

“IT IS DEIRDRE YOU MOURN FOR”:
THE THIRD-PERSON NARRATION
OF DEIRDRE MCCLOSKEY’S *CROSSING: A MEMOIR*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. “I AM MERELY A WOMAN TELLING”.....	14
III. VOICING HER COMPLEX SUBJECTIVITIES.....	25
IV. CONCLUSION.....	49
ENDNOTES.....	51
WORKS CITED.....	52

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ABSTRACT

This thesis uses Deirdre McCloskey’s memoir *Crossing: A Memoir* (1999) as a case study to explore the relationship between personal and cultural narratives of transsexuality. McCloskey’s work is noteworthy for being the only trans memoir written almost entirely in the third person. As I demonstrate, this formal strategy makes her multiple selves legible and disrupts conventional notions of transsexuality as the “wrong body” experience—a linear journey in which one’s life is cut in half. Instead, my analysis reveals that the narrative arc of transsexuality can be circular, consisting of hybrid and multiple identities. Building on Jay Prosser’s theory of transsexuality as narrative work, this thesis argues for a complex and relational model of trans (autobiographical) subjectivity in which transformation hinges on the recognition of continuity among past and present selves.

In *Crossing*, McCloskey situates her narrative as an historical and political document, and she explores the connections among psychological, social, and cultural influences that give rise to her identities Donald, Jane, Dee, and Deirdre. In her memoir, McCloskey does not seek to make a confession or impose one narrative onto her life; instead, she uses third-person narration to explore the permeability among her past and present identities, treating her memories of Donald, Jane, Dee and Deirdre as the stepping stones that help her cross from man to woman. In so doing, *Crossing* illuminates the personally and socially transformative power of multiplicity and hybridity in trans self-narratives.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1994, when he was 52, prominent conservative economist Donald McCloskey transitioned to Deirdre McCloskey. In 1999, she published her third-person narrative, *Crossing: A Memoir*. McCloskey examines her awakening to her identity as a gender crosser, the eventual loss of her family, her painful experiences with facial and bodily surgeries, and her difficult and ultimately successful crossing from man to woman. Like other trans narratives written since the mid-1950s,ⁱ *Crossing* follows a narrative arc of most Male-to-Female (MTF) and Female-to-Male (FTM) memoirs in which the individual, from a young age, experiences gender dysphoria,ⁱⁱ eventually decides to transition, and encounters resistance and challenges from family and social and clinical institutions. Donald feels an innate discomfort with his gender role from an early age and secretly crossdresses with more frequency over the years. After his younger child, a daughter, leaves home for college, he crossdresses more openly as his crossdressing self Jane until he realizes that he wants to cross permanently to “she” and becomes first Dee and then Deirdre. Dee’s family gives him an ultimatum: pick either transitioning or them, but not both. Dee’s wife divorces him and his family disowns Deirdre. Dee also encounters transphobia and ignorance from psychiatrists and doctors. Following him from state to state in order to prevent his access to surgery, McCloskey’s sister, a psychology professor at the University of Arizona, gets court orders four times in failed attempts to have Dee diagnosed as incompetent.

The 1990s, the decade of McCloskey’s transitioning, was an important decade for the birth of gender politics.ⁱⁱⁱ Social and cultural discourses on transsexuality, transgenderism, and Gender Identity Disorder inform how McCloskey conveys her trans subjectivity. The clinical term “transsexual” was first introduced in 1949 to describe those individuals who

seek to change the physical characteristics of their bodily sex with clinical means to transitioning such as hormone replacement therapy and facial and bodily surgeries (Meyerowitz 5). “Transgender” was an umbrella term introduced by gender activists in the mid-1990s to broaden the scope of gender dysphoric experiences and expression. According to the historian Joanne Meyerowitz, transgenderism is a social term that encompasses “those with various forms and degrees of crossgender practices and identifications. ‘Transgendered’ includes, among others, some people who identify as ‘butch’ or masculine lesbians, as ‘fairies,’ ‘queens,’ or feminine gay men, and as heterosexual crossdressers as well as those who identify as transsexual (10). Since the early 1970s, transsexuality and then transgenderism are listed as mental disorders by the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV)*, and require a diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder (GID) before the individual is medically approved for hormonal and surgical transitioning (254). GID allows for “the professional recognition of transsexualism and professional guidelines for its treatment” (255). In her memoir, McCloskey often faces ignorance from clinicians who conflate gender and sexual identity. As I will discuss throughout my thesis, McCloskey’s political opposition to transgenderism informs her identity formation as a gender crosser.

McCloskey’s memoir is noteworthy for being the only trans memoir written almost entirely in the third person, which allows for the representation of her multiple selves. The third-person calls attention to the communicative or expressive power of personal pronouns and also allows for an analysis of the relationship between narrative (the story one tells of how one becomes oneself) and representation (how one signifies oneself/selves within that story). Jane, Donald’s crossdressing self, is narrated as “he.” Dee, McCloskey’s self-named

identity after she decides to transition, is also narrated as “he” until McCloskey changes her official identification papers and receives her first facial surgeries, after which Dee becomes “she.” Deirdre, McCloskey’s chosen name for her female self, is “she.” In order both to respect McCloskey’s gender identification and also to analyze McCloskey’s specifically gendered representations of her selves in her memoir, I use “McCloskey” as “she” to signify the memoirist, “he” as Donald, “he” as Dee before facial surgery and “she” thereafter, and “she” as Deirdre. The questions guiding my analysis of *Crossing* are: What gender politics and life experiences cause McCloskey to separate one identity from another? What continuities join them?

McCloskey’s foregrounding of the communicative power of pronouns suggest multiplicity, but more generally might be calling our attention to the difficulties of using pronouns as signifiers for identities that fall outside of the sex/gender binary. Trans individuals, activists, and scholars agree that the pronoun used should be the one that the transsexual individual prefers, but when discussing the past, it enacts a difficulty, because the individual used to be referred to by a different pronoun. As Joanne Meyerowitz notes in *How Sex Changed* (2002), the specific use of gender labels draws our attention to how “deeply we invest our everyday language and lives with constant referents to gender” (13). The formal strategy of *Crossing* allows swift movement from one sense of self to another, so that often, it is difficult to know which pronoun to use to describe McCloskey’s selves, especially when she refers to her hybrid selves Donald/Jane, Donald/Dee, and Donald/Deirdre. The third-person narrative is a constant reminder of how the sex/gender system fails to account for the complexity and multiplicity of possible gendered experiences. McCloskey’s narrative strategy complicates the singularity of “I” by allowing her to speak

from the multiple positions that the first-person would not allow her. For someone who has experienced many genders, the third person is perfect.

For all the third person's narrative potential, the only other trans memoir with third-person narration is Renee Richards' *Second Serve: The Renee Richards Story* (1983). The intermittent presence of the third-person in Richards' memoir has been treated by critics as a formalist style that expresses alienation from her bodily experiences (Prosser 122) or as simply "disorienting" (Califa 174). A critical reading of *Crossing's* third person narration shows the rich possibilities for tying formalist strategy with content. When an individual moves from "he" to "she," the third person, even though it enacts distance, also allows for mappings of the subject's self-understanding. How McCloskey categorizes her selves offers the chance to note the cultural, social, and personal influences that make possible her trans subjectivity. By not burying her gendered selves under the monolithic invisibility of "I," she also shows us the complexities of her gendered past, which challenges the dominant cultural narrative of transsexuality as the "wrong body" experience. In *Second Skins: The Body Narratives of Transsexuality* (1998), Jay Prosser describes both autobiography and trans bodily experiences as structures with second skins, because inherent in both is the condition of simultaneously having the "wrong" body/life-story and wanting the "right" body/life-story one knows one already possesses. Prosser locates trans autobiographical subjectivity within the tension between passing as one's transitioned gender and also being "read" as a transsexual because of one's memoir. In contrast to Prosser, I locate trans autobiographical subjectivity within the complex gendered representations both before and after transitioning. I will use a dialectical relation between McCloskey's losses and gains to show how we can only understand each of her selves by how they influence each other's identity formation.

Crossing's third-person narration allows me to explore the specific social and cultural contexts that give rise to each of her gendered experiences. Identity exists at the nexus of myriad, overlapping experiences, of which the felt-sense of the body is only one.

It is important to acknowledge the lived experiences of transgender individuals. Autobiography is among the few forums in which transsexuals can give voice to their experiences. Scholars often center their analysis of trans personal narratives around the dominant cultural narrative of transsexuality as the “wrong body” experience (Prosser 1998; Rubin 2003).^{iv} In his in-depth analysis of trans memoirs in *Second Skins*, Prosser draws from over fifty trans narratives published between 1954 and 1995 to describe what he sees as the common stages of trans narratives: “suffering and confusion; the epiphany of self-discovery; corporeal and social transformation/conversion; and finally the arrival ‘home’—the reassignment” (101). Prosser arrives at this common transsexual “plot” by aligning his analysis of trans personal narratives with the dominant cultural narrative which describes transsexuality as wrong embodiment. Prosser notes that “transsexuals continue to deploy the image of wrong embodiment because being trapped in the wrong body is simply what transsexuality feels like” (69). Using the frame of transsexuality’s “wrong body” experiences and emphasizing the many examples of bodily discomfort in transsexual memoirs, Prosser argues that because these narratives “are written out of experience, the body, sex, feeling, [and] belief in an immanent self, reading transsexual body narratives necessitates our using these categories that we have come to believe require deconstructing a priori” (17). Prosser challenges poststructuralists and queer theorists such as Judith Butler, whose theory of gender performativity often renders bodies phantasmatic.^v Prosser takes into

account the materiality of bodies,^{vi} but he does not deconstruct “right” and “wrong” embodiment.

