"A Light Where There is Dark": Transgressive Teaching and the Promise of Liberation from Transphobia

_Cameron, you're a star, a light where there is dark_
_And you're a hundred times a woman_
_A hundred times the man that they are._
_Cameron_, by Jillette Johnson

**INTRODUCTION**

Of all social issue clusters now confronting publics, few are so knotty as those related to transgenders (here, defined in the broadest terms, as those whose sense of identity and gender do not correspond with their sex at birth), taking place at a nexus of complications related to health, psychology, sex, stigmatization, and prejudice (Klein, 2011), and focus of a growing body of news attention, analyses and controversy, ranging from athletics to the military to child-rearing to film and television casting.

Although knowledge about, and discussion of, transgenders is certainly on the rise, a good deal of it is misrepresentation (Mayer & McHugh, 2016), leaving a need for different, more creative approaches to fashioning and disseminating communication that encourages accuracy and plays down preconception. In this paper I am concerned with achieving just this goal: to see transgender activists as transgressive teachers, relying on a model advanced in recent work, then using it to suggest several communication trajectories to use to teach publics about the reality of transgender, eventually to unite transgenders and non-transgenders in common understanding.
THE THERE MODEL

Origins. The analytical perspective taken here is based on Holt's (2019a, 2019b) pioneering work, generated by an eight-week, one-credit course called "Forever Home," which assumed an experiential, transgressive standpoint to train freshmen and sophomore honors students to work with real-life organizations in the pet adoption sector (Holt, 2019b). Exploration of results of transgressive learning/teaching methods (McClaren & Kincheloe, 2007) used deliberately in that course led to creation of the THERE model (Figure 1, below)—Teacher as Outlaw, How Courses Fit, Expand Problem Space, Reveal ZOPED, and Engage Real World)—uniting five streams of scholarship that inform transgressive approaches to pedagogy (Freire, 2005; hooks, 1994).

Transgressive teaching is an evolutionary outcome of previous dominant models, like behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, experiential learning, and social learning (Holt, 2019a, p. 4), each advancing in declaring how much autonomy students should have in the learning transaction, eventually reaching the transgressive, which not only insists students be given freedom in learning but that they use their knowledge to bring about social change (Motta, 2013).

Brief explanation of levels. The innermost level—and as bi-directional arrows indicate, movement may come from center to periphery, or vice versa, hence the dual designation, T1/T5 ("T" for "transgression")—is concerned with authority in the learning environment (Pace & Hemmings, 2007). The THERE
model posits a locus well beyond teachers' traditionally iron control in antiquated classrooms, to modern teachers who eagerly don the mantle of outlaw, breaching the bastions of the conventional via risky incursions to remake the rules (Harris, 2011). As usual, transgressive teaching icon bell hooks (1994) puts it especially well: "Teaching is a performative act...that offers the space for change, invention, spontaneous shifts, that can serve as a catalyst drawing out the unique elements in each classroom" (p. 11).

Next out is T2/T4, "how courses fit," though in this context it is better said, "how teaching strategies fit" (in the original form [Holt, 2019b], it was "honors courses fit"). At this level outlaw teachers choose methods to use, and predictably, the range of choices is more diverse than in conventional pedagogy (Parker, 2003).
Next is T3/T3 (expand problem space). Problem spaces (Newell & Simon, 1972) "...provide resources to shape solutions. Expanding problem spaces means recasting problems to involve more resources or reconfiguring existing ones, especially those that are veiled at first (Dorst & Cross, 2001) or emerge as solutions develop (Engeström, 1987)." (Holt, 2019b, p. 34)

Next is T4/T2 (reveal ZOPED), invoking Vygotsky's well-known zone of proximal development (ZPD or ZOPED). In that perpetually quoted passage, ZOPED is "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Holt points out that one can see T4/T2 as a fertile "no man's land" between T3/T3, with its less restrained brainstorming tendencies (Dorst, 2004), and the unruly "real world," though of course all of the model is the real world, here denoted T5/T1, both the goal of what is mapped onto the model and the source of all one needs to achieve it.

