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<CN>Chapter 1

<CT>Cut from a Different Cloth

<CS>Gender Transgressions in the Early Twentieth Century

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<TXT>In 1902 a police officer imprisoned an Indigenous person from Rio Negro (Patagonia) for using a "false sexual identity." The police took her to the Institute of Legal Medicine in the main city of the province, Viedma, where Dr. César Faussone took numerous pictures of the person and classified her as an hombre-mujer (man-woman) and an invertido (invert).[1] The photographs were taken thirty years after the campaign in which the Argentine state had taken Indigenous land and forced the integration of Indigenous people, primarily as a labor force. Caras y caretas (CyC), one of the most popular magazines of the period, published the pictures along with a short article.[2]

Faussone showed himself intrigued by the presence of the hombre-mujer; she did not coincide with the dominant legal and scientific parameters of gender at the time. However, according to the journalists, she was an important female member of her small town of General Frías, with its mixed white, creole, and Indigenous population. Her neighbors often chose her as the godmother at baptisms because of her talent for knitting and sewing clothes. In

contrast, the journalist described her as a disguised subject with male pronouns: "He is an indigenous subject who dressed as a woman and served as godmother in baptisms, being very much celebrated by the neighbours of those distant places." And the writer added that "despite his women's clothing, this subject was a man, but as the original lady caused neither harm nor damage, being an honest and hard-working person, and highly skilled in weaving, embroidery, and other feminine labors, no one ever noticed her strange obsession for disguising her sex. The subject is a man when dressed as a man, and dressed as a woman is a woman: this is undeniable."[3]

The photographs published in Caras y caretas portrayed the dominant ideas about gender transgressions in the early twentieth century particularly well. They conveyed imaginaries about the sexual and racial boundaries of the modern Argentinean nation, and the limits of a citizenship defined by contrasts: male/female, white/Indigenous, civilization/barbarism, medicine/pathology, elite/poor, and urban/rural. The narrations of this Indigenous body show how ideas of gender and race converged in specific spaces. Buenos Aires cultural elites insisted on imagining Patagonia as a lawless space to be civilized, a space inhabited by sexually and racially disordered subjects who threatened the homeland.[4] The encounter of at least the doctors and the inverted points of view in these photographs expressed conflicts and anxieties about how,

through the uses of objects, gestures, and activities, certain bodies were understood as male or female.

This chapter places related transgressive body experiences at the core of the Argentine modernizing project of the early twentieth century. It explores gender transgressions in the period before two major processes that happened in the mid-1930s: the slow emergence of biotechnological gender-affirmation practices such as hormones, and the 1933 ban on dressing in public with "clothes of the opposite sex."[5] By doing so the chapter analyzes two conflicting forces. From above it studies how the public portrayal of these gender-transgressive bodies was vital for making social boundaries that associated citizenship, nationhood, and sex with certain bodies. From below it examines the creative mechanisms with which gender-variant people negotiated these boundaries and built practices of gender belonging.

This chapter shows how the widely accepted binary and restricted notion of sex acted as a scaffold for gender embodiment. This binary idea of male and female sex became a field of experimentation, a harness of embodiment that guided people who crossed gender boundaries. To say that invertidos, mujeres-hombres, and hombres-mujeres were cut from a different cloth points to the fact that, by using the same clothing (dresses, corsets, trousers, neckties, and suits) and gestures as the dominant cisgender population, these people actively participated in shaping ideas of

sex, reinforcing its everyday administration by activating social mechanisms of gender recognition, at the same time making it unstable by demonstrating how they were able to transgress a social norm widely considered to be "natural."

The chapter has four sections. The first proposes an alternative new reading of the history of gender transgression in the early twentieth century, rooted in trans and queer historiography. The second section analyzes the era's medical, artistic, and popular languages of gender transgression. The third section studies how gender-variant people negotiated these boundaries as an expanded notion of citizenship. The fourth and final section analyzes diverse feminine experiences of embodiment and their incursion into public spaces as the prelude to their legal expulsion from those spaces.

<A>An Inverted History of Body Transgressions

<TXT>At the turn of the century, Buenos Aires became a symbol of Latin American progress. Argentina's integration into the global market and the agricultural export boom transformed the capital city: governments developed unprecedented infrastructure and fostered transatlantic migration to feed the demand for labor.[6] However, in the shadows of the lights of modernity, the gloomy discontent of minorities who endured poverty and displacement

spread throughout the urban landscape. A growing literature on vice and crime gave visibility to allegedly deviant bodies: sex workers, pimps, maricas, and invertidos became icons of the threat to the elite's dreamed-of nation.[7]

Stories about figures like the Indigenous hombre-mujer or invertido published in newspapers called attention to the multiple languages with which physicians, journalists, and police officers tried to make sense of those people crossing gender and sexual frontiers. As the next section shows, there was a multiplication of medical, popular, and artistic vocabularies to name fluid experiences that did not respond to a monolithic identity. Physicians, police officers, and journalists usually used words like invertidos sexuales, pederastas, homosexuales, or uranistas to name a diverse world of what they understood as male sexual deviations. These words referred to different practices, from cross-dressing to same-sex activity.[8] In contrast, many historians believe that marica, even if not published in the media, was the word used among those considered abnormal to name different dissident sexual and gender practices.[9] While these words may have different connotations for sexual dissidents and doctors, the cultural elites tend to build a representation of a unique subject dangerous for the nation.

Historians of sexuality (myself included) have usually confronted this challenging situation of understanding sexualities

that escape our contemporary notions by using primary sources in which the words of physicians, police officers, and journalists generally predominated rather than those of maricas and invertidos. As Gill-Peterson points out, there is still a disagreement over the viability of including early twentieth-century figures in trans genealogies, rather than lesbian or gay, because of the lack of clear separation between categories.[10] While it is impossible to solve the lack of documentary sources and any attempt of placing people in stable categories, I propose an inverted history that helps us to distance from the medical language that has reduced diverse experiences to their notion of homosexuality.[11] I join other historians to interrogate the complexities of sexual inversion to counterbalance those narratives that usually situated them in the genealogy of gay and lesbian identities. This means to explore the history of transness before the existence of concepts such as "transsexual," while also being aware of the dangers of the anachronistic use of both trans and gay/lesbian scopes.[12] I propose an alternative reading to the previous understanding of these experiences by showing how a reading rooted in gender embodiment could allow us to focus on gender transgressions beyond reducing them to protosexual identities.[13]

Across the globe various sexual expressions considered abnormal by doctors and police officers have prompted historians to reflect on how they could analyze experiences of sexual dissidence

before the consolidation of modern sexual identities. Historians faced a significant challenge regarding how fields often used to trace identity genealogies, such as gay history, could develop tools to study complex sexual behaviors that didn't adjust to our current understanding of the relationships between sexual practices and gender expression. One of the most influential responses was George Chauncey's pivotal book Gay New York, in which he questions the idea that US gay men and lesbians have always lived in a closet, as well as the concept that gender and sexuality have always been distinct domains of personhood. Chauncey shows that queer people were not isolated, invisible, and self-hating during the first decades of the twentieth century until the emergence of the homo-heterosexual binary in the post–World War II world.[14]

Chauncey's work inspired others to explore the erotic experience before the emergence of the binary homo-heterosexuality. Based on Chauncey's analysis of fairies--effeminate subjects who had sex with young working-class men--Argentine queer historians studied maricas as a similar model by showing how they participated in hierarchical sexual relationships with male partners who understood themselves as heterosexuals, following the social belief among the popular classes that sexual deviation was related to being penetrated.[15] The attention to maricas was a reaction to a traditional gay history interpretation, represented by the initial Argentine historical works of Jorge Salessi, Osvaldo Bazán, and

Daniel Bao, that tended to associate different erotic and gender expressions with the proto-formation of a homosexual identity (and its pathologization.)[16] Mir Yarfitz points out, "Thus early histories often minimized the role of gender transgression or "reversal" in many of the case studies, or interpreted the conflation of male same-sex attraction with effeminacy as homophobic.[17] Even if historians made a clear effort to avoid it, there is a more extended mainstream teleological common sense in which maricas' sensibility would be displaced after Peronism (1945–55) by homosexuals, and then by the multiplication of other identities such as travestis and gays in the last decades of the century, which fails to see the diverse trajectories of these sensibilities and their coexistence through time.[18] While the literature about maricas challenged reductionist perspectives by showing how maricas transgressed the contemporary understanding of sexual identity (and were even usually understood as a third sex),[19] the expansion of this figure as the dominant model of the early twentieth century also runs the risk of reducing a multiplicity of experiences to a homogeneous narrative centered on these subjects' erotic practices. Chauncey's recent revision of his studies of fairies in New York helps us to be aware of the risks of overexpanding the model of maricas to a wide range of diverse erotic and gendered experiences. He points out that even if he had explored fairies' femininity that went beyond the model of

homosexuality to understand how they acted as counterparts to the virilization of working-class men, he still reduced them to the spectrum of homosexuality. He did not consider that some people defined themselves as "women in the wrong bodies" a piece of evidence as important as fairies' erotic gendered practices. While this does not mean that we should reduce American fairies or local maricas to other modern categories such as transgenderism, Chauncey points out how exploring the sexual inversion of embodiment, and its complex dialogue with sexual desire, could open new paths for queer history.[20] Yarfitz has pointed out that this apparent conflict between gay and trans lenses echoes social movements' efforts to legitimate themselves by seeking ancestors in the past, and he worries also that this can make static experiences that fluctuated and coexisted.[21]

