense of knowing "to which sex one belongs, that is, the awareness 'I am a male' or 'I am a female'".'[46] Subsequently, Germon identifies a number of interventions in a 1964 paper by Stoller which entrench the notion of 'core' gender identity, and provide the ground 'that enables Stoller to separate out the concept of sex, his most well known contribution to gender'.[47] This intellectual history of 'gender' has become widely reproduced, and 'gloss paragraphs' which indicate 'commonly held positions about the recent past'[48] repeat these steps (first Money, then Stoller, then second wave feminism) as a point of departure.[49]

The significance of this particular clinical moment is in fact overstated. The idea that sex and gender were distinct – one embodied and biological, the other social – had been present in English-language psychoanalytic and psychological literature since at least the 1940s. In a 1946 review of new books by Helene Deutsch and Theodor Reik, for example, A. Salina Damm writes of the useful yet often overlooked psychoanalytical 'distinction between *sex* (a matter of anatomy, physiology and fervid behaviour) and *gender* (the social estimation of the man-like or the masculine and of the woman-like or the feminine' [italics original].[50] These contributions have been lost in dominant intellectual histories which emphasize the Money to Stoller moment as of supreme epistemic significance.

It is, however, correct that it was the publication of Stoller's *Sex and Gender vol. 1* which led to the renewed interest in gender as a conceptual container by feminists in the 1970s, and as Isabell Dahms writes, 'it is Stoller, rather than Money, who is generally cited in the second-wave feminist literature on gender'.[51] Examining Stoller's dependence on Prince's ideas is therefore important for addressing the transmisogynistic injustice wherein trans women can only be the subjects, never the authors, of knowledge. Such epistemic erasure is exemplified in Jemima Repo's study *The Biopolitics of Gender*. In Repo's account of how *Sex and Gender* 'reported on 10 years of research on the psychosexual development, related syndromes, and treatment of intersexed and male transsexual patients'[52] she accepts without question that the 'patients' were simply passive objects in these encounters. This is despite Sandy Stone's documentation of a 'feedback loop' of evidence for transsexuality as diagnosis and diagnosable during this period; the bible for medical gatekeeping, Harry Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon* (1966), was widely shared among trans communities who learnt the necessary script to be eligible for healthcare, unbeknownst to doctors who presumed their patients to be too illogical to engage in such competent behaviour.[53]

None of these increasingly well-rehearsed histories discuss the influence of Prince on Stoller's thought – an omission aided by the fact that he never credits her publicly. Yet exploring the development of Prince's own thought prior to her regular meetings and collaborations with Stoller demonstrates that Stoller's 'refinement' of gender – and its disentanglement from 'sex' – bears a remarkable similarity to the work Prince had been theorizing, publishing and then disseminating in the preceding years. The dominant intellectual history of the sex/gender distinction jumps from Money to Stoller – yet as the following section highlights, it was Prince who was the first to recognize the significance of Money's concept of 'gender role' for understandings of gender identity, and without her influence it is unlikely that the history of sexual science, trans medicine or feminist philosophy would have proceeded in the way that it did.

THE VIRGINIA PRINCE – ROBERT STOLLER EXCHANGES

Robert Stoller's 1964 letter to Prince is typed on informal paper without any institutional heading, suggestive of a personal relationship between the two. At the same time, he addresses her formally, as 'Dear Dr. Prince', and the focus of the letter remains professional and research-related.[54] This simultaneously close yet professional relationship is a pattern of their involvement with each other, and this letter isn't an isolated exchange. A year earlier, Stoller had written a shorter, similar letter of thanks to Prince, explaining 'we are most appreciative of your having presented your data on transvestism to the conference on Tuesday, October 29, in the role of Miss Virginia Prince'.[55] Their correspondence is clear evidence of a relationship that was extremely significant for Stoller. In the 1964 letter he writes:

> Your great willingness to help [the UCLA Gender Identity Research Clinic of the Department of Psychiatry] in the past, both as Virginia and as Charles, has been most appreciated by the members of our research team. In addition, your lectures to medical students and to our residents have been of great teaching value, especially because you are willing to appear in the role of Virginia, thus demonstrating clearly the material on transvestism on which you were talking.[56]

Stoller was reliant on the co-operation and assistance of influential and well-connected members of the trans community to provide the necessary data for his own sex/gender research. In addition to thanking her for her lectures, Stoller's letter demonstrates this reliance on Prince's community contacts, asking for help with:

> a rather lengthy questionnaire we have prepared, in which we are trying to search out the attitudes of a number of different groups of people in the population regarding certain specific gender and sex role problems. This project would be incomplete if we could not get data from an extensive group of transvestites. Is it possible for you to mail out 400–500 of these

> questionnaires to members of your group? Such data would be invaluable to us.[57]

Prince's combination of academic authority and embeddedness within a network of trans individuals made her an essential contact for Stoller. His letter ends by thanking Prince not only for her community-based assistance, but for her intellectual influence.