The commonality Prosser finds in both transsexual bodily experiences and narratives is the notion of second skins. In terms of transsexual embodiments, he describes the first skin, the presurgical skin, as the outer wrong one, and the second skin, the body image, as the “authentic” inner skin (69). By positioning transsexual embodiments as outer wrongness and inner authenticity, Prosser adheres to essentialist notions of embodiment, because he focuses on the innateness of identity rather than considering how identity is psychologically, socially, and culturally malleable. Continuing his analogy of second skins, Prosser describes transsexual narratives as the second skin that makes bodies legible. Prosser notes that “[n]arrative is also a kind of second skin: the story the transsexual must weave around the body in order that this body may be ‘read’” (101). First, pre-transitioned transsexuals have to convince psychiatrists and doctors, who he calls their often doubtful confessors, to give them the bodies they already mentally have. Eventually, when psychiatrists and doctors give them the diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder (GID), transsexuals have access to hormone replacement therapy and facial and bodily surgeries. Prosser notes that all transsexuals, even if they do not write memoirs, are already “skilled” autobiographers because of the narratives they tell doctors. The second skin of narration also occurs when transsexuals narrate retrospectively from the positions of their post-transitioned selves. Prosser argues that the autobiography, the second skin, authorizes trans subjectivity, because “autobiography, then, allows the transsexual to remain (very publically) a transsexual” (131). By locating trans subjectivity in their writers’ autobiographies, Prosser notes the tension in transsexuals’

transitioning in order to publicly pass as men or women, and also the memoirists' desire, through public narratives, to be recognized as transsexuals.

There is a limitation in Prosser's use of second skins to describe both transsexual embodiments and narratives. He argues that "transsexuality is always narrative work, a transformation of the body that requires the remolding of the life into a particular narrative shape" (4) while at the same time linking that narrative to the dominant cultural narrative of transsexuality as wrong embodiment. Transsexuality as narrative work suggests that there are more than skins involved when transsexuals realize their subjectivities, but Prosser firmly places subjectivity in his notion of skins. First, by locating the first act of narration in psychiatrists' offices, Prosser does not take into account the personal narratives transsexuals tell themselves before they meet with doctors. To be the "arch" storytellers Prosser describes, transsexuals often consider the narratives they give to doctors to be anti-narratives that have to conform to psychiatry's diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder (GID). In other words, they already know their stories before they construct their stories for clinicians. Second, transsexuality as narrative work and a specific embodiment that already contains immanent truths allows for only one narrative that hinges on the "wrong body" experience rather than explores how trans subjectivities are located at the nexus of cultural, social, and personal influences, of which bodily discomfort is only one factor. The monolithic "wrong body" does not take into account the fact that notions of bodies are historically specific.^{vii} During the mid-1950s, the medical model of bodies was based on individuals possessing both male and female; later on, the sex/gender binary model was accepted. Prosser traps trans subjectivities in dichotomies such as "right" versus "wrong" body and constructed versus innate sense of self. While transsexuals do often express their feelings of bodily discomfort,

Prosser reduces their complex relationships to their pre- and post-transitioned bodies when he fails to question the notion of the monolithic “wrong body” paradigm, which problematically positions post-transitioned bodies as “right bodies.” As Prosser notes himself, after their facial and bodily surgeries, transsexuals still have to adapt to their changed bodies. Surgeries often fail and have to be reattempted for years. With his notion of second skins, Prosser places primary importance on representations of the psychiatric and medical aspects of transitioning in trans narratives and reduces trans subjectivities to bodies and surgeries. He inadvertently reinforces the dominant sex/gender binary system and does not take into account the ways that transsexuals are often in tension with this system.

In my analysis of McCloskey’s *Crossing*, I will argue that trans subjectivities arise and develop inside and outside of psychiatric and medical representations. Even though I disagree with Prosser’s methodology in centering his analysis of trans autobiographies around the “wrong body” paradigm, I would like to explore further his convincing argument that transsexuality is narrative work. It is important to understand that transsexuality encompasses more than bodily experiences and to read transsexual subjectivities within their specific cultural, societal, and psychic complexities. Beyond skins, there are also—significantly for narrating subjectivity—how one’s mind and body changes together, personal preference of one’s gender roles, and how one wants to position oneself within one’s family, society, and culture. In *Assuming a Body: Transgender and Rhetorics of Materiality* (2010), Gayle Salamon critiques Prosser by persuasively arguing that his use of transsexual memoirs to examine “the materiality of transsexual narratives” is too literal, because she finds it “doubtful” that the relationship between “materiality and the figural, or materiality and narrative . . . in either case is one of simple correspondence” (40). Beyond her brief critique

of Prosser, Salamon does not suggest how we might analyze the relationship between materiality and narrative, but her argument that the bodily ego, gender, exceeds its skin suggests that narratives too can exceed their authors' intentions. In her discussion of the phenomenological body, Salamon notes that "[a]n insistence that phenomenological experiences of the body and the subject are *individual* rather than categorical situates the subject differently, temporally and socially" (49; italics mine). In contrast to Prosser's a-transhistorical approach to bodies and narratives, Salamon asks us to consider how each subject's sense of embodiment is individual, specific to his or her time, place, and experiences. The diversity of transsexual life experiences seem to suggest that each transsexual narrative cannot be accounted by psychiatry's GID and that the diversity of trans embodiments cannot even fall along a bell curve. Salamon's phenomenological study suggests that transsexuality cannot fall under the category of transsexuality as it is currently conceived by social, medical, and theoretical narratives.

A common challenge all transsexual subjects share in their narrative works is their navigation through the difficult terrain between essentialism (they are transitioning to a certain gender because they feel innate social and bodily discomfort related to gender and/or sexual identity) and social constructionism (they have to socialize as well as transition into the gender). In order to understand the implications of McCloskey's third-person memoir, it is important to understand the tension between essentialism and the socially constructionism and how it affects our understanding of transsexual identity, embodiment, and narrative work. Essentialism views gender identity as innate and social constructionism views it as culturally and socially influenced.^{viii} For transsexual scholars and storytellers, there is something frightening about accepting the rubric of social constructionism, which often

erases the materiality of bodies in favor of seeking discourses on bodies. In *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (2000), Anne Fausto-Sterling considers the theoretical conflicts between essentialism and social constructionism—typically the debate between nature versus nurture in human development—and espouses a dynamic relationship between both. Drawing from the feminist philosopher Elizabeth Grosz, who argues in *Volatile Bodies* (1994) that the mind and the body arise together, Fausto-Sterling proposes a developmental systems theory in which the mind and the body develop and change together. She proposes a dynamic framework in which “as we grow and develop, we literally, not just ‘discursively’ (that is, through language and cultural practices), construct our bodies, incorporating experience into our very flesh. To understand this claim, we must erode the distinctions between the physical and the social body” (325-326). The way that experiences are assimilated into our bodies cannot always be determined by identity labels. Often, we cannot clearly separate the multiple, intersectional influences that shape who we are and who we become. Fausto-Sterling argues that “a single behavior may have many underlying causes, events that happen at different times in development. I suspect that our labels of homosexual, heterosexual, bisexual, and transgender are really not good categories at all, and are best understood only in terms of unique developmental events affecting particular individuals” (421-422). Like Salamon’s phenomenological approach to experiences as individual, Fausto-Sterling sees value in approaching each individual’s experiences on his/her own specific terms. In my analysis of *Crossing*, I would like to use Salamon’s understanding of the phenomenological body as individual and Fausto-Sterling’s developmental systems theory to challenge the dominant cultural narrative of transsexuality as wrong embodiment and Prosser’s reductive reading of transsexual representations as

dichotomous second skins. At the same time, I do not want to disclaim the importance of the materiality of bodies in trans subjects' lives. McCloskey *Crossing's* third person narrative allows for mappings of McCloskey's pre- and post-transitioned selves. Her subjectivity is more than skin-deep.

Significantly, McCloskey emphasizes her identity as a gender crosser over the clinical term "transsexual." The title of her memoir, "Crossing," focuses on gender as a journey. Following in the tradition of travel writer Jan Morris' *Conundrum* (1974), which uses travel as a metaphor for gender crossing, McCloskey also links traveling and gender crossing, emphasizing gender as a journey. She notes that she "visited womanhood and stayed" (xiii). It is through her physical travels that she meets herself. She goes to crossdressing conventions on the sly. She travels to have her sex reassignment surgeries, traveling as far as Australia and Holland, the latter of which has the largest sex reassignment medical facilities in the world and where gender is not as restricted as in America. By using the language of travel, McCloskey complicates the notion of transsexuality's two skins superimposed on the body. In my thesis, I focus on McCloskey's internal journey. She journeys from Donald to Deirdre, a journey that is as much social and psychological as it is physiological, and it is often impossible to distinguish how the combination of influences affects one another.

Before I analyze the cultural and political significance of McCloskey's third-person narration in Chapter 1, I examine how McCloskey, in a first-person *Preface*, situates herself as narrator in relation to her third-person memoir. Even though she never explains why she has chosen the third-person as her formalist strategy, her *Preface's* first-person address to her readers helps us deduce the cultural and social influences that determine, allow, and also limit how she can represent herself. As I have mentioned before, the 1990s was an important

decade for gender rights, and in her *Preface*, McCloskey tells us that her memoir allows her to engage in progressive gender rights issues; however, her personal and political opposition to the emerging category of “transgender” reveals the cultural ambivalence she feels towards the shifting gender categories of the 1990s, when transsexuality increasingly fell under the umbrella term of transgenderism. Her dislike of “third-sex talk” and any identity that falls outside of the sex/gender binary derives from her fear that she is viewed as less than human. Her positioning of her memoir as non-confessional and as a historical and social document situates her story within historical, cultural, social, and theoretical discourses.

