IN BETWEEN SEX AND GENDER IN TRANSGENDER TALES¹

ENTRE SEXO E GÊNERO EM HISTÓRIAS DE TRANSGÊNERO

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Abstract: Cassandra Rios in *Georgette: Sex veste saia e calça* and Rosamaría Roffiel in *¿Quieres que te lo cuente otra vez?* defy the dichotomous sex/gender model by incorporating transgendered narratives that destroy the male/masculine and female/feminine division. Cassandra Rios and Rosamaría Roffiel stylistically imitate the traditional structures and values of fairy tales, with an intent to present contested issues of desire involving same-sex relationships. This article argues that by embodying both genders, the main characters widen the borders on gender embodiments and sexual identities by providing a model of inclusion and agency to redefine one's bodily identity and desire.

Keywords: Transgender. Sex. Identity. Cassandra Rios. Rosamaría Roffiel.

Resumo: Cassandra Rios, em *Georgette: Sex veste saia e calça*, e Rosamaría Roffiel, em *¿Quieres que te lo cuente otra vez?*, desafiam o modelo dicotômico de sexo/gênero ao incorporarem narrativas de transgênero que destroem as divisões homem/masculino e fêmea/feminino. Cassandra Rios e Rosamaría Roffiel estilisticamente imitam as estruturas e valores tradicionais dos contos de fadas, com o propósito de apresentar questões contestadas de desejo envolvendo relacionamentos do mesmo sexo. Este artigo argumenta que, ao incorporarem os dois gêneros, os personagens principais das obras expandem as fronteiras das possibilidades de gênero, bem como as identidades sexuais ao promoverem um modelo de inclusão e agenciamento que redefina nossa identidade corporal e o desejo.

Palavras-chave: Transgênero. Sexo. Identidade. Cassandra Rios. Rosamaría Roffiel.

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One of the major teachings of Hinduism is that every man and woman contained within himself or herself both male and female principles. A man was a man only because of the excess of the principle of masculinity, while a woman had an excess of femininity. This maleness or femaleness remained in conflict within the individual and could only be harmonized for very brief periods during sexual intercourse, something which allowed the couple to realize the absolute. Such a realization occurred when each had lost consciousness of his or her own sex and found the other.

Vern L. Bullough and Bonnie Bullough

There is the presence of ancient cultural and religious sources that challenged the dichotomous sex/gender model that has propelled modern truths based on two sexes and two rigid definitions of gender. Countless stories and images depict a split of one body into two different sexes, such as Adam and Eve, the union of two separate sexes as described by Bullough and Bullough in the epigraph by way of intercourse, and lastly, the possibility of having both genders and sexes in one body, classically represented by hermaphrodites and angels. This article focuses on the third category, a transgendered identity. I base my use of the term according to the definition delineated by Abby L. Ferber, Kimberly Holcomb, and Tre Wentling as “persons who change, cross, or go beyond or through the culturally defined gender categories (woman/man) [. . .] a person whose gender identity is different from their biological or birth-assigned sex” (2009, p. 557). This paper is part of a larger conversation around the ways in which gender and sexuality are circulated and contested in Latin American literature.

The presence of gender and sexually ambiguous representations begin to shift with time in purpose and meaning. As second-wave feminists argued in the 1970s that sex and gender are two distinct categories, Anne Fausto-Sterling asserts that contemporary societies continue to be influenced by the teachings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who gave way to what Foucault describes as discipline, both as a science and as a normalization of the body (2009, p. 7-8). Leading to what Fausto-Sterling describes as the “absurdly oversimplified” depiction of sexuality, and as a result, gender as well (2009, p. 9). The control over the body influences the ways in which individuals opt to embody these categories. The social resistance of many communities to allow both gender and sexuality to be blurred, and the persistence to maintain the male/masculine and female/feminine division continues to be a persistent struggle.