> I would like to thank you in general for your cooperation in so many areas of our research, for you have not only made available to us information from your own life, reading material of both scientific and lay nature, photographs related to transvestism, and letters describing the feelings of transvestites who have subscribed to your magazine, *but also a point of view in dealing with theoretical problems which, as you know, has greatly occupied our interest* [italics mine].[58]

This point of view is most likely Prince's new systematization of the relationship between sex and gender.

By the time that Stoller was publicly presenting his concept of 'core gender identity' in 1963, Virginia Prince had been developing her own theories of sex and gender as distinct, the former biological, the latter psychological, for at least three years. Prince was open about her influence on her friend 'Bob', explaining the resemblance of many of their ideas in a later interview with Kenneth Plummer: 'Well I have brainwashed Bob for five or six years'.[59] Although intended as a throwaway comment, Prince's influence is confirmed by Prince and Stoller's close acquaintances, the sexologists Vern Bullough and Richard Green, who both noted that Prince 'deserves the credit for the first useful clarification of these terms' [sex and gender] and that 'in this matter she had much influence upon Stoller'.[60] Amongst the *Transvestia* readership it was widely understood that the intellectual direction of travel was from Prince to Stoller. A review of Stoller's *Sex and Gender* in a 1968 issue of *Transvestia* by one of the journal's readers observes that 'to some extent, it represents her [Virginia's] thinking, as she and Dr. Stoller have come to agree on many points in the course of this cooperation', referencing the previous six years of fortnightly interviews and collaboration between Stoller and Prince.[61] Meanwhile, unlike Stoller, Benjamin does reference Prince after enlisting her as an adviser for his landmark text *The Transsexual Phenomenon* in 1966, and credits the clarity her systematization had provided: 'sex and gender are synonyms according to the dictionary. But as it was well put by Dr. Prince, sex is "below the belt" and "gender is above"'.[62] Prince's biographer Richard F. Docter, discussing the Prince-Stoller interview transcripts, comments that 'one persistent theme pursued by Prince was her insistence on the clarification of the differences between the words, sex and gender. She insisted that the term, sex, should be biologically defined, while the term, gender, should refer to attributes of masculinity and femininity'.[63] And it is to Prince's own understandings of sex

and gender as they were being formed in years prior to her meeting with Stoller, and then prior to the publication of Stoller's *Sex and Gender* in 1968, that I shall now turn.

VIRGINIA PRINCE'S PHILOSOPHIES OF SEX AND GENDER

As discussed above, Prince had begun developing her own philosophies of sex and gender in 1941, when she had access to all the available literature in the medical libraries at the Langley Porter Clinic and the Biomedicine Library in Berkley. Prince sought to counter some of the misogyny and transphobia that motivated clinical discussions around transvestism at the time, aiming to depathologize it as a behaviour, foreground the actual experiences of transvestites themselves, and steer discussions away from the 'explanations' that focussed on bad mothering or sexual perversion. In the 1950s, before Prince articulated her version of the sex/gender distinction, interest in 'sexual disorders' tended to conflate expressions of femininity in subjects assigned male at birth with homosexuality. Understanding from first-hand experience the difference, and fearing the taint of sexual perversion against the background of the Lavender Scare (a government-led moral panic about homosexuality), in 1957 Prince published her first academic article on sex and gender. Titled 'Homosexuality, Transvestism and Transsexuality: Reflections on Their Etiology and Differentiation', it contained the foundations of what Prince would consistently argue: that most transvestites were generally not homosexual, that sex, gender and sexuality are distinct, and that medical researchers and the general public had failed to realize this. Faced with US sexological orthodoxies which ignored the work of writers on sexuality such as Magnus Hirschfield and Havelock Ellis, who had distinguished transvestism from homosexuality fifty years earlier, Prince used her research expertise to distil their arguments for her own readers and for the US sexological community. She builds on these to offer her own theorization of transvestism as unrelated to sexuality. Prince asserts in this paper that the 'true' transvestite fails to have their identity understood socially, clinically and even by themselves, because they are commonly interpreted as being homosexual or actually wanting to be a woman. 'Unfortunately, since all three types of individuals may have one thing in common, namely the desire to wear feminine attire, it has been the fashion to proceed on the theory that *all is gold that glitters*, and class them under the same head'.[64] However, 'there are a great many transvestites on record who are exclusively heterosexual' and, linked to this, 'unlike the transsexual, the transvestite values his male organs, enjoys using them and does not desire them removed'.[65] While Prince had not yet formulated her understanding of the sex/gender distinction, this article established – rhetorically at least – the basis for her novel contention that expressions of femininity in subjects assigned male at birth can be understood as normal, a step towards realizing a more 'total self', and need to be separated from those other sex deviations, homosexuality and transsexuality.