This new reading problematizes previous approaches that reduced the analysis of gender and sexual transgression to erotic practices. While queer history has explored the making of the categories that gave meaning to sexual experiences and understood doctors' language as an attempt to build social order,[22] here I propose an inverted history that sets gender embodiment at the core of its analysis. I am not saying that we should abandon the previous studies on maricas, but rather that we should open our narrative beyond sexual encounters in order to approach experiences of gender transgression. The inversion of this history does not aim

to create a new essentialist history to replace the dominance of the gay with a predominant trans history. Instead, it seeks to invert the attention to sexual encounters with one based on gender embodiment to formulate an alternative narrative more concerned with understanding the flux beyond what was once understood as "sex" than with classifying these people in one category or another. It is a call for increased attention to how the lack of trust of previous historical perspectives on how the "feeling of inverting sex" was central for some subjects who reproduced the social understanding of sex at a given historical moment as inflexible and natural. In this sense, even though I am aware that the division between sexual orientation and gender embodiment was not yet defined, this chapter shows the diverse convergences and divergences that went far beyond medical reductionism.[23] This perspective pursues a reading that engages with the fact that gender encompasses far more than sexual desire and that "sexuality" does not always align in conventional ways with gender identity. But this approach also must consider the risks of forcing an artificial separation of gender and sexuality as lived experiences.[24] A history focused on these body transgressions opens questions about the heterogeneous world of maricas and invertidos, about the possible disidentification between sexual practices and gender embodiment, and, more broadly, about the lived experience of inverting gender.

This chapter challenges the overrepresentation of male homosexual experience over other possibilities by bringing maricas and inverts into conversation with mujeres-hombres--a possibly offensive medical term used to define what we would today consider female-to-male transition. The chapter also shows how this erasure of experiences other than the male homosexual one has restricted the historical imagination of nonconforming and binary gender expressions before the consolidation of modern sexual identities. By bringing together male and female experiences against the gender assigned at birth, this chapter problematizes how these gendered experiences have been flattened to fit the history of "homosexuality." It values the diversity of logic with which some people gendered their bodies to embody a male or female corporeality against social expectations. More concretely, by connecting multiple stories, it offers a new reading of subjects like inverts or maricas, in order to value the particularities of their gendered body construction. By focusing on the frontiers of gender embodiment, this study brings together multiple stories of those defined by others with pathologic labels that responded to different logics, such as mujeres-hombres, intersexuales, and invertidos sexuales, and how they experienced transgressing gender.

My inverted history explores the complex different meanings and desires usually compressed by the binary language of their times. A move away from close attention to sexual practices to

center gender embodiment helps us to see how allegedly compact categories such as marica or invertido were attempts to make sense of very plural experiences. Sexual inversion was usually used by experts to define "gender reversal as much as same-sex sexual behavior, and many physicians understood them as part of the 'third sex.'"[25] My proposal for invert history seeks to open ourselves to seeing that multiple ways of inverting sex exist, and that not all of them can be reduced to sexual practices, as they were by doctors.

The most influential doctor working in this area in the early twentieth century was Francisco de Veyga. The notes on some of his case studies can help us to understand the existing differences between inverts seeking a more stable gender transgression and those people who engaged in sporadic cross-dressing.[26] The head of the Department of Legal Medicine at the Buenos Aires School of Medicine and a key figure in positivist social science, de Veyga worked in jails and influenced the local state-elite. He published several notes on patients imprisoned by the police. One of his patients, V.--whom doctors defined as a working-class man with "a feminine voice and gestures"--is a good example. V. worked in the house of a wealthy family as a domestic employee from the age of thirteen. He had been raped by the employer's oldest son, with whom he continued having sexual encounters until he was fired. After that he sought out other manly

partners. He moved in with a female sex worker, and he started selling sex and wearing female clothes. However, V. did not define himself as a woman, which made de Veyga notice that there existed a difference between feminization and "sex change" (In those years, the concept didn't have a medical conception. It was a term occasionally used to describe gender transgressions.) He wrote, "The use of disguise has not influenced his spirit as deeply as it has in many other inverts, making them believe in the definitive transformation of their sex; he has always, and at all times, kept his quality as a man in mind. Never has the feeling of his complete transformation taken possession of him."[27] De Veyga contrasted this case with those of other patients who felt an internal sexual inversion, an expression usually undermined by doctors: "That 'woman's soul' which so many of them claim to possess and in whose existence they have among themselves claimed to possess and in whose existence they have come to make many worthy observers believe, is nothing but a pure fantasy, or a delirious delusion."[28] De Veyga observed how one of his prisoners articulated "each and every attitude, detail, and taste in harmony with the tendencies and qualities belonging to the new adopted sex, this person takes pleasure in sleeping in long embroidered lace nightgowns, urinating in a squatting position, simulating childbirth in all its anguish and pains, wearing perfume, carrying flowers, and traveling to Brazil to perform in male brothels."[29] Another example was Aurora,

a thirty-year-old Paraguayan hairdresser and thief who was imprisoned in 1903. Even if de Veyga insisted that Aurora dressed as a woman to steal from men, he was surprised that along with a dress she was also using female underwear. While de Veyga argued that the "art of being real" included the use of women's lingerie,[30] we could read it as an intimate practice of female gender belonging.

Drawing on a number of similar case studies, this chapter is a call to take the risk of creating an alternative history that focuses on the transgression of gender frontiers beyond erotic practices. This is not a call to build a new genealogy of modern identities that could lead to teleological narratives. Instead, it is an invitation to multiply our perspective in order to track the stories of those who have struggled to be able to live and be recognized on their own gendered terms.

<A>Inverting "Sex": Medical and Popular Languages of Gender Transgression

<TXT>The hypervisibilization of images and stories of people transgressing gender emerged at a vital moment of consolidation of the Argentine nation-state. Physicians, police officers, policy makers, journalists, artists, and common people participated in an open conversation about the borders of gender. Even if, as Pablo

Ben shows, the elite intention to police sexuality was distant from the realities of working-class everyday life experience, the representations of what doctors defined as invertidos sexuales or mujeres-hombres, as well as many other figures of gender transgression, open space for conversation between the medical, artistic, and popular languages about what sex was and what its limits were.[31] In this section I am interested in reconstructing the multiplication of figures of "sexual inversion" in the first decades of the century to understand the role they played in reinforcing a binary notion of "sex." At the same time, I conjecture that these figures might have worked as "open scripts" that allowed a relative identification for those people seeking to transgress the rules of "gender."

The concerns about people transgressing gender frontiers also emerged at a crucial time for the definition of the modern category of sex. Argentinian doctors understood sex as the external expression of genitals and the internal presence of reproductive organs in binary terms: men or women. However, the progressive development of global sexual sciences began to highlight that sex was defined by multifactorial elements such as hormones. There was advocacy, for example, of the idea that there was a dominant and a dominated sex in every person. Yarfitz has highlighted the time lag of Argentine experts, most of whom continued to believe that sexual inversion could be socially acquired, in contrast with European

doctors, who came earlier to believe that it was inherently congenital.[32] Based on these conceptions, local physicians expressed urgent concern for same-sex spaces such as prisons, military, and prisons. They believed in the role of public institutions in avoiding the spread of what they considered sexual pathologies in the shaping of the modern citizen.[33]

Argentine physicians placed alleged deviating bodies in dialogue with broader debates among the elite about the central roles of immigration, race, and sexuality for the nation's future. Because these discourses were both a hierarchical understanding of sex and gender and the emergence of a visible sex-deviant subculture, doctors' public portrayal of allegedly deviant bodies worked as laboratories for the manufacturing of categories of social order. The circulation of stories and illustrations of invertidos sexuales was part of an effort by these cultural elites to merge their dream of social order with the flesh, one that sought to align gender, body, and citizenship.

Dr. Faussone's photographs can be read as part of the role of physicians in Argentine state-building. Since the late nineteenth century, medical discourses legitimated a power restricted to wealthy landowners and promoted ideas of progress based on racial and gender hierarchies.[34] The photograph was an echo of the foundational act of consolidation of the state: the so-called conquest of the desert, a military campaign with which the

Argentine state took control of Patagonia by defeating the Indigenous populations (Mapuche, Pampa, and Tehuelche, among others). The state forced the integration of Indigenous people as a labor force and expanded the agricultural frontier, which facilitated an unprecedented economic development.[35] Under conservative rule, the country's economy grew based on agricultural expansion, the modernization of the port cities, the development of transportation networks, and the export of raw materials. Elites embraced European migration to increase the labor force and to "civilize" the country, while at the same time restricting public power to a small minority of large landowners.