Similar to many women who espouse feminist ideals but do not label themselves “feminist,” Peter Drucker argues that there are countless examples of how Latin Americans engage in “same-sex sex” but clearly do not identify themselves as “gay” (2000, p. 12). The prolific discrepancy between practice and

titles of identity intimates the existing controversies also within the interplay of gender and sex in diverse developing countries. In the case of Mexico, Max Mejía stresses that the contemporary perception of homosexuality is greatly influenced by diverse origins, such as the current ideologies streamed through globalization as well as pre-Hispanic cultures and Christianity (2000, p. 43).

David William Foster in *Sexual Textualities* makes an important observation: homosexual themes have been present in Latin American literature since the nineteenth century; however, a clearly defined movement, a literary canon and a theoretical framework have not (2009, p. 3). Foster believes that space for same-sex relationships has been provided, and he refers to it as homo-socialism. What is critical nonetheless is that a homosexual identity has not been constructed or given space to do so (FOSTER, 2009, p. 3). As long as man continues to reproduce the macho prototype, he can have access to both men and women without assuming a homosexual identity (FOSTER, 2009, p. 3). If an individual clearly defines and stays within the prescribed gender roles, their sexual identity is not necessarily altered by engaging in bisexual intercourse. In the Brazilian case, James N. Green writes that in the contemporary lesbian and gay movement, there is a highly organized and active membership that has become very involved with the Workers Party since the 1990s (2000, p. 57). The overarching polemic among the organizations is their political involvement with the Left, which continues to uphold the very heteronormative system that the organizations are placing into question (GREEN, 2000, p. 60).

Challenging gender divisions allows individuals to expand their identity categories and to uproot gender inequality. The human experience is complex and ever-changing, and Fausto-Sterling emphasizes that transgendered people “and a blossoming organization of intersexuals all have formed social movements to include diverse sexual beings under the umbrella of normality” (2009, p. 13). For Karen Yescavage and Jonathan Alexander, transgender individuals across cultures offer a more challenging understanding of gender and sexuality (2009, p. 22). The dual categorization system is a social construction, and in this article, I argue that the need to act upon one’s homoerotic desires propels the adaptation of tales as a means by which to challenge the two-sex model of masculinity and femininity. The discussions of gender and sexuality are often too limited and are a platform for gender inequality. The authors under analysis, Cassandra Rios and Rosamaría Roffiel, stylistically imitate the traditional structures and values of fairy tales, with an intent that is based on their objective to present contested issues of desire involving same-sex relationships. By replicating an institutionalized format that provides a legacy of emotional attachments, both texts insert themselves into a resistant readership that is part of the two genders/sex model. However, by imi-

tating a structure similar to the tale's, the texts under analysis introduce important gender and sex variables that make visible the complexity of both, as well as the limited options offered by a heterosexual society. Using the legacy of personal exposure to these types of texts, the works under analysis make a claim to human emotion, to rigid heterosexual paradigms, in order to revisit the lack of tolerance and to develop more just social structures of inclusion.

Georgette: Sex veste saia e calça was published in Brazil by Cassandra Rios in 1961. Her novels are traditionally heterosexual plots saturated by erotic desire and its confrontations with social structures revolving around class and gender. Due to her romantic thematic development which incorporates overt emotional responses, the author and her works have not been seriously considered by scholarship. The second text, *¿Quieres que te lo cuente otra vez?* was written by the Mexican writer Rosamaría Roffiel and published in 1999. It is the last short story in a collection of stories that showcase social constraints on gender and sexuality, sexual desire and accounts pertaining to homosexual subjects, such as AIDS, erotic encounters, and the formation of relationships. The author has penned a few other fictional texts, one book on theory, and another on her personal travels to Central America. Both authors, Roffiel and Rios, have rarely been touched upon by critics, especially in North America.