This paper also laid the foundations for the crude anatomical essentialism through which Prince discursively constructed her own subject position as superior to those sexually deviant homosexuals and transsexuals who defied middle-class morality by either conducting erotic relations with those of the same anatomical formation as themselves or altering their bodies by surgery.[66] The unthinkable – trans lesbians and gay trans men who did both! Initially not having had the finances to pursue surgery herself,[67] she made a life's mission of intellectually and morally justifying her decision never to do so, and of advising others to follow her lead: to live, in her words, as 'genderally' oneself (some or all of the time), whilst remaining sexually 'normal'. In a letter to Lou Sullivan, for instance, she queries why he identifies as a gay man: 'Why do you not seek straight men who might buy the gender change and still be able to make out with you sexually as anatomy dictates?'[68] Despite her own erotic life reading as at least a little lesbian from the perspective of the present (she collected lesbian BDSM porn,[69] and in 1960 was prosecuted for a sex letter communicating her lesbian erotic desires, which was interpreted as homosexual by the authorities because both writers were transfeminine),[70] her commitment to heteronormativity animated her commitment to cis*sexism* and her notion that whilst gender is mutable, sexual difference is not. She then mobilized the heterosexual transvestite identity formation as a politically acceptable trans feminine subject position, deserving of rights and respectability on a par with what white, middle-class American men were entitled to.

Prince's introduction to the work of John Money came after this first paper was published, and the significance of his formulation of gender became apparent after she pleaded guilty for the sex letter. Faced with a five-year parole settlement, a devastating condition of which was that she would be unable to wear her normal women's clothes, her attorney had the idea that she would able to continue to dress 'en-femme' if she gave lectures educating the public about cross-dressing. Prince gladly took up this idea, and the first date, at her attorney's Kiwanis Club, was set for just a few weeks' time, in March 1961. As Prince was preparing, she was trying to figure out how to explain her 'cross-dressing' to a 'normal' (i.e. male, straight, cis, middle-class) audience, when Money's research came to her:

> How do I appear before forty ordinary businessmen, the kind of people that join service clubs, dressed as a woman, and try to explain to them what the hell's going on? I mean, they're going to have a built-in idea this is a queer queen if there ever was one. And I couldn't figure out how to approach the subject, what to tell them.
>
> And then I thought of John Money's book – not book, but article – with the Hampsons. The subject was pseudohermaphrodites, in which John first published the statement about being caught up in the gender appropriate to the sex of assignment. Which is a very important assignment.[71]

A photograph (Fig. 1) captures Prince giving one of these lectures. That she observes and mobilizes the potentially sanitizing, respectability-oriented potential for gender as a concept *distinct* from sex in order to avoid being conflated with those 'queer queens' is historically and epistemically significant. In the talks she gives, Prince centres the 'great definition of gender' laid out in 1955 by Money and Joan and John Hampson in order to convince her audience of 'ordinary businessmen' that there was nothing overly threatening, radical or destabilizing about cross-dressing.[72] It was about gender, after all, not sex. Prince publishes an abridged version of these talks in a 1964 issue of *Transvestia.* Her bifurcation of sex and gender is central:

> 'Sex' is a matter of anatomy and physiology and it has to do with reproduction. The proper words to use when referring to sex are 'male' and 'female'. Gender on the other hand, is a matter of psychology and sociology. It has to do with what we do and how we do it, social customs and expectations, prohibitions and attitudes. The proper words to use when referring to Gender are 'man' and 'woman', and the adjectives are 'masculine' and 'feminine'. If one listens in on conversations he will be surprised at the frequency with which these words are misused.[73]

Prince, as this extract clarifies, is reliant on and reproductive of the ideology of sexual difference, reinscribing (cis)sexed difference at the same time as she denaturalizes (cis)gender, the set of attributes appropriate to a perceived particular bodily configuration. It was during the course of these service club lectures (guest appearances at civic organizations for professionals) that her framing of sex, gender and sexuality really began to take shape, as she made original use of the article published four years prior, by John Money and the Hampsons on 'pseudo-hermaphrodite socialization' to make a general point about gender socialization.[74]

The idea that one could be assigned male at birth and express femininity, but not be gay, was a radical re-organization of conventional social mores in the early 1960s. Prince's talks were well received, and as word got around, she was invited to speak at tens of service clubs across Southern California. She soon realized that the time available in these lectures was not enough to explain her theory of transvestism as normative gender expression to everyone, yet the topic was capturing people's attention and imagination. To address this, Prince wrote a pamphlet that she could hand out to club chairmen and the police department. 'The whole idea was to educate the police force such as, such as when they ran across a guy in a dress they wouldn't crucify them or put him up for being gay' [*sic*].[75] The pamphlet was titled 'An Introduction to the Subject of Transvestism or Femmiphilia (crossdressing)', and the foreword summarizes her philosophy of transvestism as it had been pitched at the service clubs, highlighting its dependence on a sex/gender distinction.[76] Her framing is notably similar to Millett's quotation of Stoller's arguments a decade later:

> Masculinity and femininity are generally considered as being biologically determined, inseparable from sex and therefore unchangeable. This is not so! Sex and Gender are not the same thing. Sex is a matter of anatomy and physiology and is determined by various biological factors. Gender on the other hand, is a matter of psychology and sociology. It is a social invention and gender roles are learned responses, culturally determined and largely artificial. The requirements for each role vary from culture to culture and from one era to another. Thus we LEARN to be masculine or feminine because our anatomical sex at birth dictates what role we should be trained in. However, in cases of mistaken sexual identity, children have been reared in the gender opposite to their true sex and have learned to live the role adequately. This proves that we all have the capacity to be trained either way.[77]

Building on the research of John Money and the Hampsons, Prince was able to articulate her own subject position in a non-threatening manner to conservative service club members, and to distinguish, for popular audiences, between sex as 'natural' and gender as 'cultural' for the first time. These were also the intellectual innovations she presented in her lectures titled 'Sex and Gender' to Stoller's students. By classifying homosexuality and transsexuality together as 'sex' disorders, Prince advanced an ontological separation between 'sex' and 'gender' which would have an immense impact on the development of scientific knowledges and identity formations.