In Chapter 2, I will explore how McCloskey’s constant reevaluation of her memories as Donald and how her examination of her experiences of passing and embodying womanhood as Donald, Jane, Dee, and Deirdre convey her trans subjectivity of multiple hybridity, which challenges the dominant social script of transsexuality as the “wrong body” experience. Autobiography is a self-reflective act that has a complex relationship with conveying transsexual bodily experiences. Analyzing McCloskey’s identities shows one possible pathway trans individuals take. It is important to acknowledge both the social and personal materiality of the body in trans individuals’ lives, but this understanding is mediated by narrative, which is the link between discourse and materiality, representation and reality. Transsexuality as narrative work suggests that the dominant cultural narrative of transsexuality can be rewritten not as cutting away of one’s life, but rather joining of all the segments of one’s life. First, throughout her memoir, McCloskey links voice, speech, and narrative. Second, *Crossing’s* linear structure from Donald/Jane to Dee to Deirdre allows for the temporal specificity of heterogeneous identities. Trans experiences can result in splitting one’s life in half or finding the means narratively to convey a continuous flow from one

sense of self to another. Third, McCloskey's third-person narrative sustains the complex relationships among her trans subjectivities, because Donald's life experiences influence the woman Deirdre becomes. The linearity of Donald becoming Deidre is also circular as Deirdre's memories of Donald help her become herself.

II. “I AM MERELY A WOMAN TELLING”

In her first-person *Preface* for her (mostly) third-person narrative, McCloskey presents herself as a witness of her own account, outside as well as inside of it. She introduces her narrative position as a female storyteller: “The world does not tell stories. Men and women do, and I am merely a woman telling” (xv). She situates herself as the retrospective narrator outside of the four individuals she will narrate: Donald, Jane, Dee, and Deirdre. She presents her current location as a woman, making this the position from which all stories must emerge. McCloskey also gives herself space outside of the text of her third person narrative by considering its limitations:

I have tried to tell a true story. Yet none of the conversations and descriptions in the book are court transcripts. Each is something I believe I remember, ordered in the sequence I believe I remember, and intended to show how I heard and saw and thought at the time—my recollections, my ardent opinions, how I felt as I remember how I felt. (xv)

She makes the distinction between a personal narrative and a life amassed through court transcripts, suggesting there would be a different kind of truth conveyed if her life could be filtered through court transcripts rather than the fallacies of memory. McCloskey’s mention of court transcripts is important considering the ways in which her personal narrative of transitioning exists in conjunction with and in tension against family members’ and clinicians’ narratives of her life. She frees her account from theirs. By working within autobiography, McCloskey frees her story from the court transcripts and other records that impeded her during her transitioning from 1994 to 1997. She also alludes to the distinction between the selves she used to be and those selves she remembers and constructs in her accounting. Autobiography is bound formalistically to giving the life a certain retrospective

narrative shape. There is an aspect of invention involved in the double task of “reaching back into the past not merely to recapture but to repeat the psychological rhythms of identity formation, and reaching forward into the future to fix the structure of this identity in a permanent self-made existence as literary text” (Eakin 226). The reasons for returning to and giving narrative structure to the past rely on one’s present position. Retrospectively, McCloskey structures her awareness of her distinct gender identities and experiences into the structure of her narrative itself.

In explaining her ambivalence concerning her role as a memoirist and in expressing her identity politics as specifically a transsexual identity rather than a more genderqueer/transgender deconstruction of identity, McCloskey draws on the tradition of autobiography as confession, but also importantly situates her memoir as non-confessional. She is a woman telling, not confessing. According to Paul John Eakin’s *Fictions in Autobiography: Studies in the Art of Self-Invention* (1985), autobiography, like identity, is bound by culture, limited spatially and temporally to culturally specific concepts of the self (198).^{ix} Eakin explores the scholarship that argues that knowledge of the self, the recognition of the self as a self, must necessarily arise through language. Autobiography is structured like self-consciousness, which could be described as the simultaneous capacity to know and be what one knows (219). Because of its gaze inward, autobiography has a long history as a confession. St. Augustine is considered the first Western autobiographer of confession as a spiritual journey towards finding God and confessing to God. When he published his *Confessions* in 1782, Rousseau broadened the possibilities for autobiography to be a personal confession of the self to the self and as the means towards self-understanding. *Crossing* is a memoir within the traditions of autobiography as a spiritual journey and journey towards

self-understanding. Even though McCloskey writes in autobiographical traditions of confession, she also challenges her role as someone confessing or that she has a truth to confess. She asks why she has to be held accountable for her transsexuality when others do not have to explain their identities: “I say in response to your question Why? ‘Can't I just be?’ You, dear reader, are” (xiii). If she does not present her memoir as confession, then how might her memoir be read? What kind of narrative does she espouse? I argue that she situates her personal narrative as a historical, political document. She speaks for other gender crossers of the 1990s, an important decade for transsexual history and politics.

In contrast to many transsexual memoirs, which often have a *Preface* written by a medical professional, McCloskey authors her own *Preface*, altering the convention of an outside authority by positioning herself as the sole authority of her text. As a woman telling, McCloskey has political goals in mind in writing her story. She situates her personal account in her desire to contribute to human and civil rights campaigns:

I am ashamed that from the 1960s to the 1990s, in the political movements for black civil rights, women's liberation, gay rights, and opposition to the war in Vietnam, I had sound opinions but never really took a chance on them. Telling you my story is my last chance to be counted. (xiv)

Linking her memoir to historical movements that have sought human rights for the disenfranchised, her memoir becomes a document that gives voice to the silent and the invisible, which is important when considering that transsexuals are rendered invisible by institutions, norms, and discourses. In *Invisible Lives: The Erasure of Transsexual and Transgendered People* (2000), Viviane K. Namaste theorizes that transsexuals are produced through erasure. Even though she focuses on the erasure of both transsexual and transgendered subjects, Namaste often notes particularly that transsexual specificity might be erased because of the uses and definitions of the term transgender (62). Namaste asks,

“What does it mean if we only hear the voices of people who call themselves ‘transgendered’ while ignoring individuals who have changed sex and who call themselves ‘men’ or ‘women’? (63). By the late 90s, transsexuality was included under the umbrella term of transgenderism, a term inclusive of all those who fall outside of the normative sex/gender system. Namaste’s theory of transsexual erasure applies to McCloskey’s identity as a woman. In her memoir, McCloskey has a twofold task in both convincing the reader that she is socially, physically, and psychically a woman and also, because of her past and her gender crossing, revealing that she is a transsexual woman. She is both a woman and a transsexual woman telling her story.

By telling her story, McCloskey wants to contribute to the political and cultural project of humanizing transsexuals, because cultural representations of transsexuals have been overwhelmingly negative since the 1950s. McCloskey praises the 1990s for humanizing transsexuals: “Nowadays there are many books about the crossgendered. Movies and television have stopped portraying them as dangerous lunatics in the mold of Anthony Perkins in *Psycho*” (xv). Even though I agree that there are more books about gender crossers, I disagree that popular culture has stopped representing transsexuals as deranged lunatics and killers. American writer Thomas Harris’ popular novel, *The Silence of the Lambs* (1988) is especially troubling for its antagonist, transsexual serial killer Jame Gumb, nicknamed “Buffalo Bill.” Because he is denied sex reassignment by his psychiatrist, who does not consider him to be a “real” transsexual, Gumb kidnaps, kills, and skins women to fashion a “female skin” of his own. The film version of *The Silence of the Lambs*, which came out in 1991, was a commercial success, received widespread critical acclaim, and is the only third film in history to win the top five categorical Oscars at the Academy Awards. In

2011, the film was selected by the National Film Registry for preservation because it is considered of cultural, historical, and aesthetic importance by the United States Library of Congress. Even today, “Buffalo Bill” is often parodied by popular television shows such as *The Family Guy*.

For McCloskey, the project of humanizing transsexuals is fraught with dilemmas. Having hybrid identities enacts textual difficulties, especially because McCloskey is clear about her gender politics:

Later Deirdre became clear about her distaste for the third-sex talk. It was the usual way of talking about homosexuality in progressive circles about 1910. Such talk was better than hatred, but it robbed homosexuals of their familiar humanity. It was a condescending toleration, and ignorant. After all, gay men are men, lesbians women. “I am a woman,” Deirdre would say, “not a third thing of neuter gender” (136)

It is unclear what McCloskey means when she refers to the “progressive circles about 1910” and her statement implies that if she identifies as a third sex, which she positions as an “it,” she would be denying her “familiar humanity.” Towards the end of her memoir, McCloskey produces a list of the stereotypes of transsexuality, and she sarcastically denies that “she is a third sex, you see” (251). Her gender politics erases the possibility that transsexuals who do identify as a third sex are human. Even though McCloskey is a prominent public figure who has often spoken of her gender crossing, the statements she make as Donald, Jane, Dee, and Donald in her memoir at times minimize the complexity of her life. McCloskey notes that

[t]here seems to be two patterns: either you've always known you were of the wrong gender or you've constructed a psychological dam against the realization, which suddenly breaks, usually in mature adulthood. The categories correspond to Richard Docter's of primary and secondary gender crossers. (79)

McCloskey identifies with the second pattern of cross dressers. Her identity politics is in tension with her third person narration, especially when she writes of Donald/Deirdre, Donald/Jane, and Donald/Dee. McCloskey does not consider any of these identities to be a

third sex or gender, and identifies Donald/Jane as a man cross-dressing, even when the difference between cross-dressing and embodying femininity becomes blurry. Deirdre is not in drag, but Donald as Jane is in drag. What is it that ontologically separates them? In writing of her political opposition against third gender embodiment such as Two Spirit and drag, McCloskey situates herself historically *against* the gender politics of her time. She seemingly enacts a narrative simplification of the body of her memoir, because the third-person narrative, in contrast to the singular “I am merely a woman telling,” allows her multiple and hybrid former selves to help tell her story. By writing that “men and women tell stories,” she forecloses the possibility that she is a transsexual woman telling a story. Her multiple points-of-view reveal a tension in which McCloskey makes visible the multiplicity inherent in trans experiences while at the same time making statements that erase hers as well as other trans experiences. Except for describing the third sex as a “third thing of neuter gender,” McCloskey never defines “third sex,” using only the example of the “berdache,” whom she describes as “the crossdressing medicine man/woman among Native Americans” (136). By linking the “berdache,” who prefer to be called Two-Spirit, to her description of the third sex, McCloskey erases the complexity of Two-Spirit, who are not all medicine people, and who often married and held many respected professions in their communities, which shows that their cultures and societies did not regard them as a neuter gender.^x To support her own identity politics, McCloskey does not consider how other cultures have different gender systems to humanize those people who, like her, fall outside of the sex/gender system. With the simplification McCloskey places on sex and gender, McCloskey situates herself in the ambivalences of a gender crosser of the 1990s, when

transgender was a term recently introduced that threatened those who were more familiar with stringent gender categories.