The two selected texts explore eroticism within a political context, where erotic desire is not simply describing corporeal and psychological passions. Instead, eroticism is framed within a context that demonstrates the unjust double standards in love: the exclusion and the suffering that exists within subjects as they realize that there is no place in society for them to manifest their gender transformations. As an alternative, the characters search for transgender identities and spaces that better reflect an environment of growth, and not one of oppression. This article is framed by Audre Lorde's view on the erotic, that is, as a source of knowledge and social empowerment. For Lorde, the erotic is a source of untamed knowledge, which reminds us of our repressed agency, our past outside of privilege, as well as a source of energy that helps transcend the individual to move from oppressive circles. Instead of breaking from the historical past or wanting to erase it, she makes use of it as a means to inform how its consequences are visible in the present, and how the erotic as a source of knowledge and non-Western lines has been an untapped resource to transform a legacy of social disempowerment. Furthermore, the second author to guide this work is Chris Weedon, who posits, the principal questions of the women's liberation movement and as a result of feminism as well: "what it is to be a woman, how our femininity and sexuality are defined for us and how we might begin to redefine them for ourselves" (1997, p. 1). Having an active role in the rep-

resentation and construction of women's subjectivity is foundational for many feminists. Both Lorde and Weeden inform on the ways in which the exploration of erotic pleasure has the potential to redefine social and political limits, in order for women and men to be agents of their own bodies and desires, determine who they are, and as a result, expand the borders on gender and sexuality.

Georgette: A Tale of a Man and a Woman

Georgette: Sex veste saia e calça by Cassandra Rios narrates the life of Roberto and his desire to be a woman. Raised by a single mother who was abandoned by her husband for another woman, Dona Maura raises Roberto, along with her older three daughters. The family calls him Bob at an early age. In elementary school, Bob feels an attraction to a classmate named Artur, who shortly after leaves the school for unknown reasons. As a young adult, he will come upon Artur once again, and fall passionately in love with him. The novel traces the development of Bob's love life, from a melodramatic relationship with Artur, to his companionship with an older gentleman named Clovis, who provides for him and encourages him to explore his feminine side, leading to Bob's transformation into Georgette. The novel ends with Bob's tragic suicide, when he realizes that he is being manipulated by Artur for money and will never obtain what he desires, Artur, and the life he dreams of next to him.

Since a young child, Bob isolates himself from family members and innocently keeps his attraction to Artur at school to himself. Capturing the politics surrounding relationships, Bob demonstrates that even at a young age, he is aware of the attraction for the "wrong" sex, and that boys should only invest in girls. As a result, Bob's feelings are taboo and forbidden, and must be kept silent. In his realization that he must keep his emotions silent, Bob begins to daydream and allow himself an alternate life that exists in his mind. The lack of privacy in his mother's house rarely allows him to connect his male body with his feminine gender. It is, however, Bob's reencounter with Artur that marks his coming of age and reignites his desire for him. The space he creates in his imagination gives Bob the full freedom to dream and desire. When the opportunity arises in the real world, Bob makes his dreams come true by applying makeup, thereby fueling the construction of his transgendered identity.

Although *Georgette* is much longer than the Mexican text, and a different genre, it offers an eclectic construction of style, one that references tales. As I explained earlier, before becoming a transvestite, Bob begins to show his dependence on his imagination. This is also the beginning of his construction of an alternate self. Bob is first influenced by the institutionalized process of story-

telling, as a venue to construct his passions and dreams, before fully transforming his body by cross-dressing. Throughout the novel, Rios makes allusions to particular expressions, which leads me to believe that Bob interprets love within the idyllic structures of tales and desires to live a fairy tale ending, a novella full of love. In an instance, Rios writes that Bob day dreams, “[u]m transcorrer de idílios românticos no qual ele se via sempre como o personagem de um drama trágico sendo conquistado por Arturzinho” (1961, p. 51). Bob wants to be happy, but his homoerotic desire makes him feel that his love cannot be realized in the space he is part of, causing him to constantly place himself in a tragic future. Quotations like the one above give insights into how Bob, like many other adolescent girls who comply with normative views, imagine their future romances within a fairy tale structure. They want to be saved, seduced, and taken away by a man that they envision will adore them as much as they do. Bob is no different.

