Revision as Trans* Praxis

Info

- Date: Friday, February 8, 2024
- Time: 9:00 AM–10:00 AM ET
- Location: #AWP24 Kansas City

Type of Event

Multiple Literary Genres Craft & Criticism

Event Description

The panel affirms revision as transformative practice. Writing across gender and genre, we will examine literary and human transition—the revision of form, language, narrative, and understanding. The panel will discuss the promise of reflective practice, away from perfection and legibility toward integrity and liberation. Topics will include conception, discernment, integration, and audience. Framing revision as iterative rather than linear, we consider what’s at stake in revision: truth.

Statement of Value

Under constant threat and political attack, trans* people deserve a forum to champion their issues, experiences, and wisdom. The panelists have published in and edited notable publications across genre. By sharing their rich lived experience of radical change, the panel will foster a crucial rethinking of revision in regards to identity and reduce harm for marginalized groups, of which the panelists are a part, toward liberation for all.

Event Agenda

The moderator will introduce the topic and four panelists, reading their short biographies. Panelists will briefly introduce their relationship to gender and genre. The moderator will facilitate discussion with questions for 35 minutes. The reading will end with a 15-minute audience Q&A.
Schedule

- Welcome guests to the panel/topic
- Introduce panelists and moderator
- Discuss prepared questions

Panelists

**Nico Amador** is a poet, community organizer and educator living in rural Vermont. His poetry and criticism has been featured in *Poetry Unbound*, *Bettering American Poetry*, *Poem-a-Day*, *PANK*, *Pleiades*, *West Branch Review*, *Fugue Journal* and elsewhere. His chapbook, *Flower Wars*, was selected as the winner of the Anzaldúa Poetry Prize and was published by Newfound Press. He received his MFA from Bennington College, is a grant recipient from the Vermont Arts Council, and an alumni of the Lambda Literary Foundation’s Writers Retreat. Follow him on Instagram @nico.amador

**K. Angel** has been published by the *Tin House Open Bar*, *PANK*, and the *New Flash Fiction Review*. A two-time participant in the HBMG Foundation’s National Winter Playwrights Retreat, their projects across genres are curious about consent, chosen community, and metamorphosis interruptus. They make homes in Austin and London, where they occasionally perform as the singing country drag king TrucK.

**Safa Khatib** is a poet and translator living and working in St. Louis. Her work has appeared in *The White Review*, *Words Without Borders*, *The Baffler* and *The Los Angeles Review of Books*. Her first book *Silhouette* is forthcoming with Bloomsbury Poetry.

**Maurice L. Tracy** is a Black, queer, fat femme born to Black parents, raised in a world hostile to them. Currently cooking, loving, laughing, crying, and fucking (but never at the same time) in St. Louis. You can keep up with Maurice on Instagram @blaqueer.

Moderator

**Crystal Odelle** is a queer trans storyteller, chapbooks editor at Newfound, and author of the novel *Goodnight*. Their stories have appeared in *Split Lip Magazine*, *Gulf Coast*, *bedfellows*, *beestung*, and elsewhere. Crystal was a Tin House Scholar, Lambda Literary fellow, and nominated for Best of the Net.
Questions

1. What parallels and differences exist between gender and genre?

2. How do you distinguish the intention of an object from the object itself—the initial idea for a story from the actual words on the page, or the person that the world insists exists versus what is?
   a. “There’s a way to revise what is happening in the image, and a way to revise how I’m looking at what I thought was happening.”

3. What is the value of a draft? What is consistent or core? What influences shape growth?

4. Can you describe any noticeable difference between revising pre transition versus post?
   a. not honing or whittling or shaping, but watering, pruning, dancing, listening, leaning, nurturing.

5. What considerations of audience do you make in regards to revision as trans* practice?
   a. “How do I want to allow/encourage you [the audience] to play with me [the work]?”

6. Can you speak to parenting your work, maybe the way you’ve learned to (re)parent yourself?
   a. “Listening to a text NOT because it has 'the answers,' but because it has important opinions about what it can/should/might be.”
   b. “No longer about restraining the text (the self); they are in service of giving more independent life to the work.”

7. What's at stake in revision? What promise? Safa in our email thread mentioned an essay by Denise Levertov ("Notes on Organic Form") in which she writes "when that devotion brings us to undreamed abysses and we find ourselves sailing slowly over them and landing on the other side—that's ecstasy." What's on the other side?
Further Reading

- **Subject to Change**: an anthology celebrating the work of five poets who are unapologetically trans: Joshua Jennifer Espinoza, Christopher Soto, beyza ozer, Cameron Awkward-Rich, and Kay Ulanday Barrett.
- In *Poetic Operations* artist and theorist micha cárdenas considers contemporary digital media, artwork, and poetry in order to articulate trans of color strategies for safety and survival. Drawing on decolonial theory, women of color feminism, media theory, and queer of color critique, cárdenas develops a method she calls algorithmic analysis.
- **Queer Phenomenology**: In this groundbreaking work, Sara Ahmed demonstrates how queer studies can put phenomenology to productive use. Focusing on the “orientation” aspect of “sexual orientation” and the “orient” in “orientalism,” Ahmed examines what it means for bodies to be situated in space and time.
- **The War of Desire**: In this work, Allucquere Rosanne Stone examines the myriad ways modern technology is challenging traditional notions of gender identity.
- **Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics** gathers together a diverse range of 55 poets with varying aesthetics and backgrounds. In addition to generous samples of poetry by each trans writer, the book also includes “poetics statements”—reflections by each poet that provide context for their work covering a range of issues from identification and embodiment to language and activism.
- **Borderlands/La Frontera**: Anzaldúa, a Chicana native of Texas, explores in prose and poetry the murky, precarious existence of those living on the frontier between cultures and languages.