SEX, GENDER AND THE HETEROSEXUAL TRANSVESTITE

The sex/gender distinction, as formulated by Prince in the years prior to her introduction to and decades of collaborations with Stoller, became central to the development of her own philosophy of transvestism as heterosexual, respectable and 'healthy'. She reiterated it in *Transvestia*, authoring Virgin Views columns with titles such as 'Change of Sex or Gender' and 'You Can't Add by Subtraction'.[78] In the latter, she defines 'true transsexuals' – a category she argues makes up only twenty per cent of those desiring surgery – as being unhappy in their gender *and* sexuality: 'To put it bluntly a true TS must have a conscious or unconscious wish to receive a male penis', and she advises the majority of readers to instead pursue feminine joys such as 'peace, joy, beauty' without seeking gender-affirming surgery.[79] As she distinguishes in an earlier issue, 'let us therefore not try to be females, let us try to be *ladies* – there is a big difference as any proper lady can tell you' [emphasis original].[80]

Prince's implicitly classed and racialized fashioning of herself as a 'proper lady' (who was not a female) seems to be a submission to what she felt was achievable for herself and her readership at the time. As a trained pharmacologist, her understanding of sex hormones, which she self-administered, led her to appreciate the non-binary character of sex, and – foreshadowing arguments that would be made by writers such as Susan Stryker, Judith Butler and Anne Fausto-Sterling almost three decades later – the role of an ideological commitment to

sex/gender polarity in constructing dichotomized biological sex categories.[81] Discussing sex hormones in 1962, for example, she makes the more visionary comment that, given the prevalence of intersex, 'it is obvious that "male" and "female" are becoming statistical terms only', even going as far as to note that

> The law and the legal profession will one day be faced with having to decide the sex of the person or at least the sex he wishes to present to society on the basis of the person's own personal preference simply for lack of clear cut distinctions. When sex and gender with it can be influenced and determined by the interaction of anatomy, chromosomes, hormones and the psychosocial forces of upbringing, all kinds of combinations are possible and the rules cannot be imposed just on the basis of what the majority are like. That will be the day, as the man said, for FPs.[82]

Such a softening of her typical ontological absolutism was also present in her 1957 article, which ends with the caveat that 'It must not be supposed that the author feels that all cases can be sharply and precisely divided into these three categories'.[83] However, these more visionary understandings were not the ones that she presented at scientific conferences, in exchanges with leading sexologists, to audiences of service men and policemen, and to the wives of heterosexual crossdressers who sought her advice about their marriages and domestic lives. Instead, she concentrated her energies on reassuring these groups that 'most transvestites were *normal heterosexual* men who sought only to express the beautiful women within' [italics mine].[84] Her success at mainstreaming these arguments led those in Full Personality Expression and adjacent organizations to refer to themselves as 'the *gender* community'. This was a time when, as Joanne Meyerowitz writes,

> People who decades earlier might have been grouped together as 'inverts' were now sorting themselves out. In each group, those who sought respectability hoped to avoid the label of freak or the status of outcast. They adopted strategies that might make them appear 'normal', strategies that sometimes involved rejecting 'abnormal' others.[85]

The introduction of a category of gender that was free from the negative connotations of sex, homosexuality, sexual perversion, sex work, fetishism, and sexual deviance, was, for many, life-changing. It did personal, political and affective work; allowing cross-dressers to hold onto well-paid jobs, families and the promises and privileges available to middle-class white professionals of liberal citizenship under racial capitalism. It also provided a category, 'gender', through which people could better capture and communicate, in a non-pathologized way, what it feels like to be trans.

In the disaggregation of gender from sex and sexuality, Prince's potentially radical arguments are also among her most conservative. She believed in humans' naturally gender-expansive potential, and the importance of people being able to

express themselves free from the constraints of socially imposed bodily expectations. Whilst she argues for gendered self-determination, however, she negates bodily autonomy for those pursuing surgery (but not other gender-affirming body modification practices such as hormones or electrolysis). Prince celebrates femininity in *all* subjects, and argues that feminine expression in 'men' is more socially ostracized than masculine expression in 'women'. In some ways, this led her to be an early theorist of transmisogyny (she was also both a perpetrator and recipient of it). Yet it was paired with her denial of transvestism in subjects assigned female at birth, another regressive argument which got mainstreamed in the scientific literature, including Stoller's *Sex and Gender*.[86] Prince gets close to theorizing the performativity of gender, recognizing masculinity and femininity as culturally specific styles which anyone in theory can learn, cite and access. However, she champions a binary view of the contents of each, and presents an essentialized, classed and racialized understanding of what 'proper' femininity entails; heels, appropriate make up, dresses, passivity, intuition and being 'self-effacing with men'.[87] Ultimately, Prince appealed to a colonial and conservative logic of nature/culture which naturalized sex and sexuality, whilst presenting 'gender' as social and therefore amenable to change. When sex is relegated to the ontological and gender to the psychological, what remains intact is 'a transphobic conception of ontology' which effaces 'the possibility that ontology itself can be conceived otherwise.'[88]