The photograph of the Indigenous body spoke to the elites' obsession with extending the power of civilization, usually imagined as a process rooted in Buenos Aires that needed to colonize the country. Faussone's words in CyC also recalled a long tradition of national elites' thinking that imagined Patagonia as a chaotic space dominated by Indigenous culture that needed to be socially, sexually, and racially organized.[36] Likewise, from the 1880s onward, the liberal elites' obsession with sameness was based on the invisibilization and hypervisibilization of those bodies that did not fit with the national model of the civilized white man. On the one hand, dominant discourses insisted on the success of the melting pot--a myth of the origin of the "Argentine race" that consisted in the mixing of people of different ethnic and

racial backgrounds with a predominance of white population--in erasing alleged minorities such as Indigenous people or Afro-Argentines. However, on the other hand, as Kerr and Alberto's recent racial histories of Afro-Argentine and Indigenous visual portrayal show, the hypervisibilization of racialized bodies as sexually and socially abnormal reinforced the idea that they were part of a past that the country needed to leave behind.[37]

Faussone's photographs can be read in dialogue with a longer tradition of a paradoxical gendered image of Indigenous men, who were considered by non-Indigenous Argentines to be both sexually dangerous for white women in the frontier and, at the same time, not male or productive enough.[38] Since the mid-nineteenth century, the widespread circulation of Indigenous photographs rooted the representation of bodily otherness in gender and racial dimensions. These images participated in the definition of race as a vector with which ethnic borders were organized in Argentina in a socioeconomic and cultural code. Argentine racial hierarchies were reconfigured in terms of class (by associating dark skin with lower incomes), geography (the backward interior as against the modern metropolis), and gender (a patriarchal order of men and women who had differentiated roles in the whitening of the nation).[39] In the massive market of postcards, Indigenous bodies were often painted in watercolors, such as many images of caciques (Indigenous political leaders), who were painted pink to produce a feminization

of their bodies to exalt the male Argentinian domination over them.[40]

The first decades of the twentieth century not only promoted the distrust of Indigenous bodies; the cultural elites also depended on other images related to the underworld of working-class people to project to them their anxiety about stereotypical figures threatening national development. The cultural elites usually understood working-class and poor people's way of life as an environment for social degeneration that needed social reformation. In their writing and cultural production, the figures of sexual excess or abnormality expressed in the world of tango and its prostitutes, venereal disease, the hypervirilized pimps and criminals, the alleged immoral life of working-class men and the alleged laziness or sexual menace of Indigenous people became productive to define the racial, gendered and class frontiers of Argentina as a self-perceived white nation.[41] After the crisis of the liberal project, this long building process materialized in the 1930s, the period usually called as the Infamous Decade of military dictatorship, with the empowerment of the police to eradicate "undesirable subjects" from public space.[42]

The fact that Faussone used photographs for his medical project and to guarantee it a broader public circulation was in dialogue with the longer efforts for defining the racial boundaries of the alleged desirable Argentine sexuality. Photography has been

central to the medical and anthropological project of body classification because it affirms the specialist domains over those bodies considered exotic, transforming them into objects of science.[43] Photography of naked Indigenous bodies at the time reinforced racial boundaries by portraying them as uncivilized subjects that did not fit in the modern civilized Argentina and deployed paradoxical sexualized fantasies about their alleged innocence or sexual immorality.[44] By showing the Indigenous body as an exotic transgression of modern rules, Faussone reaffirmed a pact with Caras y caretas readers about the limits of gender embodiment and civilization.

The photograph performed a double act: it attempted to reduce one body to an object of science while affirming the (implied white) readership's identification against the uncivilized Indigenous person. The magazine published three pictures in which the doctor progressively undressed the man-woman to reveal her "true sex." The two photos were portrayed in contrast as a mechanism for defining the racialized gender boundaries. In figure 1.1, the Indigenous person is dressed and looking straight at the camera. She is in a public context in which Faussone portrays himself as agent of discovery in a game of contrasts. He embodies public rationality and social distinction in contrast with the Indigenous person labeled as an abnormal subject from the "remote regions of our country."[45] The doctor's personification of

civilization organizes the social hierarchy of the woman by linking class, gender, and racialized prescriptions. The white Argentinian man observes the figure of the Indigenous "man-woman" and, as described by the journalist, defines nonurban areas as spaces that must be civilized, reducing the woman to an object of science without a name. In figure 1.2 the naked Indigenous body is used as proof of her "true sex." She is shown in a house that introduces the reader to the idea of her intimacy, and the lack of breasts is shown as her unsuccessful femininity. Nevertheless, Faussone's desire to show her "secret" contrasts with her defiant gesture of emotionlessness, which acts as a counterpoint to his narrative. She expresses a mixture of shame and anger that challenges her position as a passive object of modern science. The normalization of the sexual anomaly and its disruption are metaphors for the tensions related to the embodiment of these social boundaries.[46]

While physicians and policy makers used these transgressive bodies to define national boundaries by portraying Indigenous bodies as pathological, the dream of urban progress boosted by transatlantic migration quickly showed its shadows. An increasing disappointment grew in the medical literature among those trying to understand erotic and social forces beyond their control: prostitutes, maricas, and invertidos became symbols of a threatening danger polluting social progress.

The production of stories about people moving from one gender to another was an open laboratory of categories with which journalists and doctors produced a cultural boundary to separate those gender embodiments that were allegedly natural from those considered to be artificial. Before the state openly prohibited wearing clothing of the "opposite sex" in 1933, tabloid newspapers channeled concerns about those living with allegedly artificial masculinity or femininity. While there are disciplinary dimensions of the public experimentation with these bodies to define the limits of sex, I argue that at the same time the circulation of these stories and other cultural artifacts played a role in determining the potential plasticity of the social recognition of gender, one that made available knowledge of possible paths for transgressing gender rules. Far from considering social concern about these changes only as a normalizing limit, I interpret it as a symptom of how these actors labeled abnormal fed on these narratives and actively participated in shaping conflictive notions of "sex."

Ideas about gender transgressions quickly disseminated in the press and were easy to find for those seeking similar experiences. José Ingenieros--one of the most influential social thinkers of the time--called attention to what he defined as the criminal's vanity, the desire to be portrayed by doctors or journalists in order to achieve fame. Ingenieros conceptualized

newspapers as "laboratories for criminal defense."[47] Physicians were aware of the risks of their public experimentation to define the limits of sex. Francisco de Veyga, the doctor who conducted the most influential studies about invertidos sexuales, suspended his book project on invertidos sexuales under the assumption of the possible risks of popularizing such characters.[48] Ingenieros's metaphor of newspapers as laboratories is helpful for understanding that while these portrayals were central to defining the social boundaries of sex, the representations of gender transgressions were also an open space of interpretation and identification.

Journalists and doctors worked to build an association between sexual deviation and crime. The vague vocabulary of the press generally used as synonyms terms related with sexual inversion and homosexuality and reproduced stories portraying any gender-transgressing as a synonym for danger and antinational practices. Usually called "female-dressed thieves," these characters blurred the limits between social and gendered deviations. This also reveals that because of their social marginalization, many invertidos or maricas moved across the world of brothels and crime. These associations worked to portray them as dangerous, breaking both gendered and social rules. A good example is the case of a young man from Catamarca who was imprisoned in a train by a guard: "a woman who was not a woman was traveling in one of the cars, despite her skirts, petticoats, and Louis XVI boots,

he was a fugitive from a prison riot."[49] The anarchist press also reported the adventures of trade union leaders who wore women's clothes to escape from the police.[50] Such stories inspired a number of humorous articles describing the police's mechanisms for detecting people disguised as the "opposite sex."[51]

Ideas about gender plasticity also became popular on the artistic circuit in gender impersonation shows called transformismo. Because of its integration into the global economic trade, the rapid growth propelled by transoceanic immigration, and public infrastructure development, Buenos Aires was consolidated as an attractive international leisure market.[52] In the first decade of the century, the Italian artist Leopoldo Fregoli became a regular character in the theaters of Buenos Aires. In his shows he would change into different women's costumes quickly, drawing on an old French tradition. He first visited Buenos Aires in 1895 to present his act at the National Theater. Thanks to his increasing popularity, he decided to continue with new seasons and visited Argentina regularly until 1936.[53] Fregoli's performances were also recorded and sold for playing on gramophones.[54] This was not entirely new in the city where, from the early nineteenth century, the elite enjoyed French gender-impersonation shows.[55]

Buenos Aires became a central stage of the global circuit of gender impersonation, and the popularity of this act spread among all social classes. In the major theaters, the shows were

presented as family entertainment. Young ladies from high society attended, hoping to find potential husbands.[56] Likewise, anarchist cultural circles organized events with transformistas in working-class trade union centers.[57] Transformismo grew as a popular kind of show, with important local interpreters, such as the successful Aldo, famous for his character based on a Japanese geisha,[58] or Fátima Miris's compadrito, the classic male lower-class urban character from tango songs, performed regularly in theaters in Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Spain.[59] Popular shows such as la marimacho, in which men performing very effeminately told jokes, remained popular for several years.[60] In 1934 a well-known French performer presented himself at the Luna Park, one of the biggest theaters in the city. The show's posters featured a body half dressed as an elegant dandy and the other half in a dress, with the text: "It is not Adam, or Eve, but a little of each."[61] In the 1940s transformismo was also performed in small working-class cabarets and cafés.[62]

Even if this long European tradition was not the same as the other transgressions of gender rules discussed here, it was a platform of theatrical comedy based on a binary notion of sex that helped to circulate a language and an aesthetic of crossing gender frontiers. A good example is that while in the nineteenth century these performances were contained on the stage, the popularization of these acts could also lead to moral anxiety among the elites.