However, even though McCloskey seems to undercut the progressiveness of her memoir with her opposition to transgender politics, the significance of her memoir lies in her refusal to espouse a biological reason for her gender crossing, because of the psychological and medical traps inherent in giving a single answer. She notes that “a demand for an answer to why carries with it in our medicalized culture an agenda of treatment. If a gender crosser is ‘just’ a guy who gets pleasure from it, that's one thing (laugh at him, jail him, murder him). If it's brain chemistry, that's another (commit him to a madhouse and try to ‘cure’ him)” (xiii). McCloskey alludes to the popular concept that has equated transsexuality with pathology, as a mental disorder that only surgery can “fix.” Seeking biological origins to transsexuality entraps the subject into medical systems of knowledge. Transsexual subjects are constrained by social, psychiatric, and medical institutions. McCloskey is clear about her conflict with these institutions:

These days most people will grant you an exemption from the why question if you are gay: in 1960 they would not and were therefore eager to do things to you, many of them nasty. I want the courtesy and the safety of a why-less treatment extended to gender crossers. I want the medical models of gender crossing (and of twenty other things) to fall. (xiii-xiv)

With her mention of 1960, McCloskey alludes to the inhumane treatment of homosexuals before homosexuality was declassified by the American Psychiatric Association as a mental disorder in 1973; soon after, homosexuality would be removed from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV)*. But decades later, in 1996, in the midst of McCloskey’s transitioning, transsexuality would still be in the *DSM IV*, listed as a mental disorder. McCloskey recalls gay history to question the clinical establishment’s authorized

gatekeeping of individuals' rights to gender crossing. McCloskey is pointing out that gender identity, like sexual identity, is not a disorder. However, in both the popular imagination and in clinical settings, gender and sexuality have been conflated, when socially and psychically for subjects, neither identity formation is necessarily connected. Like other transsexual memoirists since the 1950s, McCloskey deemphasizes her sexuality so that her crossing not be linked to sexuality. She balances her story to include both bodily experiences and her acculturation as a woman.

Second, in addition to her refusal to give biological reasons for her gender crossing, McCloskey suggests that there is no innate truth to her identity that is based wholly on biology or culture; rather, by expressing her difficulties navigating through identity politics and her understanding of her own identity, McCloskey does not hold herself to any particular theory. McCloskey's ambivalent treatment of both essentialism and social constructionism suggests that she is looking for a route between these two. Choosing either/or entraps her in linking identity to biological determinism or to identity as wholly socially constructed. McCloskey apologizes for her statements concerning men and women. McCloskey writes, "I apologize for romanticizing sometimes the goodness of women and criticizing sometimes the badness of men" (xv). McCloskey uses the example that "[f]eminine' gestures . . . are not God's own creation. This of course I know" (xv) to bring our attention to her awareness to her ability to navigate the theories about her embodiment. She continues that "[t]he social construction of gender is, after all, something a gender crosser comes to know with unusual vividness. She does it for a living" (xv). When McCloskey describes what it means to be a gender crosser, she focuses on the social process by writing that "[a]fter a year of hesitation, and two years from well beginning, I found to my delight that I had crossed. Look by look,

smile by smile, I was accepted” (xiv). Her social acceptance as a woman (smile by smile) and the surgical procedures that made her physically recognizable as a woman (look by look) are what epitomize her crossing. McCloskey views her gender crossing as a profession, a second job, and the means by which she can live her life as a gender she never thought she could be. Transsexuals have to master the texts that theorize their subjectivity and embodiment in order that they may understand their bodily feelings and navigate the social and personal difficulties of transitioning. She has to position herself in relation to theories of identity as essentialist or socially constructed.

McCloskey aligns social constructionism, the theory that our identities are contingent on the social world, with academia, and essentialism, the theory that there are innate qualities that make us who we are, with stereotypes. McCloskey gives her readers a disclaimer, telling us that “[i]n contrasting how men and women ‘are’ I do not mean to recruit stereotypes or essentialisms” and that she is merely “reporting how the difference in social practice seemed to me, admitting always that the difference might be, as the professors say, ‘socially constructed.’ Gender is not in every way ‘natural’” (xiv-xv). McCloskey’s alignment of stereotypes and essentialism and her use of quotes around “socially constructed” show her ambivalence. She does not wholly buy into social constructionism, aligning it with professors, and also writing that it “might” be true. Her comment that “[g]ender is not in every way ‘natural’” suggests that, for her, there are *some* ways that gender *is* natural. At the same time, by equating essentialism with stereotypes, McCloskey acknowledges the ill-effects of essentialism narrowed down to biological determinism. However, even though she takes issue with essentialism, she does not seek to discount biological narratives to identity, writing that even though she has successfully gender crossed, the social acceptance “doesn’t

make me a 100 percent, essential woman—I'll never have XX chromosomes, never have had the life of a girl and woman up to age fifty-two [when she crossed]" (xiv). McCloskey's notion of the "100 percent, essential woman" is based on a combination of genetics and life experiences. To her, she will never be an "authentic" woman, and she writes gratefully that "the world does not demand 100 percents and essences, thank God" (xiv). Her use of "the world" is surprising, considering that the gender binary and society's demands that Donald adhere strictly to masculine behavior means that Deirdre does not realize the possibility of her existence until her mid-50s.

The tension between McCloskey's use of essentialist and social constructionist language and the first person in her *Preface* and the third person in her body narrative shows the difficulties in personally conveying a life literally cut in half by the sex/gender system. Even though the two narrative difficulties of (1) giving an account of oneself as a (transsexual) woman and (2) navigating between identity as essentialist and socially constructed seem at first very different concerns, they are linked importantly in conveying the dilemmas of representing the complexity of transsexual social and bodily experiences. In the midst of her apologies and explaining the multiple reasons for writing her memoir, McCloskey hints the third-person narrative in itself contains ways to read beyond her statements: "Perhaps my stories of Donald and then Dee and then Deirdre show enough bad women and good men to offset my romantic theories" (xiv). Even though McCloskey is referring specifically to how her body narrative will complicate her statements, I argue that she is also referring to how the third-person also complicates her position as "merely a woman telling." She asks us to consider her representations of her selves within the specific cultural and social contexts of each of her specific gendered experiences. She describes her

story as “stepping stones.” She does not want any part of her past to be erased. One of her memoir project’s important agendas is to regain her losses. The narrative arcs of transsexuality can embrace the entirety of a lifetime of crossing identities instead of being focused on the reductive opposition of the “wrong” versus the “right” body experience. *Crossing* offers the possibility of seeing how transformation takes place as one’s new identities arise and overlap on the old. As McCloskey maps the stops she makes along her journey, stepping carefully from stone to stone, we see that she never seeks to resolve her struggles concerning her identities. Transsexuality as narrative work hinges on a story of hybrid multiplicity in which her multiple selves dynamically interact. We can only understand each of her identities in relation to each other, and her past selves inform the woman she becomes.

III. VOICING HER COMPLEX SUBJECTIVITIES

From the beginning of her memoir, McCloskey enacts a distance from her narrative with her use of the omniscient third person, which situates both the narrator and the reader outside of her direct consciousness. We are watching and analyzing her memories with her, but not from within her. It is rare for a memoir to be in the third person, but this formalist strategy works well in relating the multiplicity of transsexual social and bodily experiences. This narrative strategy provides a unique approach to telling a story that cannot be conveyed by the first person, which conveys the sense of a singular gender experience. The monolithic “I” gives the sense of a continuous, unified self while the third person allows McCloskey to lay out her specifically gendered experiences for careful inspection. Our ability to know the “I” is limited temporarily and spatially to the comments the “I” makes. The third person allows us to see how McCloskey, as narrator, retrospectively shapes her gendered experiences and how her multiple selves interact through their in-text commentary as her story unfolds. The narrative separates the two selves into the narrator and the memory, showing us the distance between Donald and Deirdre, a distance signified by pronouns that also closely foreshadows the story in which Donald will become Deirdre. *Crossing’s* categorization as memoir reminds us that Donald and Deirdre are one individual, but significantly separated by the binary distance from male to female, and from memory to identity. She views her past from an analytical distance and clearly, and sometimes not-so-clearly, genders her life for us. McCloskey uses “he” to signify Donald, Jane, and Dee (before facial surgery) and “she” to signify Dee (after surgery) and Deirdre.

Because it is McCloskey who remembers, she is the one who controls the narrative; however, her one voice is broken up into many, interlaced from multiple points in time, which destabilizes both gender and memory. Memory is not linear nor a binary, but rather, like identity, overlaps. The autobiographical cohesiveness of the subject is complicated when the multiple voices of the memoirist's past selves are allowed their space. For McCloskey, this narrative strategy allows her to defamiliarize normative notions of sex and gender, because third-person narration allows and lends room for narrative acknowledgment of multiple sex/gender combinations that have existed in her past before she became Deirdre. By writing a third person narrative, McCloskey splits her identities continuously and distances her readers from a sense that she is omniscient, and that she has always known herself as a transsexual. Instead, she highlights gender as a process. Each of these individuals are the same and also not the same, because her identities have to reach across time and space in their understandings of the divides the sex/gender binary has created in each of McCloskey's identities.

