



# Trans Desire/Affective Cyborgs (Think Media)

*Micha Cárdenas, Barbara Fornssler*

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**Trans Desire** explores the ramifications of using desire as the basis for contemporary political movements rooted in a struggle for autonomy, from the perspective of a transgender person about to begin hormone replacement therapy. It examines the affinities between psychoanalytic theories of desire, queer theory and biopolitics, using the work of theorists including Avital Ronell, Giorgio Agamben and Judith Butler. **Trans Desire** proposes that radical queer porn is an example of world building that effectively resists biopower without turning to former movements' demands for rights and legislative reforms.

**Affective Cyborgs** is framed as a necessary departure from Donna Haraway's cyborg. Appropriated from the complex sexual politics of BDSM culture, the figure of the "switch" is proposed as a new possibility for conceptualizing agency in our encounters with technology. A doubling of the cyborg body, the switch locates the liminal space in which the binary of dominance and submission may be explored as a contextual and meshed embodiment of contingency, materialized via affective decision. This framing suggests new directions for feminist philosophies of technology.

## **From the back cover:**

Micha Cárdenas takes apart the terms and implicit contract binding the project of "Master Thesis." What is it to master an object of inquiry that resists boundary control or conceptual arrest? How does one pursue a thesis when genre and gender assignments are continually destabilized? Situated between soft rant and manifesto, between autobiographeme and scholarship, between single and double authorship, *Trans Desire* bravely faces down the quirky habits of our bildopedic culture, reformatting the very conditions of institutional submission.

- Avital Ronell

In this powerful meta-account of transgressive embodiments and desires, Cárdenas enunciates a rousing, theoretically complex and practically explicit politic of resistance which will resonate with scholar and layperson alike.

- Allucquère Rosanne Stone

In *Trans Desire*, Micha Cárdenas offers a moving and provocative exploration of transgender desire, its limits, and its potential for biopolitical resistance. At an intersection of poetics and theory, Cárdenas embraces a queer ethico-politics devoted to radically challenging not only heteronormativity but the oppressive power of Empire more broadly.

- Diane Davis

## **About the authors:**

Micha Cárdenas [transreal.org] is an artist/theorist and a PhD Student in Media Arts and Practice at the University of Southern California. She received her MA in Communication at the European Graduate

School, Saas-Fee, Switzerland and her MFA from UCSD.

Barbara Fornssler is a PhD student at the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee, Switzerland, and a writer whose research interests include the body and technology, multimodal communication, and philosophies of gender.

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