The French journalist Jules Huret highlighted that some local elites understood these acts as moral transgressions. When Fregoli visited the city of Córdoba in 1910, "he appeared dressed as a dancer with a big décolleté. People started shouting against indecency and immorality, and he was forced to abandon the city."[63] Likewise, we know that these images work as figures for transgressive embodiments; by the mid-twentieth century many maricas and travestis were performing these acts in working-class bars and brothels.[64]

The convergence between popular shows and the articles about those people allegedly simulating another sex produced vital information about gender embodiment. In 1910 the popular magazine PBT published instructions for practicing male transformismo. With photographs of a famous actress who transformed herself into an elegant man, they show how the performance demanded clothing and explained how to act as a man. The article emphasized the art of walking by comparing how men and women usually stand and pose their legs differently.[65] This guidance shows how transformismo became a legitimate platform that fostered knowledge of how transgressing gender rules may have unexpected uses.

The popularity of transformismo penetrated deep into popular culture, as for example with tango, the mainstream musical genre among working-class people. Since the end of the nineteenth century, doctors and intellectuals had expressed their concern

about how this popular music associated with working-class life and prostitution promoted deviant gender figures, for instance, by representing the characters of brothel madams and pimps as manly women and feminine men.[66] Tango played a role in popularizing representations of gender crossing. During the 1910s, Pepita Avellaneda (1874–1951) and Linda Thelma (1884–1939) portrayed figures that embodied a stereotypical lower-class masculinity during their tango shows.[67] Linda Thelma was famous both in the world of coplas (northern folk music) and tango. Even if some journalists criticized her for appropriating the figure of the gaucho to "ruin our popular poems" and accused her of being part of a "decadent" star system,[68] she became one of the most-requested performers in the world of variety shows.[69] From the 1920s the famous singer Azucena Maizani (1902–70), one of the first well-known women composers, usually performed in public dressed like a man, in a character known as La Ñata Gaucha.[70] Maizani's album promotions portrayed her like other male tango singers, with hats and suits, and the press usually pointed out that she had a male haircut.[71] Maizani's repertoire had a flexible gender strategy in which she portrayed a man, and in one of her most famous songs, "Pero yo que sé" (1928), Maizani avoided revealing the gender of the singer, opening a space for male and female identification.[72]

Elites' anxieties were also transversal for a leftist culture that usually venerated masculinity as a motor of social

transformation. Even if anarchists promoted gender equality and free love, and sometimes did not condemn sexual dissidence, representations of sexual deviation were important tools for defining internal hierarchies.[73] A good example is the anarchist author José Castillo's play Los invertidos (1914), which was intended as propaganda to stress the degeneration of the elite. The play narrated the story of a doctor (Florez) with a double life, with his invert friends and his straight family. The show also made reference to one of the most famous female invertidos, La Princesa de Borbón, who, as I will show in the last section, became a popular myth of the transgression of gender frontiers. In the play the exposure of his secret forces the doctor to commit suicide, an outcome that is presented as the tragic future that awaits all invertidos.[74]

Cultural elites were aware that these discourses not only had a disciplinary dimension but also made available possible identifications of paths to gender transgression. Yarfitz points out that the Buenos Aires city authorities shut down the play under the belief that even the title alone was promoting vice. The show was performed only a few times under the title Los anormales (The Abnormal Ones) and quickly sold out.[75] In his defence of the prophylactic intention of the play, Castillo refers to the widespread knowledge about sexual inversion among ordinary people: "Does 'The Inverts' arise from an immoral idea? Does it inspire

impure desire? Provoke sensual dissolution? No. It speaks to us of a vice that nobody doesn't already know about and that the entire world is convinced exists. And in speaking to us, it shows this vice in its most pernicious aspect."[76]

Castillo was right: physicians did not have a monopoly on the conversation about everyday gender-transgressive practices. The languages of the working-class world also expressed traces of those experiences beyond gender and sexual norms. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the hybridization of immigrants and Indigenous people produced a rich popular sublanguage of Spanish called Lunfardo, with several references to sexual deviation.

People used words such as maricones, maricas, putos, invertidos, tortillera, or hombre-mujer/mujer-hombre to define a spectrum of sexual attitudes and gender expressions.[77] The German ethnologist Robert Lehmann-Nitsche (1872–1938) wrote recollections of the oral popular language and jokes. He recorded a major collection of popular erotic references in the early twentieth century. While people used this terminology to define every man who was penetrated in a sexual act by others, Lunfardo dictionaries add a particular gender dimension to this that could be associated with the experiences of those people. People could associate effeminate sexual inversion--particularly those penetrated in the sexual act--with words referring to their gender fluidity with mockery, using words such as Manflorita/Manfloro/Manflora, a deformation of

hermafrodita that exalted how these characters expressed fluid male and female features beyond the binary male/female, defined as an "effeminate man who wants to look like a woman and dresses and behaves as if he were one."[78] Other similar terms defined this idea about how sexual inversion was related to a corporeal and spiritual duality: a gendered body experience. For example, the use of the phrase "varones de ambos sesos" (men with both brains; sesos could also sound like sexos) refers to someone's alleged dual sexes and brains.[79] Another example is the word mino, a masculinization of mina, a popular slang word for "woman."[80]

In summary, in their more creative or disciplinary expressions, doctors, working-class people, journalists, and artists participated in social exploration of the limits of the body and the frontiers of gender belonging. However, even if it was expected for these boundaries to align with people's behavior, some stories show how people transgressing gender rules tried to negotiate and retain their sovereignty over their bodies.

<A>In the Body: Negotiating the Boundaries of "Sex"

<TXT>The debates and everyday struggle to define the limits of gender belonging were central to the formulation of citizenship as a status inseparable from the body. Even if the agents of science and law tried to reduce people who transgressed gender frontiers to

objects of science, people also negotiated their gender belonging from below. In the case of female-to-male gender transgressions, the articulation of efficient male embodiment allowed them access to citizenship, understood here beyond its legal assertion of a broader political sense of belonging. In this section I explore how different people negotiated their sovereignty over their bodies with agents of science and the state. By reinforcing, adapting, or rejecting dominant languages, certain people experimented with the limits of their gender belonging by deploying multiple practices and technologies.

In 1904 the prestigious medical journal La semana médica published Carlos Roche's doctoral dissertation, in which he gathered several cases of people living with an allegedly artificial sex. Between 1900 and 1904, Roche worked at the gynecology department of the Hospital Francés (French Hospital), in Buenos Aires, where he collected stories, letters, and testimonies of those who lived between what they understood as the "two true sexes."[81] Roche describes that in 1904 Catalina Espil visited Dr. Jorge Laure's office at the French Hospital. She was a twenty-three-year-old French maid who had been raised by a single mother. After her birth in Paris, a doctor pointed out to her mother that the child had some "male genital elements" and no uterus. Following the doctor's advice, her mother decided to migrate to Argentina in order to give her daughter a new life and to get her legal papers

as a girl.[82] Catalina was raised as a girl. She arrived in Buenos Aires when she was three years old. At age six she entered a girls' school, and as a teenager she trained for one year to become a teacher. However, she could not finish her studies. When she turned fourteen, her mother sent her to a farm outside the city to avoid punishment for her unexpected bodily changes. In contrast with other girls her age, she noticed that she did not have her period and that her body was not changing as expected. Catalina started shaving her facial hair and using cloths to reinforce her female figure. When she was eighteen years old, she moved back to the city and began working as a maid for a rich family. Some months later she got a job as a maid in the maternity ward of the French Hospital, which fostered her interest in visiting a doctor.[83]

Catalina's story is helpful for understanding that more than an abstract cultural production, medical hierarchies were experienced through the body. Doctors experimented and practiced with their patients to force them to internalize social rules. After some days experiencing pain when urinating, Catalina visited Dr. Laure. Her "deep voice" caught the doctor's attention. He called her a liar for hiding her "true sex" with female clothes. After a genital examination, he defined Catalina as a man with "a 3 and \F1/2 cm flaccid penis that reaches 6 cm, and a glans the size of an eight-year-old boy's" and pointed out that Catalina had a prostate and no female internal reproductive organs. Moreover,

Laure argued that Catalina's pain was caused by a terrible tumor. He added that Catalina's female appearance was confusing: he described her as a man with "virile aspect softened by long hair." During that period doctors used invasive practices to embody binary sex, which included, for example, early mutilating surgeries on "hermaphrodite" children's genitalia.[84] While Catalina had not been submitted to such surgery during her childhood, Dr. Laure intended to operate on her to "correct" her "sex."