Giving voice to her experiences is important to McCloskey, which she metaphorically conveys by continually linking voice and identity throughout her memoir. When he is ten, struggling to overcome his stuttering, Donald also wishes for female embodiment. His nightly prayers are twofold, connecting speech to femininity:

**Whoever: Please. Tomorrow when I wake up:
I won't stutter. I'll just talk like people do. It'll be easy for me, like flying in the stories. Sam Small the flying Yorkshireman.
And I'll be a girl. A girl. It's easy. Samantha Small the flying Yorkshire WOMAN.** (6; bolded print McCloskey)

McCloskey stresses identity as continuity by layering her struggles with voice and speech from Donald's childhood to Deirdre's present. After Dee is given the diagnosis of Gender

Identity Disorder and begins his multiple surgeries to face and body, the most difficult aspect of surgery for Dee and then Deirdre is voice surgery. Before Dee's voice surgeries, he had begun voice therapy: "'Loft' the voice, they said, in a series of sessions over the next month. Make it come from the top of your throat, not from your chest like a man. Stress the sibilant quality of ssssss. Vary your pitch within the sentence" (82). After the first attempt at voice surgery, the doctors tell Dee that his voice is more male and that such a voice cannot be trained to be female (152). The voice therapy reminds him of practicing his childhood stutter away: "The weekly visits were a repeat of years of speech therapy as a child" (153). Eventually, McCloskey gains a female voice, recognizable as the hoarse voice of a sick woman (245). There is the suggestion of reconciliation between two bodily experiences when McCloskey expresses the wish that she had trained Donald's voice instead of seeking a new voice, which was an expensive, fruitless endeavor. McCloskey advises that

[w]ith her original, presurgery voice her many sessions with her speech therapist in Rotterdam would probably have worked better. It's better to have the range of your natural voice, she explained, which you can train feminine. Get a tape recorder. Turn off part of the male instrument, a viola acting as violin. Place your voice forward. Speak in your head instead of your chest. Articulate more clearly. No harsh onsets. (245)

To have voice and to speak in the tones of her own voice, distinct from Donald's voice, is important to Deirdre, but her wish that she trained Donald's voice to become her own, Deirdre's, voice also speaks of continuity between male and female. When commenting on Dee, the shortened version of Deirdre, McCloskey gives herself a transformative naming that is structured like a stutter: "Donald-Don-D-Dee-Deirdre" (66). The stuttering, and the mapping of those identities as broken up and yet continuous, holds her story together.

Identities can arise and disappear in an instant, and no matter how many ways identity, especially gender identity is explained, there might never be a way to explain that is

not already predetermined by the sex/gender system, which is full of contradictions. When he is interviewed by psychiatric institutions, Dee has to deny his past of Donald as Donald. At first, Dee attempts to convey the truth, but when this strategy proved fruitless, he begins to lie:

“Oh, yes,” Dee said to the Free University psychiatrist [in Amsterdam], “I’ve always had these desires. Oh, yes, Doctor, ever since I can remember. Oh, yes, it’s just like being a woman in a man’s body. Oh, yes, I hate my penis.” Oh, yes, Doctor, whatever your dopey list says. (144-145)

Dee rejects the wrong body paradigm with his sarcasm. McCloskey’s third person representation of Dee as “he” also disrupts the story he tells. With her multiple points of view originating from one individual, McCloskey purposefully inhabits the space of psychological, social, and theoretical uncertainties about transsexuality. She explores the stereotypes of transsexuality: that it is a sign of mental instability and that it is about having the wrong body. Dee, distinct and yet similar to Donald, Jane, and eventually Deirdre, is in a state of becoming a woman socially and bodily at the same time that he is a woman. He has lived a happy life as a man and he does not hate his body. Drawing from McCloskey’s dislike of third sex in reference to transsexuality, he is not a third sex either. Instead, Dee wants to convey the story that cannot be contained in the story he must tell the psychiatrist. It becomes unclear in this moment, and often throughout the memoir when Deirdre lectures on identity politics, what McCloskey’s story about her body is. Both in this moment and in her memoir itself, Dee and McCloskey the narrator are passing as a gender crosser, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions about identity itself.

Throughout her memoir, repeatedly, McCloskey presents us with a series of dilemmas similar to the situation in which she expresses that Donald was a man during his marriage simultaneously with the reality that he has always been a transsexual woman. After

he has his personal insight about being a gender crosser, Donald/Jane worries that his wife would think that she has lived for thirty years with another woman and he wants to convince his wife that “**she is mistaken about our past**” (53, bolded print McCloskey). However, later, when arguing with his wife, Donald states that he is a transsexual and ““always [has] been”” (60). To write and to speak one’s identity is layered with difficulties. When Deirdre later contemplates the nature/nurture debate of identity, she wonders, “Nature, nurture? One can’t be sure. Even I, inside the experiment. Yet what does it matter? she asked herself, with a philosophical pragmatism she knew would annoy both sides, who insist on one or the other as a test of ideology” (84). McCloskey finds validity in both schools of thought, and argues that her identity is both constructed socially and psychically and biologically influenced. Based on her life experiences as a gender crosser, she concludes that “[a]n identity is both made and not made” (177). It seems incredible how McCloskey changes from Donald to Deirdre, or is it? There are myriad factors that contribute to how she changes.

By making Deirdre’s voice distinct from Donald’s voice from the beginning of *Crossing*, McCloskey gives Deirdre a spiritual if not bodily existence. Because of the narrative presence of Deirdre’s voice from the beginning, a ghostly commenter who is Donald’s future, I argue that one of the key components of narratives of transsexuality is the dialect between loss and gain. The continuity in the past and the present and between identity and memory McCloskey experiences pre- and post-transition challenges transsexuality as the “wrong body” experience. If transitioning is both of loss and gain, then transsexual social and bodily experiences are of double lives lived rather than of Prosser’s posit of mirror images. Even before she transitions, McCloskey is doubly gendered, even triply gendered. Her life is one of multiplicity and hybridity. By focusing his analysis of

transsexual memoirs on bodily discomfort, Prosser highlights the important fact that most transsexuals do hate their pre-transitioned bodies, but in order to challenge his positioning of the pre-transitioned body as “wrong” and the post-transitioned body as “right,” analysis of transsexual narratives should also include readings of both social and bodily losses and gains. For lives literally split in half by the sex/gender system, finding ways to acknowledge or even heal that split can diversify the notion of transsexuality as narrative work.

The re-membering of Donald’s prayers and dreams shows how Donald and Deirdre are separated by gender but also joined by gender. They possess both their memories. In order to read Donald’s childhood, we are also aware of Deirdre’s present: his past means in her present, she can never be 100% woman, but because he is her past, he is part of her present imagination. When he dresses in his mother’s underthings for the first time as a young boy, Donald describes that “[i]t was not curiosity about what lay underneath women’s clothing. It was curiosity about being” (6). Female embodiment is also evident in his dreams: “He was having the first wet dreams of maleness. Oddly, his dreams were of femaleness, of having it, of being” (5). Eventually, Donald as a young boy decides not to be a girl, and his learned macho behavior is the antithesis of who Deirdre becomes. As the memoir progresses, he becomes the shadow on which her present is built. His memories are her link to her first awareness of gender; the memoir becomes his memorial because her birth as a woman is directly imposed on his timeline. Similarly to the moment when Donald as a boy wished both to stop stuttering and to also be a girl, McCloskey continues symbolically to link speech, voice, narrative and body by giving us the two voices of Donald and Deirdre in her third person narrative. Occasionally, she confuses us sometimes by not clarifying which voice is which. The voice, singular, is imperfect, and multiplied, becomes a fragmented

vocalization that stutters both physically and metaphorically, but it is importantly what links the narrative between mind and body. When voice breaks down, the interstitial spaces between give rise to the complexity of subjectivity. For McCloskey, it is the tension between constantly reorienting her experiences of her body and forming a narrative of her body that informs her decision to transition.

In *Crossing*, memory and identity overlap with Deirdre's first person comments on Donald's forays into femininity. McCloskey presents Donald as a boy and then a man uncomfortable with his masculinity but unable to see any option except to grow into his manhood. McCloskey begins *Crossing* with her interrogation with gendered memory as "Deirdre remembers Donald's mother taking him at age five into a tea and ice cream place called Schraft's, in Harvard Square" (3). She introduces two gendered selves, the adult female Deirdre looking back on five year old Donald who vividly remembers going into the women's restroom with his mother. There is nothing unique about this memory, McCloskey notes, except for the intensity with which Donald remembers "the ladies in the tiny room speaking kindly to the boy as they straightened their seams and reapplied their lipstick" (3). The sharpness of remembering being in this feminine space is perhaps due to young Donald's eventual understanding that women's spaces and habits are prohibited to him. When Deirdre remembers Donald going with his mother to clothing stores, Donald's childhood consciousness and voice arise out of the experience's vividness as "[h]e kept the memory, not yet wanting to dress as the women did, to be as the women were. He was half conscious of it: **Swordplay, yes, what boys and men do. Not that other. No.**" (4; bolded print McCloskey). Similarly to this example of Donald's spoken words, other instances of Donald's and Deirdre's commentary within the text are presented as bolded print, which

could signal the intensity of memory and/or signify an intrusion of specific past selves into the text. The intensity of Donald's memories makes him the memory keeper. From these and other memories of an ordinary boyhood, Deirdre as character/narrator also emerges, explaining that even if Donald played with his puppets like they were dolls,

it's not as simple as that, Deirdre would explain. I was not effeminate, if that's your theory. I behaved like a boy, dreamed like a boy, *was* a boy. There's nothing plain in such histories. Some male-to-female gender crossers are effeminate boys, but many are not. . . . A tiny share of noneffeminate boys like Donald wish in time to become women. You can't tell. It takes time to know oneself. There will be surprises. (5; italics McCloskey)

Through both formalist strategy and content, McCloskey distances herself from the theory that she was born in the wrong body. Similarly to Deirdre's lecture, there are other times in the text when Deirdre speaks through the text on identity politics, but those sections, like these, are never bolded. The distance between Donald, the memory keeper, and Deirdre, the memory synthesizer, shows the distance not only between being and dreaming maleness and femaleness but also between memory, the key to making sense of identity, and self-knowledge. The combination of bolded print to signal Donald's and Deirdre's voices, and the indication of Deirdre's lectures with "Deirdre would explain" throughout the memoir splits up McCloskey's narrative into multiplicity. The story is carried forward from multiple points in memory and identity. Together, all the voices contribute to telling her "strange" story as a gender crosser.