Rios presents love in a manner that until today is easily viewed in soap operas. Placed within a Western tradition, an individual is incomplete until he or she finds a partner. In a continuous attempt to place Bob within a feminine experience, he too craves the man that will complete him, as evidenced in the following quote: “haveria de chegar o dia em que Artur viria para completar o seu sonho de amor” (1961, p. 169). Bob’s inexperience and societal sexual limitations provoke him to envision his life in a narrow format with a man that mistreats him. Readers observe the tragic element within the storyline, in particular, Bob’s naiveté and infatuation with Artur, similar to that of a young girl. Although Bob’s desire is cliché for today’s forms of expressing love, it is an insight and exposition of the manner in which girls continue to be shaped to feel and love by being exposed to fairy tales. Additionally, Bob’s resemblance with an adolescent girl furthers the author’s intent of validating his love. Colette Dowling explores an individual’s real desire for another as a means by which to complete his/her personal happily ever after ending:

We have only one real shot of “liberation,” and that is to emancipate ourselves from within. It is the thesis of this book that personal, psychological dependency-the deep wish to be taken care of by others-is the chief force holding women down today. I call this “The Cinderella Complex”-a network of largely repressed attitudes and fears that keeps women in a kind of half-light, retreating from the full use of their minds and creativity. Like Cinderella, women today are still waiting for something external to transform their lives (1981, p. 31).

Bob is not a woman, but he is living through a heterosexual paradigm of storytelling and love, where he wants to be “normal” and unite his sex and gender difference as well as with the lover. It is the relationship between the body,

desire, and love expressed in *Symposium* to which both *Georgette* and Dowling refer. Desire, which must be justified by a greater cause besides the mortal flesh, and that, is love. Desire is also observed as a means to get to something else. In the Cinderella Complex instance, there is a sense of completeness through the union of the lovers. As reflected by the above quotation, Bob demonstrates a sign of neediness, waiting for Artur to come and save him. He dreams of the culmination of his novella, where Artur will redeem his love and take him where their love can be realized. The reader witnesses minor acts of violence committed by Arthur towards Bob, culminating at the end of the novel in the gang-rape of Bob led by Arthur and his friends. Bob's feminine identification leads him to imitate multiple aspects of femininity, including the psychological quest to have a happily ever after ending, which ultimately leads to his death, since in no tale does a prince rape and betray the princess and still get to live happily ever after.

Apart from reaching out to her readership and exposing the lack of tolerance and social limitations for individuals like Bob, Rios also presents the hypocrisies of heterosexual men. Throughout the novel, she attempts to uproot the heterosexual masculine figure, the perception of right/wrong, and the idea of heterosexuals as the "natural" majority. The author is able to do this by presenting distinct men, from different backgrounds and ages. In order to move away from the male/female, homosexuality/heterosexuality as perverse/normal paradigm, she destabilizes the notion of heterosexuality as the norm and as the "good" and "natural" sexuality. This approach alone is revolutionary for the times, where theorists did not form this same idea until several years after.

Continuing the discussion on the presentation of heterosexual men in the novel, Bob's second sexual contact comes from a random event that narrates how he met a pedophile, who attempted to take advantage of him. Even in this second instance, Bob is unaware of what these encounters mean. To a certain extent, childhood is rewritten by Rios and is where she begins her representation of perversion and hyper-sexuality, based not on homoerotic desires, but rather on character. The numerous examples of sexual attack onto Bob, both as a child, and later as an adult, are representative of a sexual identity that is not recognized, and as a consequence for its established invisibility, leads to acts of violence onto these bodies. Moreover, through the presence of physical threat, also lies the critique on gender inscriptions. What society most values in women, chastity and innocence, is viewed in the novel as a lack of preparation for the carnage that occurs in relationships. In Bob's case, it makes him a target for violence. Through Bob's body and his reflection of the values placed onto women's bodies, a critique on the patriarchal values of innocence and chastity is formed. The critique involves a potential to redefine femininity in order to better protect daughters and sons from being victims of violence and love.

