

CHAPTER 11

The Art of Resistance/ The Art of Empowerment: Trans Literature, Performing Arts, Music, and Visual Art

Key Questions

1. How have representations of trans people in art and culture changed over the past two hundred years?
2. Why is it important for people who do not identify as trans to create trans characters?
3. Why is it important for trans artists and writers to create their own images of trans identity?
4. Is cross-dressing in performance always a sign of gender transgression?

Chapter Overview

This chapter begins by looking at the ways trans figures have been depicted in Gothic horror over the past two hundred years. As a marginalized genre itself because it was not deemed a “high” form of literature, Gothic horror offers an excellent way to study how representations of trans people have evolved and developed over two centuries in art and the popular imagination. Art is not only aesthetic—something pleasurable to see. Quite often art resists cultural norms and stereotypes. Art also empowers. This chapter examines how trans topics appear in literature, the performing arts, music, and visual art. Now, in twenty-first-century art, many trans artists are creating and depicting their own truths to share with audiences.

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