Donald is a child of the 1950s, and those memories are important to how Deirdre eventually cultivates her femininity. During the 1950s, the teenage Donald secretly crossdressed in his mother's clothing and sneaked into his female friends' homes to try on theirs. One of his favorite outfits was "the crinolines, and shoes that fit, and garter belts and all the equipment of a 1950s girl" (7). Commenting on her boyhood, McCloskey writes,

“**Oddly, now I have a crinoline, for square dancing**, Deirdre thought” (7; bolded print McCloskey). The Deirdre who comments on Donald’s actions could be the Deirdre writing the memoir and/or the Deirdre at some other point in time being recalled by the Deirdre writing. In reflecting on the road not taken, McCloskey notes that if the option to transition earlier had been available, she would have taken it:

If he had believed crossing was practical before the birth year of 1995 he would have gone ahead. **Without question**, thought Deirdre later. **A woman's life**. But he believed he was too big, too masculine. He thought of this often during the 1950s and '60s and 70s and '80s. He wished he was shorter, of slighter build and prettier face. **Still do**. (8; bolded print McCloskey)

Female embodiment is both located in the past and retrospectively, joined by voice and memory. There is a note of regret about the life not lived. Social factors prohibiting his gender crossing are taken into consideration in comments such as “**It's amazing**, Deirdre thought, **how much depended on the mere practical possibility**” (8; bolded print McCloskey). The regrets Donald expresses about his body are multifaceted: he would have crossed sooner if his body was more feminine. The third-person formally enacts Donald’s double consciousness of being a man and yet also aware that he could be a woman: “At one level he was a happy young man, exercising his new manly body and manly duties and privileges, a coat and tie and chino pants for school and college. Only at another, buried level did he wish to be a young woman. **Nothing to be done. You're a man. Report for duty**” (9; bolded print McCloskey). At this point in his life, he conceals the dream of femaleness, accepting his obligations as a man but continuing to crossdress secretly and guiltily.

Donald describes his life in terms of “a hydraulic metaphor, the river of his life pouring and pouring into a lake behind a dam, from age eleven to age fifty-three” (9). Even

though his life flows forward, the dam imagines his life as blocked, stopped by a human-made structure. This metaphor is adept in describing the sex/gender system that allows him to live as a man but which does not allow him the possibility of breaking through to womanhood. He cannot imagine the other side of the dam because he is not yet able to imagine life as a transsexual woman. After he marries and fathers two children, he continues to identify as “a heterosexual crossdresser, tough-guy economist, regular. **Not a transsexual**, he thought, using the frightening, medicalized word” (13; bolded print McCloskey). The water accumulates because his life as a man, though happy and fulfilling, is a dead end. McCloskey continues to use the dam as a metaphor, and also as a countdown in such descriptions as “[t]hree years before the break, his gender-crossing feelings [were] still accumulating behind the dam” (10). His gender future is presented as narrative work, as encountering a dam and not knowing what lies beyond the artificially-made structure. He continues to live with the feeling that there is more to his identity that he cannot imagine.

Donald’s life as narrative work hinges on the plot of the dam eventually breaking, revealing the possibility of womanhood, but before it breaks, he has a female persona, Jane, who creates more fissures in his stable identification as a man and helps him break down the dam. When his two children finally leave home, Donald feels liberated to crossdress more often. When going online in search of other crossdressers in the mid-1990s, he chooses a secret crossdressing identity named Jane, chosen for Jane Austen. His choice of a famous British writer is significant as he authors his life after decades of hiding. He evaluates his experiences as Jane during his travels:

Go ahead: think about it. I've spent eight months January to August dealing intensely with this stuff. A convention, a few crazy fun nights at Temptations, coming out to clubs of crossdressers after forty-two years entirely in the closet.

Oh, yeah: and that mall in the northern suburbs. And the trip to Des Moines and the angry janitor at the rest stop. (50; bolded print McCloskey)

He evaluates both the good and the bad experiences: communicating with others like him, having fun at the gay bar Temptations, and also dealing with anger from individuals who refuse his right to use the women's restroom. Because Donald crossdressed most often during his business trips, there is a symbolic link between crossing and traveling from a limited sense of self to a self that encompasses gendered contradictions.

For Donald/Jane, crossdressers are male; this distinction also allows him eventually to give up his identity as a crossdresser in order to become a gender crosser. As Jane, the emphasis is on secret femininity and also on femininity as an exteriority; femaleness is not yet taken into his consciousness. As Jane, he meets crossdressers and transsexuals and in this liminal community constantly on the move, he learns to position himself in relation to the identities around him. Even though he does not yet identify as transsexual, his awareness of the differences between the social behaviors of crossdressers and transsexuals helps him come closer to breaking the dam. At the crossdressing conventions, he observes how most crossdressers still follow the social scripts of men when they do not help clean after meals. After one meal, he notices that “[n]one of the crossdressers moved. Donald later worked it out: These were men, these 97 percent of crossdressers who are not gender crossers” (33). By standing up with a trash bag and helping to clean, he knowingly positions himself within the social scripts of women, purposefully acting in contrast to behavior which he reads as masculine. Womanhood has become less of a game and more of an inquiry into being.

The story of Donald/Jane is focused on the distinction between interior/exterior but is also a complication of that dialect when the third person allows intersections of identity and memories of McCloskey's identities. The scholarly duties of Donald (going to academic

conventions) mask the crossdressing hobbies of Donald as Jane (buying cosmetics and feminine clothes, interacting with friends at crossdressing conventions, and dancing at gay bars). When describing and narrating Jane's story, McCloskey always uses "he" to refer to Jane. For example, McCloskey narrates that "[t]hough Jane was in his Sunday best, he thought he was not religious and viewed himself merely as cross-dressing-in church even" (42). The female name coupled with "he" is disorienting, but the distinction here, even though Donald is not named, is to emphasize Jane as a crossdressing persona. Jane is not a female identity separate from Donald; instead, she is Donald. Unlike Donald and Deirdre, who comments on the story with bolded print, Jane never comments on the narrative in this manner. She is silent or speaks as Donald. She has no voice apart from Donald. Jane's invisibility in Donald's consciousness is also alluded to in the first third of the memoir in which she appears, which is titled "Donald." Like Donald, Jane will also disappear. Even when McCloskey sometimes also uses Donald/Jane to signify the both of them, the female persona is always listed second. The use of "he" to signify Jane shows her as an exterior manifestation of Donald. Jane allows Donald to briefly live as a woman and to mingle among other crossdressers, and also ultimately allows him to realize that he is not a crossdresser.

An important moment at a church service for crossdressing convention members becomes a moment of insight for Jane, who cries as the lesbian preacher gives a sermon about inclusivity of minorities. McCloskey narrates that Jane "was touched and cried and cried, as he never did. He thought he was grieving for his marriage. It is Deirdre you mourn for" (42). Even after Donald informs his wife of his personal insight into his identity as a gender crosser, Jane does not have a voice beyond Donald, even though his wife's difficulties

understanding his identity means that he has to negotiate Jane's existence with her. His time with his wife is sustainable through fragmented identity. In domestic spaces, Donald alternates odd days as Donald and even days as Jane because Donald's wife would only continue to live with him if he imposes this separation between Donald and Jane. In memory, Jane mourns for his marriage, but in hindsight, he mourns for the decades he was never Deirdre. This is one of the few moments in the narrative when the third person switches abruptly to the "you," but the "you" is not addressed to readers; instead, the "you" is addressed to Jane and refers to an identity, Deirdre, who has not yet come into existence during this time in McCloskey's life. This moment is remarkable for the sudden alignment of all the identities interacting with each other. Jane is Donald, and Donald is not yet Deirdre, but McCloskey the narrator connects them all in a moment of loss for an identity that does not exist yet. This moment points to the contradictions of the sex/gender binary inherent in gender crossers' lives before they transition. The narrative McCloskey tells is one of loss. Because she did not transition sooner, she has never experienced a childhood, puberty, and a young adulthood as Deirdre. Her identity as Deirdre arises late; however, the narrative must also contend with Donald's happiness and personal fulfillment as a man. Deirdre's losses result in Donald's gains during the decades of his existence.

Finally, when Donald evaluates his experiences as Jane, he decides to transition fully, knowing that someday, he will become Deirdre. The specific moment of his gender crossing is based on a mental experiment, connected literally and symbolically to travel:

But let's see.

Try it on. A mental experiment.

Just thinking.

Near De Kalb, the only town between the outskirts of Chicago and the Mississippi, after twenty miles of just thinking, he said,

Wait:

Good Lord.
I can become a woman.
I have always wanted to. I have learned by accident that I can.
I am not a heterosexual crossdresser. All this time. I am a transsexual.
I can be a woman, he said. And he wept in relief, as the car drove itself. ***I am a woman***, he said. *Yes!*
She said again, ***I am a woman***, and wept. (50-51; italics and bolded print McCloskey)

McCloskey narrates with two pronouns, giving the sense that both Donald and Deirdre (but she had not found her name yet in this moment) made the decision to cross, but at the same time, this is one individual making the decision to cross. The narrative facticity of the moment lends it a historical truth: something that existed in time and space: August 20, 1995 on a toll road near De Kalb, a town between Chicago and the Mississippi River. However, the facticity is in contrast to language that is slightly mysterious. Both he and she say the same words: “I am a woman.” It is uncertain in this moment if these words are physically spoken aloud or kept in the mind, and there is the suggestion of a disembodied moment when “the car drove itself,” as though Donald had briefly left his body in order to return as Donald/Deirdre. This is a moment of reorienting oneself in space, both mentally and bodily. But McCloskey will be clear that “later in the crossing from man to woman Donald/Deirdre never doubted. He and then she didn’t ‘decide,’ though an economist would like to think this way, in terms of cost and benefit and a decision” (51). This moment is notable for the blurred space between her identities. Her hybrid self in this moment includes both the gendered self left behind and the gendered self being realized. The refusal to use words like “decide” is ambiguous, as though there is a risk to linking crossing with decision-making. There seems to be an attempt to make the moment as natural as possible. McCloskey writes that “Secularly speaking, understand, it is knowing yourself instead of knowing about

yourself” (51). The difference is between writing about yourself and writing yourself into existence, making gender into simultaneously a discursive and bodily act.