The denial of all relationships that do not mimic the rigid borders of heterosexuality is reflected by the novel as all the characters, except for Bob, declare themselves heterosexual. Contrary to what one would find, the most prolific representation of sexuality in the text is that of bisexuality. A particular group of men that consider themselves to be heterosexual and are not openly bisexual, but actively seek homosexual encounters, includes Artur and his gang of friends. Artur is beloved by Bob, but he and his gang manifest their desires with violence and secrecy. For these young men, homosexual and transgendered identities include effeminate behavior and a sexually passive role. They exude masculinity and, in the sex scenes, this translates to violence, including rape. The revealing element in these sex scenes is that through erotic encounters, gender roles and identities are stressed, revealing what society deems appropriate for each sex. For instance, the first time Artur kisses and has intercourse with Bob, he notices Bob's delicate hands, his lack of facial hair, and his feminine tendencies to write notes and cry. These physical attributes and social tendencies put Bob under the female category, because males cannot (supposedly) manifest their sex and gender in this fashion. Artur's response in this scene is to call Bob a "mulherzinha" (little woman) and to project his physical dominance over Bob's body by forcing him into particular positions. Whenever Bob displays any signs of resistance, Artur threatens to beat him or hurt him sexually. The physical threat complies with the psychological teachings of females, where they must submit in diverse social instances, to the power and will of men. Florence Thomas explains that the patriarchal dominion of women through silence, states forth that

conociste la esclavitud, los cinturones de castidad [...] te rifaron, te compraron [...] te invisibilizaron, pero sobre todo te callaron [...] cada vez que querías decir algo te mandaban a la cocina [...] fuiste esclava, puta, doncella [...] la señora de [...] fuiste madre y otra vez madre [...] solo excepcionalmente pudieron alzar vuelo [...] oímos más tu llanto que tu risa [...] (2001, p. 22).

For Thomas, violence against women's bodies manifests itself through the lack of equality. Bob's sex marks him as male, but his emotions and gender manifestations identify him as female, creating a dilemma for the reader which destabilizes the natural assumption between sex and gender. In the sex scene described earlier, Bob ultimately quiets down and Artur forces himself sexually onto Bob.

An additional common experience pertinent to a female readership presented in the text is rape, one of the most feared and most traumatic experiences for any individual. In the novel, Bob is gang-raped by Artur and his friends, and left unconscious by all the beatings. The reader is once again presented with a sexual identity dilemma: associate with the heterosexual male character, who in

this case is a violent rapist, or Bob, the homosexual victim. Instances like these craft a space of tolerance and compassion towards Bob, from the part of female readers who understand and fear sexual assault and male manipulation. Although the characters developed in the novel are male, the issues (also) pertain to female experiences and identities. Foster writes that traditionally in Latin American literature, the homosexual character, the one exhibiting his sexuality in a passive manner, is often portrayed as the victim of macho exploitation (2009, p. 4). This statement applies to Rios' novel, which emphasizes a distribution of power that is retained in all social spaces, particularly, a power and a privilege held by men in the state and within communities. Regardless of class, men continue to be valued more than women and are authorized to impose their will in diverse ways.

As a male, Bob's integration of feminine characteristics is a point of interest for gender analysis. As I mentioned earlier, the physical traits, clothing, and mannerisms that Bob executes are a reflection of his society. The presentation of beauty, for example, holds a privileged position within the text. Those concerned with beauty, would most likely be a female readership. Bob begins to mirror and imitate appropriate gender performances and, like other women, begins to reflect his transformations through clothing, makeup, and body language. Bob even compares himself to other women, developing a narcissistic quality of "como eu sou belo" (how I am beautiful) (1961, p. 69). The element of both the completion between men and the animosity between women is replicated by Bob, increasing to a larger degree with his physical transformation. As Bob replicates the features and characteristics that he considers essential to women, the reader has the option to become critical of those same rubrics, which are fossilized within societal expectations. Because Bob is not the perfect match between sex and gender, the reader pays closer attention to everything that does not follow his socially allocated gender identity. At a distance, female readers, for example, have an opportunity to rethink the ways in which gender is exercised by their sex.