SEXUAL DIFFERENCE, CISNESS, AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE SEX/GENDER DISTINCTION

Given that most medical professionals neglected to acknowledge the influence of Prince on their research and practice, it is difficult to ascertain the precise impact of her arguments. Scientific researchers did read *Transvestia*: the Institute for Sex Research founded by Dr Kinsey received a copy of every issue. One doctor, under the name of Dr J. J., writes to commend the January 1961 issue as 'by far the finest monograph ever published on the subject' of transvestite behaviour.[89] Prince also presented her theories at key sexology conferences. At the Annual Conference of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex in 1963, she presented a paper, 'The Expression of Femininity in the Male', beginning:

> The title of this paper will not disturb well informed people, though it would upset the general public since 'femininity' in a male sounds immoral and abnormal. This is because we have very artificial and semantically incorrect ideas about such matters. It will be well, therefore, to give a moment's attention to the sense in which I should like to use the words 'sex' and 'gender'. I think of sex as a matter of anatomy or physiology; and of gender as a matter of psychology and sociology. Or to put in in the vernacular, sex is below the belt, gender is above it. Sex and gender are, unfortunately, often used interchangeably or in ways that lead one to think of them as inseparable – masculine with maleness and feminine with femaleness.[90]

A decade later, at the Second Interdisciplinary Symposium on Gender Dysphoria Syndrome, held at Stanford in 1973, her paper was titled 'Sex vs. Gender'.[91] In it she outlined her by now regularly reiterated argument that medical specialists were confusing the two issues by using the term gender, when they were really talking about sex. This was the argument that she took to conferences:

> Many dictionaries make no distinction between the two words [sex and gender]. In reality sexual anatomy and sexual object choice (sex) are one aspect of an individual's totality, and his life style and behavior patterns (gender) are another. Because anatomic sex is used as the determiner of which life style a child should be brought up in, we have tended to look at sex as a cause and gender as the immutable and inevitable effect.[92]

Prince's heteronormative and anatomically essentialist distinction between transvestism and transsexuality gets reproduced in the work of Stoller, who notes that for transvestites 'their gender identity' is 'anchored to the preservation of their genitalia'.[93] Unlike Benjamin who, regarding transvestism and transsexuality as a spectrum, took Prince's ontological ossifications with a pinch of salt, Stoller's *Sex and Gender vol. I* reproduced almost word for word her justifications for separating transvestites from homosexuals and transsexuals.[94] Stoller elaborates the concept of a 'core gender identity' which means that 'the person unquestionably feels that he or she is the member of the assigned sex' and gives the example of transvestite men to demonstrate this:

> their core gender identity is male; that is, they know their bodies are male, that they have been assigned since birth to the male sex, that they were reared as males, and that all the world unequivocally considers them to be and always to have been males. Only later, as the personality develops, will this male core gender identity be overlaid by the gender identity with feminine elements.[95]

The 'transvestite men' in question were Prince and some of her network, and Stoller's characterization here articulates an early version of a 'cis sexed' subject position which mirrors Prince's own self-identification.

Between the publications of the DSMII (1968) and DSMIII (1980), the distinction between 'transvestism' and 'transsexualism' was established. Whilst Vern and Bonnie Bullough write that it was the DSMIII-R (1987) which included Prince's definition of transvestism,[96] the definitions of 'transsexual' and 'transvestite' in the DSMIII also have strong overtones of Prince's philosophy. For example, according to the DSMIII, in the definition of transvestism 'the essential feature is recurrent and persistent cross-dressing by a *heterosexual* male' [italics mine],[97] which directly echoes Prince's understanding of the 'true transvestite' as having 'no desire for homosexual contacts'.[98] Moreover, the distinction between transsexualism and transvestism is that 'the individual with Transvestism *considers himself to be basically male*, whereas the

anatomically male Transsexual has *a female sexual identity*' [italics mine].[99] This is another echo of Prince's differentiation between transvestism and transsexuality, first outlined in 1957. There are clear similarities, then, between the guidelines adopted for clinical care in the US and Prince's own philosophies as they had been articulated since 1957. Even before this set of guidelines came in, gender clinics adopted Prince's distinction between sex, gender and sexuality, meaning that, as Dallas Denny writes, most applicants 'were rejected as "transvestites" or gay men and offered at best therapy to help them make it through life as a member of their natal gender'.[100] Prince, who had made a mission of educating medical experts on transvestism and 'gender disorders', haunts both the clinical and feminist interpretations of the sex/gender distinction that followed.[101]