The body is linked to the mind, but in order to “know herself,” she must reorient her use of pronouns and take possession of the female pronoun. This moment, even though not linked to “decide,” is still linked to a moment of “personal insight.” In contrast to the distant perspective implied by “knowing about yourself,” the separation between self and self-knowledge is collapsed in “knowing yourself.” She, like us, want to understand this moment. This moment’s complexity draws our attention to the difficulties inherent in conveying gender crossing: at that moment of personal insight, “He knew himself. Herself” (51). Again, with the third person, there is gender ambiguity, but also, the punctuation reveals the effort to suppress ambiguity by not writing, “He knew herself.” During this significant moment of personal insight, Donald is crossdressed as Jane, but there is no mention of Jane. Instead, the two individuals who share the dialogue explaining their personal insight are Donald and Deirdre. Even when McCloskey acknowledges the presence of two gender identities side-by-side, it is a relation of separation rather than affinity: “Donald/Deirdre” rather than Donald-Deirdre. Even in the third person, there are still constraints against expressing the complexity of crossing.

Even though the chapter of her personal insight is titled “Epiphany,” McCloskey separates her use of this word by distinguishing her crossing from religious moments, epiphanies, and other transcendental moments. McCloskey uses religious language and imagery but is also wary of the language. McCloskey explains that epiphany “is a religious word, evoking Saul on the road to Damascus. ‘And suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven, and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice.’ Donald was not then religious,

Deirdre later was noncharismatically so, and the experience was not spiritual” (51).

McCloskey’s simultaneous use and disavowal of religious language indicates the difficulty of expressing an experience that occurs in the mind but is also grounded in the body, that happens in the present but is grounded in the past. McCloskey simultaneously uses and disavows the metaphoric link of gender crossing to religious conversion and the economics of cost and benefits because both are informed by discourses that inherently limit her subjectivity. Instead, what allows Donald to understand himself in this moment is the narrative work of seeing the present in relation to the past. Donald is still in his body and is still himself as he has always known himself, but in this moment, he finds a narrative understanding of the whole story of his life. At this significant moment, Donald knows how to structure his past to give rise to his future by commenting, “That’s what the crossdressing since age eleven had been about, closeted over four decades, confined within marriage. And the open dressing in clubs and at home during the eight months past, more and more. The womanhood was there beneath the surface and yearned to take form” (51). The dam breaks and his life can continue. His womanhood takes form by linking memory to identity. In this moment, there is perfect alignment, in which his secret past is the key to his future. His speech acts, linked to a changed understanding of his body, help Donald realize that he can and wants to cross genders.

The middle section of *Crossing* is titled “Dee.” Dee, like Jane, is also narratively “he,” but what distinguishes Dee from Jane is that Jane is Donald’s crossdressing identity and Dee is a liminal identity of McCloskey’s medical transitioning period. Unlike Jane, Dee comments on the story; this indicates that Dee is a unique identity, unlike Jane who was Donald. Dee is both the shortened name of both Donald and Deirdre and the liminal bodily

subject who will surgically become Deirdre. The naming of Dee, brief, alphabetical, and liminal, also foretells his limited subjectivity during the months when he faces constant, aggressive constraints to her crossing. Family misunderstandings and social institutions' ignorance of the differences among sex, gender, and sexuality often work to undercut the narrative he desires to live for himself. In the span of two years, McCloskey's wife divorces her, her children stop speaking and seeing her, her sister attempts to have her held in a medical institution four times (succeeding three times), and her son testifies against her at her competency hearing. McCloskey's immediate family and sister view transsexuality as a disorder that needs to be policed, contained, and limited for Donald's well-being.

Later, Deirdre, when lecturing on the disinformation surrounding transsexuality, critiques societal fears that transsexual surgeries, even if simply to the nose, are irreversible facial and bodily damage; policed in such ways, transsexual bodies become property of family and state institutions. McCloskey's ability to give voice to her experiences is important to her identity formation, because social forces have constraints in place against her ability to complexly convey her narrative, both formally and in content. Dee often has to actively and persistently pursue transitioning in spite of psychiatry, because his experiences with psychiatrists are predominantly negative. Psychiatric, medical, academic, and social forces could make the gender project into one of perverse and abject gendering. Trans individuals risk becoming incoherent to themselves, because the narrative of transsexuality according to psychiatry cannot hold all trans experiences. Narratively, McCloskey allows room for Donald, Dee, Deirdre, and the elusive "I," so that her whole life does not have to adhere to Gender Identity Disorder, which polices transsexuality by allowing only one narrative, one sex, and one gender to exist during one's whole lifetime. This monolithic

test/entity seems unfair, with its suggestion that there is enough commonality in trans experiences to form one narrative. Transsexual and transgender individuals like McCloskey often lie about their lives and their understanding of their lived experiences to psychiatrists in order that they can lawfully make changes to names, identification material, and have access to sex reassignment surgeries.

Dee has to learn the rules in order *to pass* as female as well as a gender crosser. Dee is under constant monitoring. He knows that others watch him just as he constantly watches himself. The line between Dee knowing himself as a gender crosser and behaving so that he is recognized as a gender crosser by medical establishments is blurry. This is evident in Dee's sarcasm when he is forcibly hospitalized by his sister, who wants him to be diagnosed as incompetent. Dee knows that he must say certain untruthful things so that he is not institutionalized. Dee speaks the script written for him already. In order to experience the individual truths of his bodily experiences, he places himself both inside and outside of normative scripts concerning transsexuality. Dee's sister attempts to have him institutionalized four times and succeeds three times in having him held against his will at three university hospitals. By the second time, speaking to his lawyer, Dee knows what to do:

"Don't sign anything."
"Yeah, I know."
"Don't argue about anything."
"Yeah, I know."
"Don't make jokes."
"Yeah, I know." (15)

When confronting the forces of psychiatry, Dee makes himself—his writing, his speech, and his personality—as invisible as possible in order to protect himself. During the stress of being confined against his will, Dee's childhood stutter returns during his psychiatric tests,

and he sarcastically interprets how psychiatry will interpret his stuttering: “**Irritating**, he reflected. **The psychiatrists will interpret [his stuttering] as a sign of conflict. They know as much about stuttering as they know about gender crossing**” (116; bolded print McCloskey). During the time he is “civilly committed,” Dee is often asked by psychiatrists about his sexuality, and fears their ignorance in linking sexuality and gender identity. GID serves as a disciplinary regime but also plays an important role in how transsexuals construct their personal narratives. Quoting from Michel Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1* (1975), Salamon notes that “[d]iscipline . . . is a kind of power that cannot be reduced to the institutions or apparatuses through which it flows, although its effects can be seen in and on the bodies it regulates” (79). The regulatory powers of psychiatry’s GID may limit how transsexuals explore the history of their bodily feelings, but it also enables transsexual subjects to produce their narratives. Looking into how these two narratives relate to each other offers ways to understand the restrictions placed on as well as the productive possibilities for how cultural, medical, and personal narratives explore transsexual bodily experiences.

After her facial surgeries and changes to identification documents, Dee narratively becomes “she,” and eventual Deirdre. McCloskey’s narration of Deirdre is the most complex. She is there from the beginning of the narrative and eventually becomes the solely narrated individual during the last third of the memoir, which is titled “Deirdre.” Deirdre’s voice takes over the narrative and becomes the voice of the narrative itself as she speaks from within, with both bolded print and non-bolded print. Her voice becomes indistinguishable from her story.

The multiple stages it takes for Donald to become Deirdre relies heavily not on difficult negotiations of “body wrongness” as Prosser posits, but rather on trying out and practicing social behaviors. There is a narrative tension in McCloskey’s nuanced depiction of the multiplicity of her trans experience while at the same time stereotyping gendered behaviors. She is hyperaware of the differences between men and women, so that when she observes them, she highlights the ways they move, act, and behave. Noticing such differences in gendered behaviors and using her knowledge to her advantage is key to her passing. Her sarcasm is often aimed at men’s behavior. In conversations with men, McCloskey uses “io, io,” which translate to egotistical “me, me,” to signify what she finds unpleasant about male behavior. When she has difficulty being recognized as a woman among men who have known her as Donald, she changes her behavior in relation to how men behave, becoming more demure and letting the men speak over her. She learns how to socially behave as a woman: “Without changing his tone he adopted women's rules for conversation: Listen, do not interrupt, support the speaker, maintain eye contact, do not gratuitously change the subject” (80). She comments: “Not io, io. Whether or not this blithe view of womanly interaction is wholly correct, within a few minutes the two other men were treating Donald as a woman” (80). Her reorientation into women’s spaces allows her to be a subject among women in her white, middle-class, academic communities. As McCloskey notes often in her memoir, what makes her a woman is her ability to join the “tribe” of women. In contrast to conversations between men, which Deirdre describes as bragging contests, she depicts conversations with women as based on equality and mutual understanding. The project of transitioning to womanhood requires socialization, and an

important component of socialization is distinguishing between socially acceptable male and female behavior, unlearning masculinity and learning femininity.

By analyzing the continuities among her identities and how they exist in relation to each other, we can better understand the comments McCloskey makes about men and women. Even though Donald disappears from the narrative, his presence is still there in her comments on men. As Donald shakes off the “uniform” of masculinity to become Deirdre, Deirdre takes on femininity to become herself, but Donald does not disappear wholly. The last third of the memoir, in which Deirdre’s story takes over, seemingly limits the subversive potential of the third-person. Donald must remain evermore silent. This is the accomplishment as well as the loss of Donald becoming Deirdre. However, he is always there, phantom-like, in her comments about men. She becomes everything that he never was and that he never had the opportunity to become. When contemplating the dynamics of gift-giving, Deirdre argues that men do not understand, but she notes that

Deirdre knew, because Donald hadn't. She remembered the last time Donald gave his wife flowers. He had to be out of town for a few days and felt guilty, so he arranged, bright boy, to have a florist deliver enormous bunches of flowers to her office for three days running. His wife was annoyed by it, this industrial and commercial approach to gift giving, which showed Donald as rich and powerful, diamond-style, but said nothing about his feelings toward her. Donald was stupidly puzzled at her annoyance. Deirdre later could only sigh, “Men!” (184)

At time such as these, when she contemplates Donald’s ignorance in relation to what she knows now, Deirdre delights in mocking Donald. Donald’s and Deirdre’s behaviors are so distinct that it is easy to perceive the two as separate beings: but this too is identity as well as narrative work.

