



GENDER

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Authors in this session addressed the social construction of difference as it relates to the body, gender, and sexuality. The themes of all papers examined appearances that did not fit into the binary gender norms defined by American society and the social consequences of such behavior. Lynch and Ryan's paper focused on how transgendered identities were portrayed in the media, specifically within the context of talk shows. Jacob's paper on radical drag performance within the gay community analyzed how they are stigmatized because they do not constitute an "authentic" object of desire. Kunkel and Boynton-Arthur analyzed interviews with women who discussed their own issues of feminist appearance.

My response to these papers addressed issues within the field of textiles and clothing. Will these authors be given the opportunity to publish their work in the CTRJ or will both their topics and methodologies be judged too non-objective? As a profession are we expanding the margins of research methods and alternative epistemologies or are we too comfortable with the familiar?

Is ITAA a little too much like the audience of the talk shows examined in Lynch and Ryan's paper who demand conformity to binary gender issues or, hopefully, are we more like the feminists and transgendered individuals who have self-examined their appearance and become more reflective about their real versus idealized image? These papers expand our appreciation and acknowledgment of alternative constructions of gender, sexuality and appearance.