That Prince made a conscious effort to conflate, and thereby stigmatize in one fell swoop, non-normative expressions of sexuality and non-cis embodiments of sex demonstrates the self-preservationist, homophobic and transphobic drives motivating her disaggregation of sex and gender. Playing on the semantic slips and slides that congeal around the word 'sex', she appealed to gender as a potentially sanitizing new term while willingly participating in the continued degradation of sex workers, transsexuals, queers and racialized transvestites unable to access the ideals of respectability reserved for white, middle-class citizen-subjects. As intersex scholarship and the entire history of eugenics and racial science make clear, dichotomous biological sex is always constituted along racialized degrees of difference.[102] Heterosexuality, too, of a state-recognized kind, is a white, middle-class distinction.[103] However, Prince's constituency, the community she imagined and interpellated when – as printed on the inside cover of early issues – dedicating *Transvestia* to the 'needs of the *sexually normal* individual who has discovered the existence of his or her "other side" and seeks to express it',[104] had access to the racialized, classed promises of liberal citizenship by birthright.

For Emma Heaney, cisness is defined as 'bodies divided into two mutually exclusive sexes whose structures determine the consciousness of those that inhabit one or the other kind of body'.[105] Meanwhile sexual difference refers to 'the social organization of the supposedly biologically derived terms of the sex binary into a hierarchy of persons and qualities' […] 'the arrangement of people into masculine and male/feminine and female'.[106] However, what becomes clear from revisiting Prince's arguments is that it is possible to partition people ideologically on the basis of sex, without accepting any corollary partition of expressions and behaviours. While cisnormativity and cisness are typically used to refer to the notion that from sex, gender follows, Prince's philosophies demonstrate the more heterogenous dimensions to the ideology of cisness. Prince relied rhetorically on a rigid heterosexual and 'natural' sex binary at the same time as arguing that gender is fluid. Her transphobia was specifically cissexist; it appealed to a fictitious yet common-sense notion of discrete and binaristic sexual dimorphism as the ground for a set of moral and political – but often abstract – arguments. Anatomy remains destiny for Prince, but only, as

she liked to argue, 'below the belt'. While disentangling gender from anatomy enabled Prince to refuse the socially imposed overdetermination of her own anatomy, she also reifies genitals as the truth of sex, conflates sexuality and anatomy, and presents 'sex' as a biological rather than sociological attribution. In seeking to restore the primacy of the mind over the body, Prince's arguments relied on damaging Cartesian dualisms wherein sovereignty is displaced from the body.

Disentangling the various ways that a naturalized male/female binary can be appealed to via the various discourses of sex, gender and sexuality begins to inform an interrogation of contemporary trans exclusionary and gender critical discourses. Much gender critical feminism has relied on the fiction of 'sex' as the basis for rights and protection, while taking conflicting perspectives on gender. Trans-exclusionary organizations like Women's Place UK, for example, argue that 'sex matters' to rally against gendered self-determination. Gender-critical feminist Maya Forstater won an employment appeal tribunal in favour of her claim that 'the immutability of sex' amounted to a philosophical belief, and was therefore protected under section 10 of the UK Equality Act.[107] In March 2025, the UK government published an 'independent review' authored by renowned gender-critical campaigner Alice Sullivan which presents biological sex as an incontestable and immutable binary, explicitly denies the reality of intersex, and recommended that public bodies resurrect this categorical 'constant' for all data collection.[108] The following month in the UK, Scottish gender critical campaigners, funded to the degree of £70,000 by J. K. Rowling, won the case they had taken to the Supreme Court which ruled that the legal definition of 'woman' is based on biological sex – without offering any definition of what 'biological sex' actually is.[109] Meanwhile publishers, journalists and gender critical authors are profiting from the polarizing, de-subjectivizing weaponization of sex difference as a common sense fact. These thinly veiled transmisogynistic arguments make use of the same common-sense framing of sex/gender, nature/culture to argue that whilst gender is social (either a threatening ideology or a valid identity), one can't change one's sex. The ramifications of this are, as they were in Prince's time, deeply pernicious. They have buttressed a mind/body dualism which medicalizes transsexuality as psychopathology.[110] They have facilitated the roll-back of already minimal state provisions of trans healthcare in the UK and the US, and the roll-out of conversion clinics in their place.[111] Moreover, a naturalization of sexual difference is race and eugenics by the back door, and regular sports 'controversies' in which racialized women's 'sex' is called into question is a regular reminder of this.