Themes for transgressors. Holt (2019a) applied the THERE model to show how Taiwan's 2014 Sunflower Movement activists (Rowen, 2015) functioned not chiefly as students, but as transgressive teachers educating a motley group of politicians and publics in how to conduct an effective, largely peaceful protest focusing on Taiwan's independence, an issue with tangled and multiplex roots (Chang & Holt, 2014). Analysis yielded three themes for transgressors—"an alliterative shout-out to Alinsky's [1989] Rules for Radicals" (Holt, 2019a, p. 19):

1. no matter how they jump about the model, solutions lie within one's reach;
calling on the past isn't enough—what one adopts has to be updated (carefully); and (3) from your wardrobe, you can never wear too many hats.

My aim is simple to state, more difficult to achieve. I want to use the THERE model to do what Holt did for the Sunflower Movement, taking the themes for transgressors and exploiting them to generate innovative approaches to transgressively educating diverse, often hostile, publics to the truths about transgenders, given the pervasive misunderstandings—bigotry, pigeon-holing, obfuscation, and outright "fake news"—about gender and identity (Mayer & McHugh, 2016), tendencies that take us right to transphobia.

I am a transgressive teacher, hence drawn to ideology, politics, and theory only to a degree: just what is needed to shape consequential real-world communication (outermost level [T5/T1]). I want us to unfurl a fair, equitable, realistic view of transgenders to the broadest publics possible. This must be realized and all I want is to get it done. So, rather than spin our wheels bickering over "philosophical parameters" of plans, let us put aside those conceptual disputes so beloved of our business, don our armor, ready to take whatever comes our way, and do what we, as communication experts, do best.

The THERE model is a good place to start. As Holt (2019b) notes, its particular strengths are

...the model's carefully defined levels, with the insight that there is substantial freedom of movement from linking the levels with and across each other, plus the fallback that being stymied in transgressing at one point only means you have numerous other avenues to stage a sortie... (p. 49)
Next, I look at each theme as a generator that, when applied to the map, inspires ideas about strategies for how to educate publics to transgender reality, unpacking theme and essential literatures underlying the level, plus the sociocultural domain of the issues addressed—what Holt (2019b) refers to as "fanning"—ventilating, as it were, supporting scholarship to generate heat and light. Explanation of points fanned from underlying scholarly commentary are provided as each theme is taken up.

**Theme 1: No matter how much they jump about the model, solutions are always within one's reach.** This analysis expands and reworks Holt's (2019a) example demonstrating how the THERE model could be applied to a non-Sunflower activist issue that was aimed at achieving social justice (pp. 30-34): advocacy of a Federal statute adding gender identity to anti-discrimination laws.

Holt argues that the model is ideal for building a strategic path, picking and choosing trajectories based on how they can be imagined to move about the levels, though seldom in sequence, such as level 1 to 2 to 3; 5 to 4 to 3; and so on. In the original exposition, dealing with pet adoption (Holt, 2019b), several paths emerged, connecting levels with one another other, as: T4/T2 (reveal ZOPED) to T5/T1 (engage real world) to T3/T3 (expand problem space), to describe real and fake knowledge about pets and rental properties (p. 44); or T3/T3 to T2/T4 (how courses fit), to expand course choices for honors students (p. 32); or T3/T3 leapfrogging T4/T2 to reach T5/T1 (p. 45), to find a service via
which to fundraise for a target pet agency; and so on. Such variations in starting, ending, and progressing through the model validate its flexibility.

Returning to the Sunflower paper and the example of whether gender identity should be part of Federal non-discrimination laws, Holt advises looking past the obvious start at T1/T5 (teacher as outlaw), saying, "Since a goal is to get society to accept gender identity discrimination as Federally actionable, it is possibly unwise to instantly put on—as Sunflowers did—the outlaw mantle (T1/T5), as this might stir up pointless antipathy" (p. 31). But if not this beginning, then which?

