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Abstract

While incarcerated on charges of prostitution, transgender activist Ceyenne Doroshow began to write her memoirs by hand, later to be published in 2012 as *Cooking in Heels: A Memoir Cookbook*. Blending recipe with personal narrative, Doroshow's autobiographical cookbook plays with various genres and breaks generic codes, challenging the rules that govern literary production and reception in the West. Far from consisting of the sentimental reflections of a socially-integrated subject, as in the traditional *Bildungsroman*, Doroshow recounts the painful experiential history of a body for whom the public sphere offers no possibilities for social integration—indeed, upon whose exclusion the dominant social body is constituted. While physical and emotional survival are at the heart of Doroshow's autobiographical project, 'survival' should not be understood as a unified subject's teleological quest for limitless individual freedom. Rather, for the narrator, 'survival' signifies an ongoing struggle to resist forces of humiliation and erasure, to knot together meaningful social bonds, and, ultimately, the capacity to transform the world and change the situation of others. Through interpersonal, experimental acts—cooking, transitioning, autobiographical writing—the psychical and physical body is drawn, always in relation to the other, who can be a source nourishment and strength; but also a source of injury, shame, and violation. This article asks: what alternative models of identity, labor, and agency are put forth in Doroshow's autobiographical act? In what ways are living and writing at the intersection of multiple marginalised identities generative of new or hybrid life narratives and autobiographical practices?

Ceyenne Doroshow's culinary memoirs should never have been printed. If certain enabling conditions, a 'room of one's own,' are necessary to create art, Doroshow had no available resource, nor proper space to call her own, that might have facilitated the publishing of her life story. On the contrary, vacillating from an abusive father's home, through periods of homelessness, and finally jailed within a men's prison cell as a trans woman, the spaces imposed upon Doroshow are always the spaces of confinement, erasure, and humiliation. Abjected, Doroshow's voice haunts the reader from outside the borders that limn 'proper' society and subjecthood. And yet, she did publish her story in 2012 as *Cooking in Heels: A Memoir Cookbook*, a project that had begun on scraps of paper while incarcerated on charges of prostitution and was finally dictated to another sex worker who typed the manuscript. Combining recipes with biography and self-narrative, the incorporation of elements of various genres in *Cooking in Heels* is part of the project of 'making do.' Both the history of the cookbook's production, as well as its thematic content, are stories of survival, attesting to an ongoing struggle to thrive within a hostile environment in which the other can be a source of strength and sustenance, but also of injury, shame, and violation. Through interpersonal and experimental acts—cooking, autobiographical writing, and transgender transitioning—the autobiographical "I," author, and cook must make do with limited resources, and creatively transform these into physical and psychical nourishment that, when shared, become healing gestures for self and other.

The form of the narrative chapter which prefaces the cookbook will not be unrecognisable to the reader working within the framework of western categories of autobiography. As the title of the narrative chapter which prefaces the cookbook—"Through the Kitchen and Beyond: How I Got Here"—suggests, this is a narrative of development that retraces the path from where 'I' came from to where 'I' am now, a story of becoming both a woman and a writer. In this light, it may be read as a variation of the autobiographical *Künstlerroman*, in which the narrative 'I,' having moved beyond antagonistic or inhibitive beginnings, and through the help of teachers or mentors, realises her individual potential and autonomy as an adult and writer. However, I argue that Doroshow's life writing disrupts such concepts as the 'individual,' 'potential' and 'autonomy,' for reasons that I will develop in the reading that follows. Moreover, far from a sentimental reflection on the protagonist's happy social integration, the arrival of the narrative 'I' into the public domain takes the form of first homelessness and finally incarceration, literal ejections from the limits of society.

This is why I read Doroshow's story as the rewriting of the history of an abject body, a figure whose presence inside threatens to collapse identity, order, and systems of meaning altogether, and therefore is continually expelled outside, beyond the borders (Kristeva 1-2). Doroshow's self-writing disturbs master narratives of sex, work, and race, and undermines official ways of remembering by proposing alternate memories than those recorded in the media coverage of her arrest. In what ways are different conceptions of the body, vulnerability, and agency called upon in Doroshow's culinary memoirs than those formulated within the life writing of sex workers who may espouse more liberal discourses of bodily autonomy? For whereas, as Anna Szörényi has rightly pointed out, sex workers have found themselves compelled to draw up a concept of the body that stresses liberal ideologies of free will and the right to choose, in order to counter the normative female body constructed within abolitionist feminist discourse (a body that, for instance, forever loses its selfhood once penetrated)[1], I argue that Doroshow's life writing suggests an ethics that stresses both the body's vulnerability and mutual interdependence with the other *without* erasing all notions of agency or of the body's potential for resistance.

Homelessness

A trans child growing up within a heteropatriarchal familial economy, the autobiographical 'I' must find ways to survive *within the body*, whose surface is experienced as ill-fitting and foreign, but also carve out places in which the body can survive *in space*. In the context of this ongoing struggle, the privileged place of the autobiographical subject's childhood is the kitchen, one of the only rooms within the walls of the home where the body can move in ways that are culturally coded as feminine, therefore prohibited to the protagonist's sexed body, read as male. Where the body's movements, behaviors, and capacity for meaningful transformation are inhibited, the kitchen provides both limited free play in the form of cooking, as well as limited refuge from the verbal injury and physical violence with which the father enforces the sexual order. The kitchen is a place where rules inhibiting creativity are momentarily suspended: seeing Julia Childs on television, the protagonist goes to the store and purchases tripe to make a soup even though she had never tasted it before, simply because "I just liked the texture and what it looked like, so I brought it home to try it" (Doroshow par. 2). Still, the word *limited* must be stressed in both of these instances, as the kitchen, despite offering relative physical shelter due to the father's reluctance to enter this

'feminine' space, never escapes the patriarchal home and as such, never fully escapes the father's repressive authority. For instance, although the autobiographical 'I' recounts that the kitchen "was my little island where my brother didn't go, where my father was conflicted about going," she reminds the reader that it remains nonetheless "the place where I got my beatings, because my dad really hated the young lady I was becoming" (Doroshow par. 8). Thus, having no proper space of her own, the modes of resistance adopted by the autobiographical subject must take the form of the everyday and opportunistic, or what Michel de Certeau has called the "tactic": strategies of resistance that "must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power…and within enemy territory" (De Certeau 36).