The trans-antagonistic, anti-feminist, racist implications of the sex/gender distinction are striking. Yet when liberal, white, second wave feminists appealed to the newly available category of gender to argue against the sociological division of men and women, it was unknowingly Prince's world that they inherited. Appealing to the sociological, without any critical engagement with the biological, the historical, and the racialized preconditions

for bodily legibility, required a level of abstract idealism made possible via the negation of race. 'Gender', for Prince and then for second wave feminists, became an abstract signifier for the organization of social life, but it was one which failed to accommodate those for whom embodiment could not be transcended by thought. Revisiting Prince's impulses also clarifies the whiteness of second wave feminisms which relied on a sex/gender distinction and explains the ease with which liberal feminist arguments in favour of gender equality have been weaponized against those they nominally claim to protect: racialized groups, sex workers and gender non-conforming individuals. It historicizes the sex-negativity, with its own racist and homophobic degradations, that would dominate a significant part of the women's liberation movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Appealing to the fantasy of a politics of gender abstracted from embodied sex and messy desire makes for a self-preservationist, liberal and accommodationist discourse which stabilizes both sex and sexuality as that which cannot change, and authorizes the medical and juridical government of such 'facts'.

CONCLUSION

This intellectual history of the sex/gender distinction is also an intellectual *cis*tory. Restoring Prince's authorship clarifies how the distinction has functioned to make sex cis – grounded in genitalia – even as Prince argued that gender expression should be liberated and had no necessary relationship to sex. Pursuing single-issue organizing and maintaining a faith in both the state and science to improve the lives of transvestites like herself who were 'otherwise normal', she was probably the first to recognize the potential of Money and the Hampsons' research to provide the intellectual foundations for an account of gender socialization and gender identity. Her vast archive offers valuable scholarship and auto-theoretical reflections on the construction of gender. However, in framing sex and gender as distinct so as to explain her own femininity to audiences of psychiatrists, service club members and middle-class heterosexual wives, Prince was also accommodating her audiences' presumed homophobia and phallo-essentialism.

Revisiting Prince's motivations, alongside her extraordinary influence on the development of sex/gender knowledges, demonstrates the inbuilt conservatism of the sex/gender distinction: what is cultural is just what one society deems cultural at any one time. The sex/gender distinction is a simplifying device; a rhetorically concise but reductive means through which to explain a far greater range of human complexity. As a framework, the sex/gender distinction serves the intentions and investments of its users, who can use its logic of nature/culture to present certain phenomena as impervious to change, regardless of whether this is the case. Prince's archive points to a longer history of how the sex/gender distinction has been mobilized to effect claims to protection for some, at the expense of pathologization and victimization for others. That it is being weaponized presently illustrates the need for feminists and historians of sexual science to not only historicize but also complicate theories of sex, to be clear

about their provinciality, and to resist common-sense notions of binary sex as anything other than a racially inflected epistemological battlefield over the morality and meaning of various parts of the body.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

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5 Zagria Cowan, 'Virginia Prince (1912–2009): A Conflicted Life in Trans Activism', *A Gender Variance Who's Who*, 2013, https://zagria.blogspot.com/p/index.html; Richard F. Docter, *From Man to Woman: The Transgender Journey of Virginia Prince*, Northridge, CA: Docter Press, 2004, p. vii. The tapes of Stoller's interviews with Prince are currently being transcribed by Dallas Denny, who has written extensively on her own experiences with Virginia Prince. See for example Dallas Denny, 'Remembering Virginia' and 'First Contact', *Chrysalis Quarterly* 2013, available online: http://dallasdenny.com/Chrysalis/tag/virginia-prince/. See also *Virginia Prince, In Her Own Words and In Mine*, ed. Dallas Denny, TransGender Publishing (in press).

6 Susan Stryker, 'Foreword', *International Journal of Transgenderism* 8: 4, 2005, pp. xv–xvi.

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8 For femmiphile see Virginia Prince, 'An Introduction to the Subject of Transvestism or Femmiphilia (cross dressing)', leaflet, c.1960, *Digital Transgender Archive*, https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/files/m613mx57c. For transgenderal see Virginia Prince, 'Virgin Views: Change of Sex or Gender', *Transvestia* 10: 60, 1969, p. 65. For transgenderist see Virginia Prince, 'The Life and Times of Virginia', *Transvestia* 100: 17, 1979, p. 98.

9 Prince, 'The Life and Times of Virginia', p. 71.

10 Virginia Prince, 'Virgin Views by Virginia: Liberation', *Transvestia* 11: 63, 1970, pp. 84–8.

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12 Gérard Raulet, 'Structuralism and Post-Structuralism: An Interview with Michel Foucault', *Telos* 55, 1983, pp. 195–211; Khadji Amin, 'We are All Nonbinary', *Representations* 158: 1, 2022, pp. 106–119, 107.

13 Susan Stryker, *Transgender History: The Roots of Today's Revolution*, Berkeley: Seal Press, 2008.

14 Dallas Denny, 'Remembering Virginia'; Jamison Green, *Becoming a Visible Man*, Nashville, 2004, pp. 73–4.

15 Among the eighteen 'friends and colleagues' Stoller mentions in the acknowledgments to *Sex and Gender* vol. 1, Prince is not included.