One possibility is what Holt suggests, T3/T3 (expand problem space), persuasively arguing that misperception of transgenders is, if not entirely, largely mired in a semantic meshugaas involving persistent bonds to words linked to sexual roles, reinforced by schema held by those who seem innocent of their power or even existence (Butler, 2014). This is muddled by strange new terms—via the Web, social media and other channels—such as heteronormativity and cisgender. Still, as complex as these connotative courses seem, they may simply boil down to disputes over what is meant by the words "female" and "male" (Burdge, 2007, p. 245-46).

Expanding the problem space might be one way to navigate the morass of contradictory and deep-seated attributions. Holt suggests we begin by accepting a provocative yet commonsensical truth about socially embedded discourse—that an utterance to which one may lay sole claim does not exist.
The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes one's "own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language...but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions; it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. (Bakhtin, 1992, p. 294)

Thus, it is useless for advocates to claim they "own" any discourse over what to call—hence discuss—transgenders, even though of course many do (Galupo, Henice, & Mercer, 2016, p. 95). Fanning some more, one sees that this studied view may be more difficult to accept if we take Bakhtin at his word, since advocates for transgenders would then share ownership with even loathsome and scatological labels from the insensitive and the ignorant. Yet this foretells dialogue (in the Bakhtin, not colloquial, sense) through realizing that one thing preventing understanding is not that activists understand while activist targets do not, but that everyone understands and misunderstands:

On this view of the self-other relationship, the act of communicating (or prior to communicating, thinking) becomes a special and unique instantiation of the communicator's identity: it involves turning, not inward toward internal ontological verification, but rather outward in the act of joining oneself to existence. One "goes out" to other social actors in search of knowledge to bring back in the fashioning of one's self, defining the self in contradistinction to, and cooperation with, the other. (Holt, 1994, pp. 556-557)

Holt poses this question: which will more likely gain ground in a campaign to educate (teach) hostile publics: to "dive headlong into the more difficult....tasks of challenging ideological positions, party affiliations, and the
like" (Holt, 2019a, p. 33) or to adopt Bakhtin's notion of universal ownership of all discourse and work on enriching, via contoured elaboration of meaning, linguistic terms people think they know, but almost certainly don't? From that perspective, Holt suggests that activists for transgender awareness diverge from Sunflower activists: not pick a fight but engage dialogue (p. 33)

Also, we should pursue, not different ways to embrace the "usual suspects," that is, shopworn labels and concepts shared by activist communities, smuggled into alternative media channels like Twitter, talk media, or blogs, but entirely new expressions. This may mean taking different positions vis-à-vis "the enemy," a change to seeing "them" as allies, as well as combatants. One persuades on the basis of common ground, not combat.

We should seek what Schön (1993) called generative metaphors, untried ways of figuratively conceiving social crises (and lack of understanding and consequent violence [Stotzer, 2009] against transgenders surely is a social crisis). To Schön, how a social problem is seen and responded to depends on how it is set, that is, the metaphor according to which it is comprehended.

If we choose to see transphobia that arises from failure to grasp information as the result of confusion due to excessive media sources, we might frame the problem using this metaphor: transgender misinformation is a media quagmire. Confronting this option (a view apparently shared by many [Eliason & Schope, 2007], thereby possibly making "quagmire" a "dead" metaphor), one might throw up one's hands and say, "well, what can you do with a situation like that?"
If one chooses to see the situation in terms of a new (generative) metaphor, say, *transgender misinformation is a minefield crossing to a peace table*, one's work could be directed toward moving through conflicting conceptions of transgender, aware of numerous "mines" to circumnavigate, but also that we might end up at a locus of accord, not an unresolvable mess.

Fanning the literature further reveals a fascinating paper by Barrett and Cooperrider (1990) linking generative metaphor and social cognition. These authors address what we are addressing—persistence of misinformation:

> Once judgments and theories about others have been formed, those judgments have a tendency to persevere even in the face of totally discrediting information, especially if one is engaged in forming a causal explanation to account for the impression or theory one has formed (Barrett & Cooperrider, 1990, p. 220).