The destabilization of traditional gender models in the novel continues with Bob's transvestite development, his questioning of gender identities, and his manifestation of homoerotic love. Vern L. Bullough and Bonnie Bullough provide a cross-cultural perspective on cross-dressing by stating that it has meant different things to different cultures throughout time (1993, p. 3). Sara Davidmann argues that in the Western world, there is still the assumption that there are only two genders that correlate to biological sex, noting that genitals continue to be the "essential defining feature of gender" (2010, p. 187). There is sufficient textual evidence to suggest that the novel wants to destroy the biological perception of gender. The outside perception of transvestism is best described by Ben Sifuentes-Jáuregui, who writes that transvestism represents and occupies the

place of the “other,” while for the transvestitic subject, it is about representing, becoming, and recreating the “self” (2002, p. 3). He emphasizes that “transvestite subjects do not necessarily imagine themselves becoming some other subject, but rather they may conceive of transvestism as an act of self-realization” (2002, p. 4). Bob exemplifies these perspectives throughout the novel, where the transformative experience means a complete physical representation of himself, where his outside matches his inside.

“Éle era ela, finalmente!” (he was she, finally!): Bob’s rebirth is rooted in the soul and rises to the flesh (1961, p. 143). Georgette’s transformation, and his imitation of feminine gender, can also be viewed as an archive of knowledge, of what is essential in determining what society expects from a woman and what is considered to be essential for femininity. *Georgette* is an example of how the flesh and the mind reunite, and with eroticism as the motivator. The main character is propelled by his inner passion to act upon his desires and find the ways with which to fulfill his dreams. As a result, a transgendered identity manifested by cross-dressing destabilizes the dichotomous conceptions of gender and sexuality, and makes visible that which exists with the acceptance of only two categories. Cross-dressing also clearly marks normative expectations on gender, making visible the imposed markers of femininity.

Rios presents an articulate presentation of how the boundaries of identity can incorporate subjects who are traditionally marginalized for their sexual orientation and the manner in which they embody gender. Rios reaches out to normalcy, as a means by which to fully integrate the transgendered subject society originally excluded. She juggles the cultural ideologies in extremes, questioning both and inserting doubt into the readers’ minds in order to attempt to disturb the exclusionist and privileged patriarchal discourse. In conclusion, *Georgette* is an example of how societal truths are challenged by presenting examples that do not follow prescriptive rubrics of gender performances. Bob is both male and female, and Georgette is Bob.

The Union of the Princess and the Fairy in *¿Quieres que te lo cuente otra vez?*

In 1970, during the Second Congress to Unite Women in New York City, an evident concern emerged: the discrimination of lesbians within the feminist movement (JAGOSE, 1996, p. 47). Race is another issue that arose among feminists, in particular, how the movement was presenting an all-white, middle-class reality. Sexual orientation and race became equally important categories for consideration and in articulating discourses. Gloria Anzaldúa, a lesbian Chicana feminist, has written on the challenges of being an independent woman and a

lesbian of color. In her influential text, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Anzaldúa identifies the process of indoctrinating gender roles in every day family interactions. As part of this process, she puts forth the innate contradictions within culture. She writes, “[t]hrough our mothers, the culture sent us mixed messages: No voy a dejar que ningún pelado desgraciado maltrate a mis hijos. And in the next breath it would say, La mujer tiene que hacer lo que le diga el hombre. Which was it to be – strong, or submissive, rebellious or conforming?” (1999, p. 40). Women are taught what the ideal characteristics are, nonetheless, contradictory discourses emerge influenced by emotions. In Anzaldúa’s chapter titled *Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan*, she disrupts traditional gender and sexual models that have only two opposite possibilities and expounds, onto the potential of encapsulating both. She calls it the “half and half,” a social evolution that is better and does not fit within the limitations presented by traditionally sexual identities. She claims not only to have “an entry into both worlds,” but also that she is “two in one” (1999, p. 41). Her language use is representative of a transgendered identity, where an individual moves freely between both.