Patients' bodies were not passive spaces for science. Even beyond the intentions of doctors, patients like Catalina had an active role in scientific knowledge production and sometimes openly rejected doctors' statements. When Laure stated in his report that Catalina was a pathological liar, she felt ashamed and upset with his decision. When he told her that she was not a woman, she "stayed mute" and "covered her face, overwhelmed." Like the emotionless expression of the Indigenous woman in Faussone's pictures, the traces of stillness or outrage seem to be symptoms of discomfort with the medical invasion of the lives of inverts or hermafroditas.[85]

Doctors used the concept hermaphrodite to label people with various anatomical conditions that didn't fit their binary notion of sex.[86] The intervention over those bodies that were considered "mistakes" of nature in need of correction is an excellent example of how bodies were living laboratories for the formation of the

nation and citizenship. Doctors understood that it was their duty to align those bodies to an alleged nature that allowed them to develop their full reproductive potentials as citizens of the nation. From the late nineteenth century, Argentine physicians practiced surgeries to define intersexual bodies into a binary conception of sex. By studying these bodies, doctors participated in shaping ideas of sexual normality. Argentine doctors promoted an evolutive conception of intersexuality in which subjects had to go through diverse stages to reach sexual differentiation. They understood hermafroditas as subjects that needed medical help to finish this process. During the twentieth century, the progressive influence of eugenics perspectives--such as Pende's Italian biotypology from the 1920s and the Spanish doctor Marañon's intersexual theory--introduced new ideas of intersexuality and along with them surgeries that promoted the use of hormones to normalize those bodies considered abnormal.[87] In this book I bring intersex lives to the history of transness because both speak of the shifting experiences of transgressing gender. Following Gill-Peterson the experimentation with both trans and intersex bodies was central to the making of medical and social notions of gender and sexuality. Likewise during those years, both inverts and the so-called hermaphrodites were seen as people crossing gender frontiers (even if, as we see in Juan's case below, some few hermaphrodites' gender transgressions were socially accepted).[88]

Catalina's strong resistance also appears to be a clear sign of how previous approaches based on ideas such as simulation or parody can be a total misreading of some people's lives. Laure was surprised that Catalina was calm:

> <EX>Regarding the mistake that had been made in declaring him a woman, he does not complain or protest, on the contrary, he seems resolved to persist. He assures us that he has never doubted being a woman, he thinks that his anomaly appeared during his stay in the Maternity Hospital where he claims to have read something in books about it.[89]

<TXT>After being classified as a man, Catalina begged not to be transferred to a men's hospital ward, which the doctor respected but added, "Notwithstanding his true sex [Catalina] is placed in a women's ward."[90] The shame that she showed was an expression of Catalina's self-perception as a woman and her feeling that being catalogued as a man meant the destruction of a self-image that she had worked to build her whole life.

This story contributes to what I pointed to in the first section: gender embodiment did not always converge with heteronormative sexual desire. Even if cases such as that of Catalina were not always common in doctors' magazines, they call our attention to how placing embodied experiences in the historical

narrative can encourage queer history to formulate new questions about the early twentieth century. Catalina had sexual encounters with women, and she stated that she had been having erections and wet dreams since she was sixteen. Dr. Laure understood this as a symptom of her "true sex," even if others of Catalina's friends declared to the doctor that she also dated a "good man." Doctors understood that what we call today sexual orientation and gender expression were part of the same "nature," and for that reason invertidos were defined as people with inverted sexual nature. It is difficult to say whether Catalina was able to separate these two elements to define herself, but we know that by maintaining a relationship with a woman and delaying her visit to the doctor, and in view of her resistance to being classified as a man, she did not align her sexual desire and gender embodiment with what was medically and socially expected.[91] Medical power usually prevailed over the patients after death. Catalina's tumor killed her, and after her death, the doctor classified her body as male. This was a final decision with which the doctor bent Catalina's will, an act repeated in other stories collected by Roche.

While medical literature usually focused on what they understood as the inversion of male homosexuals, the transitions from female to male embodiment created other concerns in the elite, because they considered men to be key actors of national modernization, which was expressed in differential access to civil

and political rights. Likewise, because doctors believed that sex was a naturally binary condition, they tried to avoid its transgression and actively participated in affirming a gender different from that which was socially assigned when they understood it to be mistaken. However, even historians could read this as a normative intervention of medicine; it is possible that for people looking to affirm a gender different from the one they were assigned at birth, engaging and adapting medical theories could help make sense of their experience. In 1904 a young teacher came to Dr. Pedro Caride's office at the Hospital Francés. He was looking for a solution to what he considered the great suffering of his life: even though he was legally identified as a woman, he recognized himself to be a frustrated man as a consequence of an alleged mistake by a midwife. Juan asked for medical help to recover a "sex" that had been denied to him.[92] When he was born, he had been classified as a hermafrodita, so the midwife indicated that the parents raise him as a woman to prevent future suffering.

My review of the legal trials initiated for name changes in the first half of the twentieth century in the Province of Buenos Aires reveals dozens of people who, after being mistakenly registered at birth, asked to have their name changed, usually when they reached the legal age of majority, between eighteen and twenty-one years old. Most of these mistakes were related to their ethnic background, which produced bureaucratic errors in their

birth certificates. Therefore, it is possible that gender embodiment did not always require legal documentation so that someone could be recognized as male or female. Instead, there were multiple practices with which people could negotiate broader inscriptions of gender embodiment. Moreover, these trials are eloquent expressions of how personal documents were central to everyday life and how gender embodiment also relied on broader mechanisms of social recognition.[93]

The medical conception of hermafroditismo allowed Juan to negotiate a medical transition to his desired masculinity. Juan wrote a letter to Caride to explain why he needed to be fully recognized as a man, then reproduced Roche's study. He believed in the potency of science. Some years before, he had visited a well-known doctor promoted by the press, but the specialist told him that his only chance was to be treated abroad. After this Juan said that he considered committing suicide. He stated:

> <EX>The first doctor that I consulted, the one who presents himself in the Capital of the Republic's newspapers, threw me out without conducting a medical examination and told me that only in Europe or the United States would I find someone able to cure me. He insisted that I don't look for it here. What hope is there for the poor who live only in their own country?[94]

<TXT>A trip abroad was impossible on a teacher's income, but he did not give up. In the end, Juan's struggle was worth it; after a medical examination found that a penis was located behind two bulges ("vaginal lips"), a hospital team decided to practice surgery to restore his "normal genitalia." After a long process, supported by the hospital, he obtained a civil sex change, the modification of his title from female to male teacher, and finally, he married his girlfriend.[95]

Juan's letter gives insights into how the idea of having an inverted spirit was productive among those struggling to have their gender recognized, which in his case converged with an alleged medical pathology. He described the pain of living in a "false costume jail" made of female clothes, doll games, and strict parental limits to activities considered inappropriate for girls. He said that after the midwife's decision, "without any meditation, they forced me to dress in female clothes to incorporate me into social life." Juan did not blame his parents for his upbringing; he believed that they were trying to save him from the frustration of not being socially accepted as a man. In his own words, they protected him from "that group of young men who, in their lack of modesty and in the dissipation typical of their sex and age, know each other's most precious secrets and give themselves spicy

nicknames”--a description of how male groups of the period regulated and punished those who did not fit within their norms.

Juan distinguished “sex,” which he felt was imposed on him, from an attempt to recover sovereignty over his body in order to become a full citizen. He wrote that his true sex had been trying to flourish for his whole life. While he was a child, he rejected spending time with his sister, playing games that he considered boring; he preferred to climb trees or ride horses, things that were not allowed due to the “the expected female weakness,” as was expressed in some magazines that alerted parents to the risks of allowing girls to exercise their strength, rather than making them practice upright and coquettish walking.[96]

Even if doctors believed in the centrality of genitalia to define sex, Juan’s case shows the coexistence of multiple medical and social conceptions of sex. The details about gestures, body shapes, and sexual desire expanded the medical conception of “sex.” Caride wrote that Juan “uses female clothes without any elegance,” adding that he had a medium-sized body, no mustache or facial hair, but that he had a “very deep and strong voice that reminds us of his true sex.” Caride also noticed that Juan was “too vigorous to be a woman,” had small breasts, and also attached a photograph to prove his genitality: a penis emerging between his “vaginal labia.” The medical description continued: “The pubis is covered by fat similar to a mons veneris, but I am sure that it is a penis without

perforation of 7 cm, that can be transformed into an organ according to his true sex." Juan and Caride understood his sexual desire as an emanation of his deep male nature, that he could fix with "reconstructive surgery" that he performed assisted by other two surgeons. Juan wrote: "It is true that women are not irrelevant to me, and that I am charmed by female beauty and grace, but is not the passion that one is not allowed to enjoy a torment?" Caride explained that Juan's anxiety to become a man was driven by his desire to marry a woman, which had left Juan exposed to accusations of being a lesbian, and some of his friends abandoned him for fear of social punishment.[97]

In her study of trans male husbands in rural America of the late nineteenth century, Emily Skidmore pointed out how trans masculine experience created paradoxes in the construction of citizenship. On the one hand, trans men used multiple practices to access social prerogatives restricted to men. On the other hand, even if these actions denaturalized the fiction with which the state and society recognized people's gender roles, it also required trans masculinity to legitimate the acceptable ways of being men in this period.[98] In fact, in contrast to other cases of people who were considered "uncivilized," Juan's request to set his sex free was part of his incarnation as a "good citizen": he sent a letter and asked for help from science. The right to be a man was not a minor one. Argentine elites believed in the centrality of

policing the male body as a vital actor in the development of the nation, the strategic subject for populating the country with healthy workers. Likewise, recognition as a man meant broader legal and political rights. Until 1918 Argentine women were considered legal minors. They had restricted political rights until 1947 and were not granted full civil rights until 1968.[99]

Because citizenship was inseparable from one's body and its recognition as male provided a wide range of social privileges, the body was also the terrain for defining citizenship's limits. Juan's views about why and how he was a man inform us of how men experienced male citizenship physically. Juan did not restrict his idea to politics; he understood that being a male citizen included public and private practices considered acceptable for men. Juan wrote that he had expressed his discomfort with his "false sex" by the ideas of the "modernism and liberalism that I have struggled for, my fight against the irrational uses of women that I was subjected to." Nevertheless, even though "some people expressed their support for my ideas, there were more of those who were not genuine, and even though I felt the gossip whip my back I have always followed the path encouraged by a strength that I am not able to explain." Maybe Juan's "liberal criticisms" of the social restrictions placed on women's individual development were similar to those promoted by the first feminist publications.[100] Nonetheless, Juan progressively abandoned his claim for women's

freedom. He thought that these "modernist and liberal ideas" were the expression of his "true sex," which was trying to flourish. His desire to get married to his girlfriend, to be able to exercise his citizenship, and to fully participate in public life, converged with his "nature" as a complete man. The surgery promised to set free his penis and his spirit. He wrote excitedly about the possibility of his full recognition: "Is it not preferable to put up with a diet far away from the coveted stew? If I can get my full genital potency, how can a man who feels himself as a true man give up his prerogatives and rights that are infinitely wider than the ones that a woman can obtain clandestinely? How could he give up something that he can enjoy legally and freely open to his social world?" As noted, surgery was the first step. Then, with the help of the doctor, Juan changed his legal identity papers and became a husband in order to be a full Argentine citizen.