As solutions, the authors rely on deliberate introduction of generative metaphors, viewing these as a possibilities "if attention is prefocused under conditions of anxiety, and if people have formed judgments of one another that persist in spite of inconsistent behavior and discrediting information" (p. 222). Limitations of space prevent further comment on this stimulating approach, but I heartily commend it to readers interested in our and similar projects: things are set out clearly and succeed in obdurate circumstances.

With little supplementary exploration, it is easy to fan the literature on generative metaphor (a key to the scholarly foundations for expansion of the problem space) to expose a link between generative metaphor and social cognition. If we can view (mis)information about transgenders as connected
to a future state where accurate information, and reaction to it, are less heated and entrenched, then we can set a possible locus for a link in T4/T2, the ZOPED linking T3/T3 (where the search for the generative metaphor actually started) and T5/T1 (where the target is). The ZOPED assumes that, contrary to conventional pedagogy, there is no direct link between what one wishes to teach and what is acquired by targeted learners, but rather a mutual movement across T4/T2 to achieve joint learning. This is what Barrett and Cooperrider (1990) are looking for and in fact achieve:

Metaphor is, at its simplest, a way of proceeding from the known to the unknown. It is a way of cognition in which the identifying qualities of one thing are transferred in an instantaneous, almost unconscious flash of insight to some other thing that is by remoteness or complexity unknown to us. The test of essential metaphor...is not any rule of grammatical form, but rather the quality of semantic transformation that is brought about. (Nisbett & Ross, 1985, p. 4)

The path I followed is one of many; the choice of literatures to fan is equally variegated, and not limited to ones at T3/T3. Inspection of Holt's two papers reveals how, in wholly different settings, levels were correlated with trajectories which then saw literatures fanned for further insight. The takeaway? There are many ways to frame misinformation about transgenders; activists may have begun to explore only a few.

*Theme 2: Calling on the past isn't enough—what one adopts has to be updated (carefully).* It is an enduring feature of successful social movements that members gain sustenance from sources other than material reward, civic responsibility, or personal gratification. Often encouragement to persist comes
from conceiving activist groups as entities unto themselves performing the functions of a social actor, despite inevitable fluctuation in membership and hence levels of commitment (Effler, 2010). Anchors for such group dynamic behavior are often found in heroes (Klapp, 1948) or martyrs (Michelsen, 2015).

In the Sunflower study, Holt (2019a) focuses on a dramatic example of a movement martyr, Cheng Nan-jung, the pro-democracy activist and publisher who, rather than surrender to arrest for insurrection, burned down his magazine's offices and himself to death (Chen, 2008, p. 42). His widely quoted parting instructions to his wife—"afterwards, it is your task"—was rephrased as a rallying cry of the Sunflowers: "afterwards, it is our task." As Holt points out, what makes that declaration work in 2014 is more than that it is so well-known among Sunflower activists (indeed, most in Taiwan). It also has to do with how the narrative was handled, given profound changes in freedom of expression between 1989, the year of Cheng’s suicide (after martial law was lifted in 1987), and 2014, and the spectacle of so many pro-independence disruptors reading the pulse of a nation, undreamed of even in the not-too-distant past.

While Cheng’s suicide was on its own profoundly moving, it must be seen in the context of the 228 incidents in early 1947, where uprisings against Chiang Kai-Shek’s KMT led to brutal suppression in which tens of thousands of Taiwanese were imprisoned or executed (Chen, 2008) and imposition of martial law that lasted for nearly four decades.

Likewise, publicized cases of violence against transgenders—venerated souls like Rita Hester, Fred Martinez, and Angie Zapata—occur against the
background of less known others, honored at sites like the starkly evocative
*Transgender Day of Remembrance* ([https://tdor.info/](https://tdor.info/)). Just as invocation of
Cheng Nan-jung served Sunflowers, so does the remembrance of transgenders
slain for, essentially, being themselves, propel the movement forward. In fact,
Rita Hester's death led Gwendolyn Ann Smith to found *Remembering Our Dead*
(Lamble, 2008, pp. 25-26), a milestone in promoting transgender awareness.