The second text under analysis is written by Rosamaría Roffiel and is found in her short story collection titled *El para siempre dura una noche* and published in 1999. Although the author has written several books, there is no existing analysis on her short story collection. This collection raises issues pertaining to sexuality and to the gay and lesbian community. From the beginning, the title of the collection presents a sentiment that rejects traditional views on love and marriage. The title reduces forever to one night. It integrates humor and a platform by which to present larger issues pertaining to lesbian relationships, which are often questioned and not taken seriously by their communities.

As shown in its title, *¿Quieres que te lo cuente otra vez?* the verb for telling a story takes the same root as the noun for short story or fairy tale, *cuento*. In this case, it is referring to the retelling process of tales. It is a short story that adapts the fairy-tale structure to present an alternate representation of gender and sexuality. *¿Quieres que te lo cuente otra vez?* is the story of a mother who tells her son Sebastián a romantic fairy tale before going to bed. In particular, this story explains how he has two mothers. Roffiel emulates the most basic characteristics of a fairy tale, the meeting and union of a couple, and subverts the heteronormative inscription to that of a homosexual relationship. The symbol of heteronormative power is the bad witch. The bad witch can be analyzed either as the traditional character within a fairy tale which haunts the princess or as the overarching social spectrum that regulates and surveys heteronormativity within both the private and public space. I arrive at the latter conclusion because the witch is the Witch of Fear, the character that has transferred fear of love-and the sense that she will never obtain homoerotic love-to the Princess.

The fairy tale consists of *Princesa Mamilinda*, or *Princess Beautiful Mother*, and *Hada Terciopela*, or *Velvet Fairy*. Immediately, from the character names, one sees the repossession of language to represent the feminine. *Terciopelo* is feminized to *Terciopela* when the word only exists in the masculine. For the storyteller, the language is changed to better represent her reality. In Spanish, a language that identifies nouns to masculine and feminine categories, the storyteller simply changes the gender of a word to represent a real woman. The value system of the storyteller is also apparent as both the listener, Sebastián, and the storyteller, his mother, affirm to the reader the beauty of the tale. As a result, homosexual love is brought forth from the dark spaces of oppression and invisibility, and rewritten into something which represents beauty.

The witch, named the *Bruja del Miedo*, or *Witch of Fear*, has put a spell on the Princess and caused her to believe that there is no one in the world that could love her, leaving her heart empty (1999, p. 131). The scenario of *Princess Mamalinda* is that of a woman who is afraid to love due to the unaccepted choice of her gender and sexual identity. If her sexual preference is not condoned, neither are her emotions. In a direct manner, the text explains the inner conflicts of not being accepted in society. The setting for the Princess is not purely seeped in medieval descriptions, but in regional tones where she is able to see rooftops and television antennas from her bedroom window. She also displays a level of independence. She has her own studio and conducts her own research projects. Before she sleeps, she places a pencil and notebook nearby, ready to write her dreams in order to remember them and to distinguish between reality and dream. When referring to fairy tales with female protagonists, Steven Swann Jones concludes that they often play passive roles, expecting others to guide and save them (1995, p. 65). Female protagonists are at times also discouraged from speaking their minds and “associated with nature and primitive emotions and values, which the narratives ultimately depict as inferior to the civilized and rationalized representations of patriarchal roles and values” (1995, p. 65). Roffiel destroys the layers that silence female protagonists, and displays the story of a female who is about to break her fears and bondage.