Focusing on citizenship as an embodied experience and expanding it to all the mechanisms with which someone defined their belonging to a community allows us to analyze a wide range of practices with which people negotiated recognition from below. Figure 1.3 is the image affixed to Raúl Luis Suárez's identity card. His hair is neatly combed, and he is wearing a tie and jacket. His clothing is no more and no less than what is expected of a man of his social position: Raúl works at the customs office. He slips a slight smile into the photograph, something totally

unexpected for a public document in which subjects are required to stay emotionless. However, perhaps he expresses a little joy: the photograph in the document seals a pact with the state. Raúl is a citizen of the Argentine Republic, as would be recognized until his death in 1930.

{Insert fig. 1.3 here}

<TXT> The spectacularization of Raúl's life was unprecedented: the media posted an article daily for at least a month, renowned figures of the time were consulted about the case, and a newspaper even published a series of fictional comics about his life. His case shows the central role of gender-transgressive bodies in shaping public debates about the limits of gender belonging. After medical intervention defined that his "true sex" had been socially changed, he was renamed with the name that his parents had given him at birth: Raquel Suárez. The scandal in the press was inevitable; his name would be added to the long list of those who were called the "women-men," a denigrative concept used in that time to define what nowadays we would describe as trans men.[101]

Raúl Luis Suárez was born in 1882 in La Coruña (Spain).[102] His parents were the baker Modesto Suárez and the dressmaker Isidora Valdez. They migrated to Durazno (Uruguay) in 1886 with their daughters Raquel and Ada Francisca. Some years later they

moved to La Plata, Argentina.[103] After Raúl's father died, the family moved to Buenos Aires, where his mother became a house cleaner until her death in 1895. Because of the multiple narratives that circulated in the press, there are several versions of how Raquel and her sister ended up in a religious orphanage. Raquel escaped from the orphanage and survived many years in poverty until the age of twenty-two, when she was able to claim her younger sister. The two worked as dressmakers, a job popular among women that was economically precarious.

Journalists circulated different versions about how Raquel became Raúl. Some of them explained the effects of a life in poverty, saying that he was looking for better opportunities in the labor market; others defined it as a tactic employed to seek sexual encounters with women. In 1908, after Ada got married, Raquel traveled to Montevideo and forged his birth certificate to be fully recognized as Raúl Luis Suárez. Between 1908 and 1912, Raúl got his citizenship card in Argentina. In 1912 Raúl married Amalia Gómez, and some months later he moved in with another lover called Matilde. He became quite well known in his neighborhood in Buenos Aires for flirting with women. He got a job in the customs office and participated in the world of male socializing. Nevertheless, his life as a man reached a limit. In 1930 he fainted and was hospitalized. The doctors were surprised that he did not have the genitalia that they expected to see under his suit. Raúl went back

home, and two days later he suffered an uncontrollable attack of emotional distress and died. Based on the neighbors' gossip, some journalists accused Matilde of poisoning and killing him, and of selling the household furniture in order to flee. In fact, Matilde was a fugitive for some days until the doctors confirmed that Raúl had not been poisoned.[104] That is how the story of Raúl flooded the newspapers.

Raul's life stresses both dimensions of the notion of living laboratories. First is the disciplinary one: the public spectacle of medical and political intervention over his body was a scenario to produce the alignment between bodies, gender, and citizenship. The second, more creative laboratory is the one in which Raul's agency over public documents, clothing, photography, and social interaction affirmed his male life. As figure 1.4 shows, after his death Raul's body became a battlefield. Under a court order, an autopsy was carried out, and for weeks the story flooded the pages of the main Buenos Aires tabloids. A group of doctors, among whom was Pedro Caride, the same specialist who intervened in Juan's case, removed Raúl's organs, his mammary glands, and his brain. Their hunt for Raúl's "true sex" forced them to dismember his body in search of a "disease" that would explain why he had been able to live his life as a man. A few weeks after his death, their verdict was clear: "She is a perfect woman." The press described Raul's body in detail, describing him as a "thick woman,

with developed hips, and bulging breasts."[105] Some journalists were shocked: "How did he usurp the civil rights of a man for twenty-three years?"[106] One theory floated was that the real Raúl had been murdered and that this was nothing more than a criminal plot to claim his property. One journalist asked his readers, "How did he create his voice, his new way of being, how did he create this new character?"[107]

{Insert fig. 1.4 here}

<TXT> The case became a public debate in the tabloid newspapers, which published comic strips and articles for weeks. This shows how gender transgression was central to a broader discussion about urban transformation, modernization, and citizenship in a context of increasing feminist suffragette struggle. Nerio Rojas, an influential doctor and future Parliament member for the Radical Civic Union, explicitly associated the case with the feminist critique of traditional values. He made an open call to restrict this type of transformation, which could undermine the infrastructure of legal sex. The doctor Julieta Lantieri--the face of the women's suffrage struggle--endorsed other doctors' opinions that Raúl was an expression of sexual deviation. The writer Alfonsina Storni understood Raúl's actions as a strategic transformation to access the rights denied to women.[108] However, the

most surprising opinion came from Susy Ortiz--a journalist from the tabloid Última hora--who openly defended Raúl's right to be a man. This article is one of the first traces of the genealogy of a feminist discourse that openly recognized people's sovereignty over their gender. In her text Ortiz refers to Raúl by his name and with male pronouns. She defined him as a "revolutionary emancipated from the absurd logic of nature" and as an example of "liberation." She openly defended his right to be a male citizen: "If he had been able to choose, the male sex would have gained a good citizen."[109]

{Insert fig. 1.5 here}

<TXT> Raúl's personal photography shows how this technology was vital for affirming gender belonging. Photography was how the body was placed in the struggle for defining social belonging with different audiences; it could be used to reaffirm one's self-image with friends or seal a document certifying one's gender, or it could use the press to undermine gendered social recognition. By this I mean that photographs act as technologies of embodiment with different powers depending on their contexts. In contrast with the pictures of the Indigenous body at the beginning of the chapter, Raúl's portraits--like many others in the CyC collection of the National Archive, where I found him--show a pronounced emotional contrast between images produced by force and those used by people

to affirm their gender. If we think of photography as an exercise of citizenry, the contrast is even more clear: the pictures of the Indigenous female person seek to negate her right to self-perception, while Raúl's affirm his right to persist through time as a man.[110] Coleman shows how photographs allow us to imagine all those pictures that were not preserved in traditional archives. Raúl's portraits open our imagination to think about all those portraits that we will never see--and that maybe we should not see--because their power relies on their intimate nature with which many people forged the right over their own body image, in their own terms.

In figure 1.4, the legal picture of Raúl is the reference for legal recognition, the proof of a document that made him a legal man despite his genitalia. Its power is connected with the state's mechanism for producing citizens; it was the document that enabled Raúl to marry and to have a good government position in the civil service. Moreover, his belonging went beyond legal recognition. The self-portrait in his office taken in 1925 (figure 1.5) was the perfect dominant manly representation of the period. His crossed legs, straight posture, smile, use of a cigarette, and elegant clothes reaffirmed his manly embodiment. Furthermore, other photographs in which he is with his colleagues also reaffirm his acceptance as a man by his coworkers, his participation in a growing middle-upper class of civil servants. The photograph's

references to spaces of public power could be part of Raul's strategy to guarantee his social and legal right to be a man. In contrast, during those years and, in at least one case, decades after his death, journalists published photographs of Raúl dressed as a woman in order to put a limit on his male interpretation and to recenter his memory as a woman.[111] One journalist described a seemingly minor detail about Raúl's body: his ears were pierced, which he considered a sign of "his place in the world, along with those of her sex."[112] Ear piercing was a widespread technique that parents used to encourage their daughters to embody their gender. In Raúl's portraits his pierced ears are imperceptible. The impossibility of finding this detail was perhaps a fortuitous coincidence or a careful detail with which Raúl guaranteed the effectiveness of his male embodiment.