However, one should also note the cautionary points in Holt's exegesis:

In transgressive teaching, to reach back into one's history to
summon resources for a sortie might not be enough; instead, one
can work from the outside in, *then* revert to fanning center levels
(three and four). Thus, linking macro- to micro-realm may not get
you the best of what history has to offer, but it can take what you
find and make it the first step in a trajectory to produce useful
ideas. (Holt, 2019a, p. 17-18)

Let's invite this into our project to use communication to push back at
transphobia. Holt's trajectory begins in T5/T1: for us, this matches the "real
world" shared cultural milieu of the transgender community, including at least
both martyrs and those who keep their memory alive. So, one immediately
begins with a cherished storehouse of knowledge. However, as Holt points out,
invoking such heroes needs elaboration. We (think we) know what these
sacrifices meant, what they mean today, but we cannot import them without
considering how they can remain the most valued players in the struggle.

Let's stay with T5/T1 for the moment, folding in what we need to accept
in the "real world" to make changes in how society deals with crimes against
transgenders. Now we have two "real world" facets to consider, one of them the
legal domain of violence against transgenders cases, crimes which are disgracefully under-reported (Stotzer, 2009).

A grim but promising landmark in waking publics to violence against transgenders was established in the case of Fred C. Martinez, Jr.:

On June 16, 2001, Fred Martinez, an openly transgendered 16-year-old Navajo, was brutally murdered near Cortez, Colorado. The community's response to his murder was intense...Many wanted a thorough investigation. Concern for the safety of other gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) youth and adults living in the Four Corners region was heightened. While the police department was reluctant to label the crime a hate crime, they pursued its investigation as if it were. (Coates, Umbreit, & Vos, 2006, p. 11)

Eventually, due to persistent, multifaceted expressions of public outrage, and after officials avoided calling the murder a hate crime, the judge was pretty much forced to sentence Martinez's killer to forty years in prison—a horrible crime got some serious time. Mapping this to the model, one could envision a path from the T5/T1 to a point where Fred's family and community donned an outlaw mantle, then selected T2/T4 communication channels (formal appeal, interpersonal, grapevine, focused kvetching, popular media, and so on) to expand the problem space (T3/T3) to enable ZOPEDs to join T3/T3 to T5/T1.

But the model promises further gains, though what I describe takes longer (we are in this for the long game). Targeting government officials in the conspiracy (and yes, I am comfortable using that word) to hide violence against transgenders, we should note that nearly all of them, including judges, are elected, and should be reminded of what will occur come election day should they conspire to silence, repress, or sanction calumny against transgenders.
When we examine available methods (go back to T2/T4) and interweave possible approaches to take at T3/T3, chances of engineering an effective ZOPED to tie to T5/T1 are better if we remember what is most important to American politicians: their unending quest, first, to get elected, and second, to stay elected (King, 1997). The points at which to pressure officials are not only after tragedies occur, but while they campaign and during their terms in office.

Recalling the point about non-linear paths about the levels, one can envision situations where the ZOPED's success—that is, what actually began when the cadre of outlaw teachers hammered officials through channels they chose—itself becomes a resource (first at T2/T4, then T3/T3) to exploit through these same channels. What ultimately happened with the case of Martinez, despite its shocking nature, advanced the cause of transgender awareness—it is certain that this young human's sacrifice will continue growing as a "light in the dark." Afterwards, it is our task to follow the hard path, bringing others to heel, reminding them that there is no hiding once they earn the community's focus.

Sunflower activists did this, continuing, long after the legislature's occupation, to harangue KMT politicians via recall initiatives, like the delightfully named Appendectomy Project (Ho, 2015, p. 88), which literally aimed to cut out "diseased" lawmakers. Finally, to extend this path, work to modify the judicial system (T5/T1) must be pursued by electing politicians (especially judges) who will keep these issues before the public (T5/T1) and hold their feet to the fire to ensure their statements are not empty promises (by monitoring channels previously selected [T2/T4]). With each victory, plus
appropriate sentencing, at trial, it will get harder for jurists to veil violence against transgenders.