16 Virginia Prince problematically believed that surgery was valid for those she classified as 'true transsexuals' who had no other means of achieving gendered self-acceptance. However, she argued that the majority of those pursuing 'sex change' surgery when it became available at UCLA in the 1960s, and in the decades that followed, were mistaking 'gender' problems for 'sex' ones. As she concludes: 'I would estimate that not more than 20% of those seeking surgery could *really* be considered to be proper Transexuals by any reasonable definition of the word'; Prince, 'Virgin Views: Change of Sex or Gender', p. 57.

17 Jules Gill-Peterson, *Histories of the Transgender Child*, Minneapolis, 2018, pp. 66–7.

18 Stoller argues that trans girls suffer from a 'belief based on their having been exposed to their mothers' bodies and attitudes for too long and in too gratifying a manner' without a father figure to 'present as an object for identification' to shield from 'the malignant effect of his mother's excessive closeness'; Robert J. Stoller, *Sex and Gender vol. 1: On the Development of Masculinity and Femininity*, London: Karnac Books [1968] 1984, p. 102. See also Julia Grant, 'A "Real Boy" and not a Sissy: Gender, Childhood, and Masculinity, 1890–1940', *Journal of Social History* 2004, 37: 4, pp. 829–51.

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20 Cowan, 'Virginia Prince (1912–2009)', p. 6.

21 Virginia Prince, 'My Accidental Career', in *How I Got Into Sex*, ed. Bonnie Bullough, Vern L. Bullough, Marilyn Fithian, William E. Hartman, Randy Sue Klein, Prometheus Books, Buffalo, 1997, p. 2.

22 Dallas Denny, '"Oral Interview with Virginia Prince", conducted by Dallas Denny during Fantasia Fair Provincetown, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, 15–22 October 1995'. Dallas Denny's personal collection, 2018.

23 While Lawrence didn't openly define herself as a lesbian, she lived as a woman with a long-term partner and her erotic history was exclusively with women. In referring to Lawrence as a lesbian, I follow Jules Gill-Peterson's injunction to develop an anti-TERF reading practice that restores trans lesbians to the historical record by documenting the evident existence of desire between trans women and other femmes. Jules Gill-Peterson, 'Toward a Historiography of the Lesbian Transsexual, or the TERF's Nightmare', *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 26: 2, 2022, pp. 133–47.

24 For Prince's encounter with Mr Stuart see Denny, 'Oral Interview', pp. 18–19.

25 Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States*, Cambridge, MA, 2004, p. 185.

26 This date is taken from Virginia Prince's oral history with Dallas Denny; see Denny, 'Oral Interview', as n. 23.

27 Cowan, 'Virginia Prince (1912–2009)', pp. 8–9.

28 The exact number of subscribers is unclear. According to Dallas Denny, by the time the magazine's run ended in 1986 there were several thousand subscribers. However, in his biography of Virginia Prince, Richard F. Docter quotes Prince as saying that the mailing list had never reached one thousand. See Dallas Denny, 'The Adventures of Virginia Prince: Salesperson Extraordinaire and Accidental Activist', in *Virginia Prince, in Her Own Words and In Mine*, ed. Denny; Docter, *From Man to Woman*, p. 83.

29 Virginia Prince, 'Virgin Views', *Transvestia* 7: 41, 1966, p. 83. Prince writes of the lack of TV publications in comparison to the 'many in the gay field' citing 'ONE, TANGENTS, DRUM, MATTACHING REVIEW, VECTOR, THE LADDER (lesbian)' as examples.

30 Robert S. Hill, '"As a Man I Exist; as a Woman I Live": Heterosexual Transvestism and the Contours of Gender and Sexuality in Postwar America', University of Michigan PhD thesis 2007, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, p. 55l.

31 Virginia Prince, *The Transvestite and His Wife*, Los Angeles, 1967; Virginia Prince, *How To Be a Woman Though Male*, Los Angeles, 1971; Virginia Prince, *Understanding Cross-Dressing*, Tulare, 1976.

32 The concept of 'the girl within' became the basis for Prince's own early formulation of transfemininity and how to psychologically undo the coercive attachments of cisgendering. See Cowan, 'Virginia Prince (1912–2009)', p. 8.

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34 Stella Sandford, 'Contingent Ontologies: Sex, Gender and "Woman" in Simone de Beauvoir and Judith Butler', *Radical Philosophy* 97, 1999, pp. 18–29.

35 Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, Urbana [1970] 2000, p. 29.

36 Millett, *Sexual Politics*, p. 29.

37 Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*, p. 263.

38 Millett, *Sexual Politics*, p. 30.

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ABSTRACT

Scholars have begun to genealogize the sex/gender distinction, pointing out that it was not a second-wave feminist invention, but in fact has its roots in the clinical research of US sexologists. However, the influence of trans individuals on the development of these clinicians' thought tends to go unacknowledged. Beginning with correspondence between Virginia Prince, a trans pharmacologist, and Robert Stoller, an influential psychiatrist, this paper demonstrates that Prince was a highly significant influence in the development of the sex/gender distinction. Revisiting Prince's rationale for distinguishing between sex and gender historicizes the inbuilt conservatism and weaponizable currency of the heuristic.

Keywords: Sex, gender, trans feminism, sexology, Virginia Prince

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