The last dimension of the experience of alignment between body, gender, and citizenship comes after death. The state deployed multiple archival practices to reproduce its social order. Raúl's body was archived. The National General Archive filed him--along with other women-men--in a collection titled "Ladies Portraits." The archive is ruthless in preserving categories over time. Raúl's male embodiment was forcibly placed by archivists in a category that does not necessarily express his desire to live as a man, and that also tell us about the legacies of vernacular language of sexual sciences of the early century in the archive, as well as how

the state extended its sovereignty over sex. On the other hand, Juan's letter was transcribed in a doctor's thesis that described him as a male subject, a contrast that helps us also to understand the different level of precariousness of this recognition, and the power of medical intervention to preserve or erase this gendered embodiment over time. However, in this aftermath, in which doctors and the state regulated Raúl's legacies, his partner negotiated his social recognition privately beyond the power of the state. According to a chronicle, after the autopsy Raul's body was buried in male underwear, and the photograph of his gravesite shows the inscription: "Raúl Luis Suárez, 1930."[113]

Thinking of male embodiment and citizenship from below helps us to understand those practices connected with mobility and social class that made it possible for some people to achieve broader social privileges. In 1962 a journalist published references to articles of 1914 about La machito, who was the leader of a gang of criminals who conducted numerous robberies. Although he had been called Adelina Bejarano, he "was of the third sex, as is often said of those people who, feeling like women, transform themselves into men or vice versa."[114] The press claimed that he "was the first woman in Buenos Aires to wear trousers." A journalist noted, "For fear of being misinterpreted he exaggerated the male characteristics," which included appearing with women in public, drinking, and adopting violent attitudes.[115] La machito,

like Raúl, showed that the exaltation of material repertoires, such as smoking, drinking, and clothing, were generally accompanied by a strong romantic performance with which they entered the stage of competition with other men.[116]

Other people used migration as an attempt to negotiate their gender recognition. In 1905 Arturo, a Brazilian migrant aged twenty-two, was imprisoned in La Pampa province, where he worked in agriculture and railroad construction. He was accused by the police of simulating a "false sex" and was forced to return to women's clothing.[117] Similar stories describe the role of clothing and gestures to avoid being caught by policemen in public spaces. In 1907 a young rural worker was imprisoned in a train station in Buenos Aires after a long trip from Patagonia. The police officer suspected that even though he was wearing wide trousers and a big hat to cover his face, the man walked a bit like a woman. After imprisonment the worker explained that he was a Spanish migrant who lived as a man in order to work in rural areas, and that even if his colleagues knew about it, they respected his decision. Although it is difficult to know to what extent this practice was a strategic gender embodiment aimed at getting better jobs or whether the description was an excuse to avoid conflicts with the police, the fact is that it was effective enough.[118]

These stories show how different people engaged with the dominant narrative of both the binary male/female and narratives of

gender transgression to negotiate sovereignty over their bodies. These diverse histories also show how invisibility was usually vital to achieving the recognition of the desired sex and how the articulation of geographical mobility, economic resources, and sometimes medical support made a difference in affirming one's gender. By expanding our understanding of citizenship as an everyday embodied and practical experience, we explore the multiple ways in which people transgressing gender frontiers achieved social recognition. Even if paradoxical, the same secret that erased these people from the historical narrative (until found by the press) was, for many of them, the best weapon to survive.

<A>The Spectacular Making of Sex

<TXT>As I point out in the first section, this book offers an alternative reading of sexual inversion. Thinking about gender embodiment before the legislation against people dressing in "clothes of the opposite sex" means exploring against what this legislation was working to achieve and how to transform it. I am interested in how these people participated in public life and, by doing so, how they interpreted dominant gender culture. This is not to say that inverts were socially accepted. As Pablo Ben points out, the influence of liberalism has contributed to decriminalizing sexual practices between consenting adults since the late

nineteenth century. While this made police officers against nonnormative sexual behavior milder, it usually was followed by giving the police power to punish public displays of sexual dissidence. Even if the legislation started in the 1930s, inverts usually faced conflict with police officers and civil violence.[119] This section studies the particularities of a subculture in which spectacularity played a vital role in the construction of gendered corporealities. While the last section shows how passing helped many people to achieve sovereignty over their bodies, this one focuses on the role of public experimentation in body feminization. Paradoxically, this section shows how cultural elites reacted to this hypervisibilization by banning practices of sexual inversion.

Turning attention from sexual desire to the body helps us interpret how gender-variant people understood and embodied gender. Aida--one of the cases studies by de Veyga--was born in Buenos Aires at the end of the nineteenth century. She grew up in an upper-income family, and from an early age she rejected being treated as a man. When she turned twenty, she found employment in an administrative position in the Casa Rosada_(house of the government), where she met an older man who, some time later, became her partner. De Veyga defined her as an "imitator of an honest woman," maybe because in contrast with other invertido profiles published by doctors, Aida did not underscore her sexual

appetites. She defined herself as a "female spirit created for men's love."[120]

As with Juan, her embodiment highlighted values expected of a woman of her social class, such as not having sex with her partner until she got "married." Marriage rituals (maridaje) had been quite popular among maricas and travestis during the twentieth century, who used them to legitimize unions in some social spheres outside of legal recognition.[121] At her wedding Aida wore "a white dress, and her hair was adorned with orange blossoms," while "the groom (had) a frock coat and white gloves." The couple lived together for a year, and after some fights they broke up. Aida got married again some months later to a second husband, a man with two children, with whom she lived for six months until she died from tuberculosis. Between the first and the second marriage, Aida defined herself as a widow. She had a time of mourning without meeting any other men.[122]

These rituals, restricted for a specific audience, speak of the primacy the gendered body mediated by binary languages of sex. Even if not legal, this form of marriage was a union in which at least one of the two people was socially considered to be a male heterosexual who played the "man's role" as penetrator in the relationship.[123] Inverts defined their sexual partners as bufa/o or chongos. Bufa/o was a deformation of bufarrón, a word used to describe subjects who played the role of penetrators in the sexual

encounters and identified themselves as heterosexuals.[124] During the colonial era, chongo had been used by enslavers to define robust enslaved people in good physical condition. At the beginning of the twentieth century, it became a popular term for apprentice bricklayers. From the 1920s onward, homosexuals used the word to define virile heterosexual men who had sex with other men in the role of the penetrator. In the late twentieth century, travestis defined a chongo as a heterosexual male who has sexual and affectionate relationships with travestis.[125]

Aida's case story was part of the genre of invertidos' autobiographies, which were common in medical and cheap literature, and which included other stories translated from foreign periodicals.[126] In addition to autobiographies, letters, plays, and poems, doctors and journalists also published photographic portraits. As I said in the last section, portraits also reflect the gendered language with which subjects make sense of their experiences of embodiment, showing the details of the broader pleasures of expressing oneself. For Aida and her peers, portraits were a means to achieve power over personal narration. One might imagine that producing these pictures was not easy, because Aida did not have Raúl's social recognition. Taking a portrait required finding a photographer committed to taking it, wearing the best dresses, a pretty hairstyle, makeup, and choosing an excellent background to make the image last over time. Small gestures such as

the hands on the hips, the stretched dress, and the strict gaze into the camera were part of the period's traditional composition of female figures. These pictures could be circulated among friends, lovers, and, for those selling sex, clients, or could just be a personal treasure.

{Insert fig. 1.6 here}

<TXT> Figure 1.6 shows some details of the broader pleasures of expressing oneself. As Aida possibly does in the portrait, invertidos usually used corsets to exalt the female figure. Even as doctors increasingly expressed their concern about the harms of this intimate clothing, corsets had been very popular among women since the end of the nineteenth century.[127] This item of clothing allowed them to refine the hip and exaggerate their breasts, which at the beginning of the twentieth century was understood as a challenge to the social demand for women's domesticity and a sign of female incursion into public space.[128] However, while the use of corsets tended to be unpopular among women by the beginning of the 1920s, the photographs help me to imagine that inverts continued using them to maximize their female features.

In this period inverts became popular villains of the Latin American urban metropolis. Journalists around the region highlighted the visibility of "men dressed as women" in Rio de

Janeiro, Montevideo, and Buenos Aires.[129] The extended concern about their presence became a prelude to the attempt to expel them from the public sphere in the context of the crisis of the liberal project in the 1930s and the legitimation of the need of state intervention to build the social order. Inverts' spectacular and scandalous appropriation of public life shows the conflictive ways in which they affirmed their effeminate expression in public, negotiating certain degrees of recognition and violence. One example is La Teresita, who was a famous cocoto in South American cities. Cocoto was a label used for men and "dressed women" who sold sex, usually related with cisgender sex workers. Deported from Buenos Aires, Chile, and Bolivia, La Teresita migrated to Spain in 1911. In his study of the lower classes of Barcelona, the journalist Marcos Bembo described her as a thirty-year-old cocoto, the daughter of a merchant, and a

> quite feminine and not-bad looking guy who dresses as a woman and uses elegant clothes; he has conquered many [people in the Americas], receiving many presents. That is the way he made enough money to live in the capital in total luxury. Every night he traveled the city in a carriage with his more desperate partners [. . .] he is a scandalous sodomite, in Chile, he created a political crisis because many members of the government have had sexual relations with him.[130]

<TXT>In Buenos Aires "he moved to an expensive home in Belgrano Street, he organized big parties, which he attended with feminine dresses of scandalous luxury."[131] Already in the late nineteenth century, the journalist Benigno Lugones pointed out that among prostitutes there was "a multitude of men" whom he considered transformed into women at their parties:

> <EX>The same ballroom criticisms, the same whispers at a ball about so-and-so's dress, so-and-so's hairstyle, so-and-so's boots, or so-and-so's fan; all those furtive glances, those flirtations, rivalries, aids, stories, lies, satires, and invectives that take place in her salon are repeated at that dance, because there the passive pederast is transformed into a woman, and the greatest offence that could be done to him would be to give him his masculine name.[132]

<TXT> The journalist Juan José de Soiza Reilly wrote a long article about the "shadowy Buenos Aires" where there were "more than three thousand thieves dressed as women," whom he described as "drug addicts, sick people, and youth with beautiful facial features." Party organizers, owners of big collections of dresses, and quite a tight-knit gang of friends became well-known through tabloids. For example, La Princesa de Borbón became famous in the

press as a thief, soothsayer, and singer in cabarets of the Southern Cone after being expelled from Argentina in 1911.[133] She had been born in Galicia (Spain) and migrated to Buenos Aires in 1899. She had "big black eyes and a feminine voice" and was famous for her love stories. One rumor circulated in the media that a Chilean man decided to commit suicide because La Princesa abandoned him. Journalists portrayed her as an intelligent criminal: she forged her documents and tried to get a pension as the widow of a soldier who died in the Paraguayan war.[134] Some journalists added that since he was a child, he loved using female clothes and experiencing the emotions of the weak sex." The same newspapers described that she went on exile to Montevideo to seek a more "peaceful life"; however, there she dated a "jealous" man that usually beat her. Her lover wounded her with a knife, leaving her in a hospital, for which her friends in Buenos Aires expressed their concern."[135]

Inspired by queer theory of the 1990s, in his brilliant pioneer book Salessi read these scandalous interactions as parodies with which invertidos undermined the dominant notions of gender, minimizing the role of transgressive gender embodiment.[136] There is no doubt that invertidos knew about doctors' theories and maybe even tried to challenge them. However, this preliminary reading risks projecting an over-rationalization of their practices. Invertidos participated in a culture defined by a binary notion of

sex. They articulated narratives and practices associated with femininity as part of a broader conception of gender and sexuality, expressing femininity and playing an alleged female role with their sexual partners, a balance that could change between them. A good example is La Bella Otero, who said, "I always believed myself to be a woman. I got married in Sevilla and had two children." She was born in Madrid in 1885, was given the name Luis, and studied in a primary school in the Spanish capital. While working in the street selling chamomile, she had her first sexual encounter with a man. La Bella Otero took the name of a famous Spanish dancer popular in the South American theater circuits. She migrated to Buenos Aires in 1898 and was illiterate. For two years she worked in domestic service and then started a career that combined singing, stealing, dancing, and selling sex. She was imprisoned thirty-four times and was even once sent to the archetypical Argentine prison: Ushuaia, in the southernmost city in the world. Eventually she died of tuberculosis.[137]

In La Bella Otero's narrative, sexual desire played a key role in the construction of her identity. She did not use her penis to get pleasure; she performed oral sex and masturbation, and enjoyed being penetrated. She worked selling sex and, according to de Veyga, was particularly attracted to fat and hairy men. She told de Veyga that when she was really attracted to a man, she conserved his sperm inside her by not defecating, an image with which she

exalted her figure as a potential pregnant mother. This portrayal was also present in a poem she gave de Veyga to publish:

<EXP>From the Buen Reito to the Alameda
Crazy desires I came to get
Boys, have it hard
with my hand I will give you pleasure
with umbrella and rattles[138]
And with a glove, I will give it to you
for your pleasure put it in my mouth
And if you feel uncomfortable with my mouth
and from the back you want to give it to me
don't be afraid, my chinito[139]
I have no fold on my back
If you feel uncomfortable with my mouth
and want to love me from my back
don't be afraid, my chinito
you will soon cum.[140]

<TXT>Several examples point to the fact that inverts negotiated their female recognition in certain public spheres in which this deviation was tolerable or imperceptible. Journalists and doctors expressed their concern about inverts' active participation in public life, because they considered that inverts' gender

transgression was a threat to a modern healthy society. Reilly describes many inverts who had passed as female in certain controlled interactions, such as La Morosini, a singer in the National Theatre, la Chochicera, who danced in working-class cabarets, and La Rubia Petrolina, who worked as a Llorona (someone hired to cry in funerals). Dora and La Sirena usually attended high-society parties to steal from the participants.[141]

{Insert fig. 1.7 and fig. 1.8 here}

<TXT> As figures 1.7 and 1.8 show, the spectacular female incursions into public spaces show that gender embodiment was relational and built by the interaction with others. Their visible navigation into the city is a sign of the gendered codes that regulated inverts' interaction with men, but more broadly how they affirmed their femininity, transgressing social expectations and negotiating belonging. While experts of the time usually reduced these navigations of public spaces to erotic or criminal strategies, there may also have been in these adventures a pleasure of a spectacular female embodiment in public spaces. It is difficult to know how much their dress code responded to that used by sex workers or upper-class women; however, some evidence shows that attending parties of the elite had given them some freedom and permission to avoid punishment. Even between the 1920s and 1930s,

female clothes showed more bodily flexibility, and young women started wearing clothes that clung to the body as the image of the modern girl. In this period inverts enhanced their femininity, showing a spectacular gender embodiment that could guarantee realness.[142] Lunfardo has explicit references to the practices of the public incursion of maricas and inverts. For the criminologist Eusebio Gomez, tirar la chancleta (to throw off the sandal) defined the attitude of those who indulged publicly in debauchery without any "moral compunction."[143] The phrase was associated primarily with those prostitutes who were victims of pimping, who had to leave their footwear (chancletas) before going to the room with their client so that they could not escape. Reilly described invertidos using the word plumiar (plumage) to describe the feminine attitude in public avenues.[144] Yirar/girar (cruising) was also a popular concept in the world of sex workers, related to walking the streets in search of erotic encounters.[145]

I interpret the reaction against invertidos' spectacular body construction as a symbol of a significant social transformation of sexual and gender understanding channeled by the state. It was the institutionalization of a broader social violence. Being in the street usually made inverts potential victims of male violence and social practices to regulate the limits of gender belonging. For example, La Bella Otero described how she preferred to move in a coach to avoid incidents with

pedestrians, who could sometimes attack her violently.[146] The socialist press warned working-class men to be aware of invertidos who could hide a knife under their dresses to steal from them, and also explained that the carriage allowed them to run quickly from police officers.[147]

The global economic crisis of 1929 drove a broader social, cultural, and political turmoil. The peripheral position of Argentina made the country vulnerable, affecting the international prices of agricultural goods and proto-industries. The crisis catalyzed disappointment with the Argentine modernization project: while (white European) immigration was considered essential for progress, the rapid growth of the urban population activated the elite's concerns. The economy stimulated the critics of those discourses, guided first by the discourses on hygiene and then by eugenics, which criticized the effects of urban modernity, such as syndicalism, poverty, prostitution, or sexual deviation.[148] In this sense sexual policing is inseparable from the shifting imaginaries of Argentine whiteness. The emerging obsession with public morality and working-class sexuality was related to the anxieties about the population's alleged healthy reproduction. I read the reaction against nonnormative and nonreproductive sexualities as expressing elites' anxieties about the alleged quality of the needed European whiteness to achieve their desired civilization.[149]

In 1930 José Félix Uriburu led Argentina's first military coup, followed by a dictatorship against the elected president Hipólito Irigoyén after the nationalization of petrol production. The military regime initiated a decade of elections mired in fraud and social conflict. The government established its discourse on the need for a public moral and military role in reshaping its future by broader politics of state intervention over the economy and social life. In convergence with global discourses about public morality, the government inaugurated an unprecedented public intervention in the public sphere that would grow increasingly in Argentina among civil and military governments: the policy codes of public morality. The photographs of invertidos walking in the street would become impossible, since the state empowered police to imprison them for public scandal in 1933. This legislation constituted a growing formalization of the sexual boundaries of citizenship. In the city of Buenos Aires, the police's legal code for moral control empowered police to imprison "those who display themselves in the public highway or public places dressed or disguised in the clothing of the opposite sex."[150]

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<TXT>This chapter explores the experiences and portrayals of transgressive gender transitions in the early twentieth century. Examining gender flexibility in a context in which people understood sex as inflexible and binary helps us to reconceptualize

the limits of queer history and our understanding of nationhood, sex, and citizenship as broader embodied experiences.

Extending our historical imagination before the existence of modern sexual identities and the legal restrictions that expel transgressive gender expressions from public life provides us with insightful tools for reimagining queer history. This text argues for the necessity of moving from a perspective attached to sexual desire to one that places gender embodiment at the core, opening questions to reconstruct a more heterogeneous subworld in porous dialogue with mainstream culture.

Moreover, thinking on transgressive bodies as living laboratories of public fabrication of social hierarchies and individual experimentation reshapes our understanding of Argentine modernity through the lens of transness. The public portrayal of transgressive bodies transforms them into disciplinary laboratories for formulating racial and sexual boundaries. Even while unidirectional, usually contested, and negotiated, this comprehension helps us ground citizenship and nationhood, to think about the micro dimension of its formation as an everyday experience. Here we study citizenship not as an abstract discourse of the elite but as a practical living reality open to reinterpretation. Following these ideas, the concept of laboratories also allows us to explore the creative ways people reinterpret dominant gendered culture, be it with spectacularity or

a low profile. This study help us to explore the multiple ways in which people transgressing boundaries negotiated their gender belonging from below.