_Theme 3: From your wardrobe, you can never wear too many hats._ In the Sunflower study, this theme was elaborated by mapping the Movement's central anthem, "Island's Sunrise." That song, written, recorded, and distributed by indie band Fire EX in a mere three days (Lin & Um, 2017, p. 161), from inside the occupied Legislative Yuan, was ground zero for an explosion of interpretations in a variety of formats (Chang, in press).

Of the possibilities for starting levels, Holt considered T1/T5, because Fire EX is clearly an "outlaw" act; T2/T4, due to the vast array of options for expression, presenting media "prosumers" a daunting variety of teaching methods to choose from; and T3/T3, "an expansion of the problem space to analyze sociohistorical circumstances, sieving what is available to see what is appropriate" (p. 20), at least in terms of searching for audiences for the song.

While appropriate for his Sunflower study, Holt's targeted levels may not be as optimal for our analysis. Rather, we might begin at the outermost level, since the "real world" encompasses a capacious co-op of artists (since our comparison is with "Island's Sunrise," we focus on musicians), a most powerful consolidation of resources to be recruited for transgender awareness action. Modern pop musicians have been instrumental in promoting transgender awareness, as noted by Bos (2017), who is to be commended for her name-check of J. D. Doyle's yeoman's work on the impressive website, _Queer Music Heritage_ (queermusicheritage.com). Finally, though never a majority,
"mainstream" acts have long been troopers promoting transgender awareness via lucrative but iconoclastic sides (Arcade Fire, Blur, David Bowie, the Kinks, Pink Floyd, Lou Reed, The Replacements, Suzanne Vega, and so on [Bendix, 2017]).

With such resources, it is odd that the community has not come up with a similar plan to produce and actively promote a single side (or a cluster of them) that could seize the attention and emotion of broad audiences. That this has not yet happened may be due to individualism (preoccupation with individual over group) versus collectivism (preoccupation with group over individual) (Hofstede, 1984). Sunflowers differ from (primarily) American transgender activists in having had an interlinked network of fans (operating in more restricted geography) from which to ignite nationwide fervor, as well as a culturally shared dislike of the KMT and the mainland in general. Contrarily, transgenders have a multitude of those producing and promoting music (optimal condition) to represent an army of martyrs and their spokespeople who mainstream American society refuses to acknowledge (non-optimal).

The *THERE* model offers several ways out of this seeming impasse, a locus for a springboard (Engeström, 1987) if ever there was one. Let's look at one: as suggested, we might begin with the whole assemblage of musical productions (T5/T1), a vast, perhaps uncountable repository of musical assets, that might be summoned to help the ill-informed understand transgenders.

From the T5/T1 root, one could expand the problem space, first, by leapfrogging over T4/T2 (reveal ZOPED) to arrive at T3/T3. This is done to
disentangle the complicated question of what to do to glean valuable data from comparing two cultures that are in some ways quite different, particularly in terms of individualistic concerns for the inviolability of an artist’s core identity.

How might one expand the problem space to optimize identification of elements needed to improve the chances (not "ensure"—that has proven repeatedly impossible, though some have tried [Borg & Hokkanen, 2011]) for successfully creating a mainstream hit song? Again, fanning the literature: in their fascinating piece on the role of emotion in activism, Brown and Pickerell (2005) quote King (2005) on one way activists keep separate their individual identity and group mind, yet find a way to make them work in harness: "Activists learned to both objectify the emotions and reflect upon them to ensure that the appropriate emotion was displayed; and to subjectively reflect through the emotions to re-create the emotional frames required to sustain their identities as activists" (p. 152). This mirrors a tightrope act that musicians wanting to "make it" in the business have to confront: how to maintain artistic integrity, while creating that from which many will want to draw sustenance.