In order to become herself, she must forget aspects of the self she used to be. Even though Donald eventually disappears from the narrative and Deirdre takes over completely,

memories of Donald exist in tension with Deirdre's present; he is the reference point by which she learns to socialize. Donald becomes a distant memory, but it is memories of him that allows her to separate herself from the man that she used to be. In physical matters such as walking, McCloskey notes that "After a year of making herself walk like a woman, she has forgotten how to walk like a natural man. She says to herself, **Good**" (178). Eventually, Donald is a ghostly, phantasmatical presence who exists outside of Deirdre; he's a ghostly presence she finds in the behavior of men who remind her of his behavior. She classifies men's behavior from a distance, a distance she has come to know as the distance between Donald and Deirdre, in order to make her feminine subjectivity and behavior legible. Everything that she becomes denies everything that he ever was; she becomes herself because she used to be him.

Gender is narrative work in which Deirdre attempts to shake her former self and reminders of her former self, but for someone who has lived for decades as Donald, this is difficult. The longer she lives as Deirdre, the more she forgets what it was like to live and feel as Donald (209). She is no longer Donald, but she always exists in relation to him. Deirdre describes herself as "Don's smarter sister. Who knows if it's the hormones, the social role, the performance of gender becoming second nature, or my true personality able now to express itself. In most matters I can't tell" (265). McCloskey refuses to separate the biological and social components to what makes her Deirdre. McCloskey does not seek to resolve or impose one narrative onto her identity, because the relationship between the past and the present are permeable. Deirdre's relationship to Donald is complex. Deirdre's character and personality is derived from Donald's childhood. McCloskey notes that Donald becomes Deirdre "**by recovering the character I had as a child**. He did not mean being

childish, but being as he had been before putting on manhood like a football uniform. Deirdre was later something like the boy Donald, less stupidly assertive or smart-mouthed than Donald the man, less joking” (53-54; bolded print McCloskey). Deirdre is derived from memory: someone Donald never had the opportunity to be during the five decades of his life. There is also the sense that Deirdre’s womanhood is a chance to begin anew, beginning from a child’s sense of self. Deirdre’s description of herself as a purer, smarter, more practical version of Donald is at odds with the comments Deirdre makes in the text, which are often sarcastic. Her comments usually come with addressing individuals as “dear.” Deirdre, in contrast to Donald, has a lecturing voice. At times, the separate voices of McCloskey’s selves seem to be the attempt to separate the political from the personal. She wants to have all the representational opportunities, but she is careful to distinguish them and locate her opinions to specific manifestations of her selves. As a boy raised during the 1950s and who never had the chance to become a woman of that time, she regains her losses by becoming a woman who is like an elder sister, the aunt, and the grandmother figure with a slightly patronizing as she lectures and expresses impatience against transphobia.

McCloskey’s family’s inability to understand the dialectical simultaneity that (1) Deirdre is and always has been Donald and (2) Deirdre is the gender transformation of Donald is tragic. At the end of *Crossing*, McCloskey conveys the incredible sense of loss that occurred with her gender crossing and shows the interdependent relationship of past identity and present identity by speaking of “Deirdre’s loss of a family, of Donald’s wife’s loss of a husband, of Deirdre’s children’s loss of a father, of Donald’s sister’s loss of a brother” (266). Deirdre loses her family because from their points-of-view, Donald has died and Deirdre is a stranger. After finding out belatedly that her son has married and then had a

child without informing her, Deirdre, devastated, talks to her friend Carol, who tells Deirdre, “Your son deserves a more heroic role in your story” because her son has taken up “the role of the man of the family. After all, you had given it up” (230-231). Deirdre finally accepts the role she has given up to become herself, commenting, “**Mine was the first leaving**” (231, bolded print McCloskey). In order to become Deirdre, McCloskey had to leave behind Donald’s life. Deirdre’s devastating loss of her immediate family is based on their inability to accept that Donald had to leave in order to regain his losses and return as Deirdre, the person he never had the chance to be.

For McCloskey, transsexuality as narrative work is based on a negotiation of her losses and gains. She factors her losses—represented by the future Deirdre she mourns for—into the woman she becomes. Living as another gender does not mean becoming a wholly other person; instead, it is often a negotiation of the overlaps among socially, culturally, and personally gendered experiences. She travels both psychically and bodily on a journey marked with both losses and gains, searching for a new sense of home because she loses everything that is familiar about home. McCloskey ends *Crossing* with May Sarton’s “The Autumn Sonnets Number 2,” a poem about accepting loss with grace. Just as McCloskey crosses during the autumn of her life and accepts the loss of her family but prays for their understanding, the poem focuses on understanding autumn not as “harsh or strange,” but as “seasonal” (266). She will “[l]ose what I lose to keep what I can keep” (266). Just as leaves fall away, so too does McCloskey’s life as Donald ends, and her life as Deirdre lead her into the rest of her life.

IV. CONCLUSION

Even though transgender individuals in the US are more protected from discrimination today, there are still many ways in which they are policed and subjected to unfair and discriminatory treatment. As the diagnostic tool Gender Identity Disorder changes to Gender Dysphoria in May 2013 (Winters), trans individuals must be aware of and also move beyond what clinicians' narratives allow. In *Crossing: A Memoir*, Deirdre McCloskey explores her multiple gender experiences as Donald, Jane, Dee, Deirdre, so that her whole life does not have to be subsumed entirely under the trans narrative established by GID, which polices transsexuality by allowing only one narrative, one sex, and one gender to exist during one's whole lifetime. Transsexual and transgender individuals like McCloskey often lie about their lives and their understanding of their lived experiences to psychiatrists in order that they can lawfully make changes to names and identification material and have access to facial and bodily surgeries. The regulatory powers of psychiatry's GID may limit how transsexuals explore the history of their psychological and bodily feelings, but it also enables transsexual subjects to produce their narratives. McCloskey's identity of Dee is narratively "he" until she is allowed to change her identification materials and have her first facial surgeries. Looking into how these two narratives relate to each other offers ways to understand the restrictions placed on as well as the productive possibilities for how cultural, medical, and personal narratives explore transsexual social and bodily experiences.

Because trans individuals often have to minimize their complex lives into a preordained shape for clinicians, it is important to acknowledge the richness of their lived experiences in such forums as autobiography. Transsexuality as narrative work offers the

possibility of gender crossing as a journey consisting of multiple possible identities as stepping stones. Each stepping stone one discovers and/or chooses depends relationally on the pathway one has already created. Instead of transsexuality as a linear journey in which one cuts one's life in half, transsexuality as narrative work can consist of circularity, in which transformation depends on the recognition of continuity among past and present selves. Allowing for multiplicity and hybridity in trans representation is conceivably personally liberating and important socially in challenging the problematic cultural narrative of transsexuality as the "wrong body" experience. Transsexuals may depend on the cultural, social, and medical texts that describe their experiences, but they can also exceed these texts. Living as another gender does not mean becoming a wholly other person; instead, it is often a negotiation of the overlaps among psychological, social, and cultural influences that give rise to one's identities. In her memoir, McCloskey refuses to separate the biological and social components to what makes her Deirdre. She does not seek to make a confession or impose one narrative onto her life; instead, she explores the permeability among her past and present identities by using her memories as Donald, Jane, Dee and Deirdre as the stepping stones that help her cross from man to woman. Donald as Jane the crossdresser discovers how to structure his past to give rise to his future as the gender crossers Dee and then Deirdre.

McCloskey's positioning of her memoir as a social and political document is not only important to the 1990s when she transitioned but is also important today. Her exploration and acknowledgement of her hybrid and multiple identities is a project that many other trans individuals can engage in today. She is one of many. Because they must pass to be recognized as their post-transitioned gender, transsexuals often feel that they must render significant portions of their lives invisible. If more trans individuals are aware of the

possibility of transsexuality as narrative work, then their lives do not have to be cut away or diminished into a restrictive narrative shape. Rather, by making visible the complexity of their lived experiences both pre- and post-transitioned, they can offer the rich diversity of their identities and stories to our culture and society.

ⁱ Other significant trans personal narratives not discussed in this thesis include Christine Jorgensen's *Christine Jorgensen: A Personal Autobiography* (1967), Max Valerio's *The Testosterone Files: My Hormonal and Social Transformation from Female to Male* (2006) and Nick Krieger's *Nina Here Nor There: My Journey Beyond Gender* (2011).

ⁱⁱ Gender dysphoria is "a technical term for individuals who are dissatisfied with the gender to which they were assigned (usually at birth) on the basis of their anatomical sex" (Rubin "Of Calamities" 467).

ⁱⁱⁱ See Wilchins' "GenderPAC and Gender Rights" pgs. 141-157.

^{iv} See Prosser's Chapter 3: Mirror Images pgs. 99-135 and Henry Rubin's Chapter 3: Betrayed by Bodies pgs. 141-174.

^v See Butler. For Prosser's critique of Butler, see Prosser's Chapter 2 pgs. 21-61.

^{vi} For more on the emerging models of materiality in feminist theory, see Alaimo and Heckman.

^{vii} See Meyerowitz pg. 99.

^{viii} For more detailed discussions of the essentialism/social constructionism debates, see Butler's *Bodies That Matter*.

^{ix} For other definitive works on autobiography, see Anderson (2011) and Eakin (1999).

^x See Sabine Lang pgs. 183-196 and Will Roscoe pgs. 119-136.

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