In a dream, *Princess Mamalinda* meets *Fairy Terciopela* in a forest. Their first encounter is marked by surprise and, specifically, by a beautiful sound that comes from the inside and the outside, and causes *Princess Mamalinda* to be overjoyed and to begin dancing with *Fairy Terciopela*. As *Princess Mamalinda* runs away with *Fairy Terciopela*, the *Witch of Fear* follows them, squeaking into the night that if the Princess continues, she will lose her freedom (1999, p. 133). The threat is ironic because a relationship can, and often does, represent in mainstream culture the loss of freedom. In this particular context, however, it is

also the opposite - the gain of freedom and the loss of fear. As the two continue their journey into the forest, they share their lives and comfort one another. As Fairy Terciopela explains, “la tomó entre sus brazos y le empezó a hacer caracolititos atrás de la oreja” (1999, p. 134). Following a rubric appropriate for children, the erotic is represented in alternative ways. In the forest, Princess Mamalinda’s perception of her senses is heightened. Her sense of touch and smell perceive perfume released by herbs, as her feet feel the wet ground. The description is erotically charged, followed by a full night of caresses and self-discovery. The protagonist shatters the taboo associated with physical contact between the same sex. It also displaces the notion that same-sex desire is perverse.

En route to the conclusion, there is a paragraph that at first glance can quickly be ignored. However, it is its repetitive use of the word “*aprender*” (to learn) that needs to be analyzed and interpreted as a source of rebirth. The night they spend together in the forest, the Princess and the Fairy learn a new set of vocabulary, including vegetation, plants, birds, the different shades of blue within the night, laughter until one cries, to give oneself, and the difference between love and dependence (1999, p. 135). The most valuable lesson of that night is that the exterior form is the means by which to make way for love (1999, p. 135). Love is and is not beyond the physical, because without the body one does not feel love. By including a homoerotic reading, the process of re-learning is a process of re-writing and re-appropriating new meanings and values to language. In a world that rejects Princess Mamalinda’s desires, and in a moment she accepts her lesbian identity, her interpretation of her surroundings also transformed. It is the act of constructing new meanings from the same traditional ones that allows for a rupture of normativity. Although dangerous to the traditional order, the use of pedagogical rubrics to incorporate lesbian desires within a fairy tale is a double game of resistance and acceptance of social structures. By utilizing normative structures, Roffiel develops a short fairy tale that doubly supports and challenges heteronormative views. Although Princess Mamalinda and Fairy Terciopela are unable to procreate and thus support a major social value within tales, they do have a son. Gender and sex, similar to *Georgette*, thus enter into conflict with one another here and do not coexist harmoniously within a dualistic framework.

In conclusion, folk narratives, including fairy tales, are an instructional tool that teaches the reader how to conform to societal expectations. They also inculcate social values by supporting marriage and patriarchal family structures, and in addition, prescribe gender roles in which female protagonists are passive and male protagonists are admired for their acts that impact the whole community. In a direct connection to gender, fairy tales are preoccupied with sexual identity, as many tales often depict coming-of-age protagonists. As a con-

sequence of such prescriptive methods, gender bias is evident, as is the oversimplification of life and the lives of individuals. This article has provided examples of how popular normative structures, such as tales, are a means with which to replicate the pedagogical process while incorporating traditionally excluded transgendered and homosexual identities. Through a process of exposure in the storytelling process, the execution of gender can be expanded and inserted within the borders of acceptability. Although the principal outcome for many feminists and self-identified transgendered citizens is to completely erase these borders, the expansion of them is a productive starting point.

As stated by *Georgette: Sex veste saia e calça*, sex wears a skirt and a pair of pants. As I have demonstrated, gender and sexuality are political, and the manifestation of erotic desire is much more complex than male/female and masculinity/femininity. Human experiences involving erotic desire cannot easily be contained in a binary system. *Georgette: Sex veste saia e calça* and *¿Quieres que te lo cuente otra vez?* are erotic texts that present political matters. The characters in both texts possess unruly normative bodies that do not fit into the binary classifications. Not accepting and not giving visibility to transgendered and homoerotic experiences in mainstream literature is a way to maintain gender division. Recuperating these bodies and providing more visibility allows for the extension of borders, particularly because Georgette, Princess Mamalinda, and Fairy Terciopela embody both genders and, as a result, weaken claims about sexual difference. Falling in between both of the traditional genders and sexes is a successful way to refute the strict confinements of erotic desire, illuminating the fact that human reality is much more diverse and demands many more identities.

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