My take on the "hats" image in the third theme is that it symbolizes efforts like "dressing to enact self" (fortuitously, a key aspect in gender-fluid identity [Oram, 2006]), here, selecting from available resources to pinpoint the elements which will have the most impact in making one's point. Just as the best music often comes from artists who experience the widest range of styles and genres, so too are activists most effective when their wardrobe has the
most hats, and since it's an ever-evolving process, so you can never have too many.

We could leapfrog back to T2/T4 to choose among these "hats" and their associated teaching tools, but it might be more profitable to traverse first to T3/T3 to expand the problem space before jumping to T2/T4, since the number of options—some of which, as support for T2/T4 methods, may or may not be useful—needs winnowing and the disciplines associated with expanding the problem space, demonstrated earlier, are perfect for sorting out options.

However effective these procedures may be for choosing amongst creative options, we still have to "take it to the streets" by selecting among, then fanning, the levels that have to be considered in more effectively creating and promoting a song. To recap, in this provisional path (to say it again: one of many!) we have gone from T5/T1; leapfrogged the ZOPED level (T4/T2); gotten to T3/T3 as a prelude to moving to T2/T4, there to select our tools in order to go back out to T5/T1 (again leapfrogging T4/T2) for the musical presentation to engage the "real world." Obviously, this gives us at least three different levels from which to appropriate literatures to fan. Since we start and end at "engaging the real world" (T5/T1), though, it is important to consider the organizational structures of the popular music industry in order to discern an optimal way to achieve our goals.

It is a commonplace of the arts industry that commercial success and quality creative product often have little to do with each other (Ginsburgh, 2003). Therefore, it is essential to seek strategies that get around the well-
known pitfalls involved in music promotion and distribution. As we fan the literature supporting T5/T1, a perceptive piece by Peterson and Berger (1971) offers glimpses inside the working of organizations that produce and promote popular music. Building on the idea that such organizations champion mechanisms which reduce the disruptive (to them) effects of entrepreneurs—a description perfect for insurgent musicians from the transgender community (and Fire EX)—these authors cite Mills (1951):

The general milieu of this new species of entrepreneur is those areas that are still uncertain and unroutinized. The new entrepreneur is very much at home in the less tangible of the "business services"—commercial research, and public relations, advertising agencies, labor relations, and the mass communication and entertainment industries. (p. 94)

Although the quote from Mills is quite old, his trenchant observations ring true today. Moreover, pursuing our provisional path, we might look for Mills’ "less tangible" elements amongst the various inter-related but ill-fitting components of this type organization. One that springs immediately to mind is that, contrasting with the milieux of these decades-old sources, today's entertainment industries are more inter- and multi-national. Thus, though we have focused on the United States, the international transgender community is impressively extensive, thus expanding the choices available for collecting hats.

It might be useful to embrace cultures and languages the same way Fire EX fans did: though the Sunflowers’ occupation took place in a closed space on a small island, its cross-cultural and international reach was stunning. Chang (in press) summarizes this reach, referring to a Ukrainian music video:
Ukrainians made the video to tell the stories of how Ukrainians fought against their government and how they support the Taiwanese students. Images of Ukraine's struggles were combined with those of the Sunflower Movement, and the story was narrated through various young students using twenty different languages to speak the following words:

...Do not let Taiwan become another Ukraine
Struggle for your freedom
Do not be afraid
Stay strong
Believe in your strength
Together you are mighty (pp. 27-28)

Sunflowers had a single set of artists for inspiration; transgender activists have thousands, and those are just the ones who are known. Also, millions of progressives support such artists and can vote with their pocketbooks concerning whether to purchase more mainstream sides produced by labels, based on whether they embrace the music of transgender activism.

The international tang of the previous discussion offers other intriguing paths whereby T3/T3 processes could lead to unexpected blends of urges to take action. It would be very interesting to target a massive transgender awareness gathering, and have musicians do there what Fire EX did with the Sunflowers (though probably without having firebrands take over a legislature!): use the energy and commitment of the assembled to drive creation of an anthem, highlighting the fact that this is done to overcome ingrained American individualism—and let everyone know that this is exactly what is being done—then confront them with the multitude of media evidence of "Island's Sunrise."
Even if they don't occupy a government building illegally, they will sure love folks who do—if they are given an example, who knows what might happen?

