

The Trans Generation: How Trans Kids (and Their Parents) are Creating a Gender Revolution

By *Travers Ann* New York: New York University Press, 2018 ISBN 9781479885794, 263 pp.

When first asked to review this book, I wondered what differences might exist for trans youth in the USA/Canada (as someone researching non-binary youth in the UK). Although both are western societies, there is a variance in political and social attitudes towards transgender identities between these continents, which becomes particularly salient when considering trans youth. Travers' writing sets the scene for the current climate within the USA and Canada, including transitions from the Obama presidency to Trump. They take the reader through a journey of some key tensions that trans youth are likely to face and how these are navigated in ways which inform the reader without the trans moral panic that is usually presented (lan-taffi and Barker, 2018).

The aim of *Trans Generation* is to give the reader an insight into the everyday experiences for trans youth, which Travers covers in the key areas of transgender kids; schools; spaces; parents and healthcare. Advocating for an affirmative approach (Ehrensaft, 2017), Travers aims to show how resources to help support trans youth (through the key areas above) are unevenly distributed, which they argue produces numerous tensions and difficulties around privilege and precarity.

Trans Generation is an important resource for understanding trans youth in the current western political climate. Travers draws on scholarship from sociology, feminism and youth studies to provide a critical and multi-disciplinary overview on trans youth. Through the use of a theoretical framework, informed by activist research from queer and trans scholars of colour, Travers challenges cis-, hetero- and binary normativities that operate within the USA and Canada — much of which I would argue also apply to the UK (see Ansara and Hegarty, 2014; Wiseman

and Davidson, 2012 for more on problems with the binary gender discourse and cisgenderism).

Travers centralises the most precarious of the trans young people (e.g. working-class, racialised, visibly non-conforming, undocumented, disabled etc.) from their research within the book to highlight the nuances in 'doing' harm-reduction and applying an anti-oppressive framework. For example, in the chapter on parents Travers includes quotes from working-class parents who were unable to afford top-surgery for their child or invest the time in educating themselves about trans issues and/or advocating for their child. The emphasis on the most precarious of the trans youth population made me wonder how we (researchers in this field) 'reach' more of these youth. Within *Trans Generation*, the young people Travers recruited are majority middle-class, from urban areas and White. Although they centralise the most precarious, I think that continuing the attempt to 'reach' diverse trans youth should remain a focus for researchers in this area to capture the range of experiences and to inform support for these youth. This will avoid producing transnormative understandings which would only reflect the experiences of the most privileged and undoubtedly reinforce a binary discourse (Watson, Wheldon, and Puhl, 2019).

There is a strong focus embedded within the book of an intersectional perspective which Travers refers to frequently and gives some personal reflection on towards the end. Current research around transgender identities argues for the importance of an intersectional framework (Vincent, 2018; de Vries, 2015) and this book certainly adds to the considerations around class and race for trans youth as well as issues around visibility — that is, being visibly non-conforming and 'passing' (Goldberg and Kivalanka, 2018). Travers also makes some concluding comments and focuses on the recommendation that any movement for social change must

start from and be inclusive of the most precarious trans youth. I believe that this supports Traver's foundation of an intersectional understanding of trans youth, as it allows for various precarious positions that some youth might occupy to be seen through the various chapters.

To conclude, Trans Generation argues for an affirmative approach to understanding and supporting trans youth that allows for self-identification and is inclusive of those who occupy more precarious positions within the trans youth population. This is in contrast to media portrayals of a 'trans moral panic' and cisheteronormative binary assumptions around gender, which through the use of quotes from young people, Travers is able to challenge. Trans Generation provides a grounded and accessible way for readers to engage with the current 'movement' of trans youth from the perspective of some of these youth. It challenges stringent binary conceptualisations of gender as well as dominant trans narratives, to allow for multiple experiences of trans youth to be heard.

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