And what of another "less tangible" element, the entertainment labor unions? One could champion (strongly) a tactic like encouraging unions in the music/entertainment sector (AFM, ASCAP, SAG-AFTRA, and so on) to require members, as a stipulation in their contracts (of course, after member approval), to support transgender rights and protection, with sanctions should they not do so. With diversity and inclusion in their very sinews from their birth (Levine, 1913), labor unions should be eager to embrace transgenders and indeed have tended this way for some time (see Holcomb & Wohlforth, 2001).

More directly, one could pressure musicians' unions and associations, and record labels, compelling them to attend to a market of whose profitability they are probably unaware, and of social justice "points" they can score with fans—transgender or not—by promoting social justice, even if it runs against the grain (they could even be shown that they can make a substantial profit, as Nike did with their contrarian Colin Kaepernick campaign [Abad-Santos, 2018]). Of course, there's an element of "selling out" in this, but I am a pragmatist: if it works, then (forgive the pun) just do it, keeping our eyes on the prize.

Fanning the literature also alerts us to the viability of subdividing target elements for exploitation. An intriguing possibility, which unfortunately I am prevented by limitations in space to explore, is to account for and adjust to the various "dialects" spoken/enacted by transgender subcultural groups, specific to their conditions and cultural milieux. A committee could be established to
analyze and codify the communication protocols employed by various groups, with one goal being to diversify resources for more effective use in compositions meant to engage diverse segments of the transgender community.

CONCLUSION

I hope this has been an enlightening, and enlivening, journey in a quest to find ways to persuade publics to accept and understand gender fluidity, coupled with useful suggestions about approaches that might make that happen. I am of course aware that some or all of these suggestions may have already been tried. If so, I would welcome hearing about the results so I can fold what has been done into work what can been done.

It is worth reiterating that these attempts to form paths through the five levels represent only some of those possible; moreover, these are first attempts. The model is unquestionably a work in progress, demanding revision and elaboration, based on whatever users wish to make of it. Holt (2019b) summarizes this sentiment:

Doubtless readers will have seen how some of the THERE model draws on roots in critical and experiential pedagogy. I have noted connections with some such sources, among the many others, in my hope of stimulating readers to further vivify the THERE model, bringing insight concerning their learning and experience to praise, vilify, verify, contradict, support, plead for, reject, and/or ignore this initial attempt at a unified field theory of pedagogical transgression. (Holt, 2019b, p. 49)
True to the open systems "feel" of the model, we should note that every suggested trajectory one enacts then becomes an element in a new system (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972), characterized by autopoiesis (Maturana & Varela, 1980), the situation in which a system becomes capable of reproducing and maintaining itself. Furthermore, when we speak of a system, we are really speaking of several systems. As plans are proposed, adjusted, polished, and incorporated, or modified, or discarded, track should be kept of everything in an accessible repository where what is done and what can be done is discussed. The model holds open the possibility of improving any given approach, uniting it with others, or abandoning it.

In applying the THERE model, no attempt is made to compel acceptance or endorsement of any plan. None are admonished to rigorously follow any proffered path; indeed, users are encouraged to move around, and best of all, once encountering blockage, to jump levels to find other paths, a condition known in systems scholarship as equifinality: in an open system, there are many paths to a given end (Kruglanski, Cernikova, Babush, Dugas, & Schumpe, 2015). With resources available, a model as guide, and an inexhaustible supply of innovation gained from often distressing experiences along with an ever-evolving body of scholarship, we have great opportunities. Sometimes, to spark a light in the darkness, all you need is some fuel and something to set it off.

YYY REFERENCES CITED


Holt, R. (2019a). "Crazed with the love of the light": Taiwan's Sunflower activists as transgressive teachers. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Communication, Northern Illinois University, Dekalb, IL.