As is remembered by the autobiographical 'I,' the kitchen is an ambiguous space within feminist imaginaries and for women more generally. A symbol of domesticity and women's subjugation to men within patriarchal cultures, the 'private' kitchen is traditionally a place of female confinement away from the 'public' masculine sphere. And yet, where it is a female-only space (note that in Doroshow's text, the kitchen is "where my father was conflicted about going," for fear, it is implied, of its supposedly feminine energy), the kitchen also potentially provides a base for plotting and resistance: for if the master's food is prepared and served in the kitchen, that food can also be poisoned. This is a strategy that the autobiographical 'I,' we will see, metaphorically takes advantage of. While some have imagined the kitchen as a place where class and racial oppressions between women are undermined, momentarily suspended in egalitarian, convivial sorority (Leonardi 342), it is probably more accurate to read the kitchen symbolically as a space where racial and class dominations are particularly played out: in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century wealthy American family home especially, the kitchen is not the privileged space of the white bourgeois or gentile woman, but of the Black female 'help' working under her employment (or, just a few generations preceding, enslaved by her). Still, the intersecting oppressions that are often made more evident or visible within the kitchen never fully extinguish the kitchen's possibilities for dreaming and quietly advancing feminist struggle, particularly when those women have no other space proper to them, as is often the experience of poor women and women of colour. Hence Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga write of the kitchen in *This Bridge Called My Back*:

> We turn to each other to make family and even there, after the exhilaration of our first discovery of each other subsides, we are forced to confront our own lack of resources as Third World women

> living in the U.S. Without money, without institutions, without one community center to call our own we so often never get as far as dreamed while plotting in our kitchens. (106)

More often than not, dreams that began in the kitchen go unrealised. Even so, "never" is qualified, allowing the possibility for slippage and excess, for cracks in the surface of the order of things, that allow for small or fleeting wins within the enemy's territory. Indeed, it is because of such a fissure in the dominant order that the protagonist comes to learn how to cook in a household where such activities are normally prohibited to 'boys.' She gleans culinary knowledge secretly by observing her grandfather, a restaurant chef: "[My grandfather] would take me to the Copacabana, where he was one of their head chefs, and I would just try to stay out of the way and watch him…Without a formal culinary education, I learned how to cook just from watching him" (Doroshow par. 1). The narrator's grandfather is uniquely allowed to prepare food at home with his masculinity intact, because his activity is associated with the (masculine) professional sphere and not (feminine) domesticity. This is unlike the parents' home, where the narrating 'I' is not allowed to cook "because they saw me as a boy and wanted me to play that role" (Doroshow par. 2). The arbitrariness of the laws of sex and gender—exemplified by the grandfather's exceptional freedom to enter the kitchen at will, although his body is coded as masculine– performatively reveal these laws' fragility. This vulnerability in the structuring of power is seized by the narrating subject as an opportunity to learn to cook – that is, to access at once a form of female-coded embodiment, as well as a means of creative expression, where both of these are elsewhere forbidden.

Indeed, as a creative and social activity, cooking echoes the practices of life writing and transgender transitioning: all of these acts make do, in a sense, with given material, transforming them and giving them new meaning. One such transition/transformation takes place at the grandparents' house, where, for the first time, an alteration is made in the surface of the textual body, reinscribing its symbolic and social signification before the reader. "I would take clay and make long fingernails for myself, and I would lie in the backyard in beach chairs and watch the trees and imagine a peaceful future" (Doroshow par. 10). Before, the autobiographical subject's childhood was summarised as inarticulability—as the narrator tells it, "I didn't know how to talk about who I was" (Doroshow par. 3). As the body finds increasing ways of speaking itself, whether in the form of clay fingernails or paper onto which the self-story is transcribed upon, not only do different futures become possible ("I would lie in the backyard in beach chairs and watch the trees and imagine

a peaceful future"), but the meaning of childhood itself is reinscribed *as* the imagining of new and different ways of being in the world. "This was a beautiful thing for me," the narrating 'I' continues. "This was what I thought childhood was supposed to be about" (Doroshow par. 10). If it can be said that childhood is heteronormatively defined in terms of potentiality, forward trajectory, and reproductive futurity, here, "future" is less about looking forwards as it is inseparable from a *looking backwards*, or the understanding of the body's history in relationship to dynamics of power.

Cooking, writing, and transitioning are not the individual projects of a self-knowing subject and 'his' capabilities, as in the traditional *Bildungsroman*, but rather, practices of necessary precariousness that depend on an empathetic listener to the self-story as it unfolds. This empathetic listener is found in the grandmother. Significantly, the grandmother, like the protagonist herself, ultimately falls under the authority of the patriarch; where his rule is characterised by force, she cannot use force to make her son love and accept her grandchild. In opposition to the father's use of violence, resistance takes the form of listening, understanding, invitation and solidarity, as exemplified by the grandmother's modes of sociality. "My grandmother understood what was happening to me," the narrating 'I' recounts, "and she tried in her way to give me support and encouragement. She would invite me to her house and into her kitchen, and she would often come to our house to check on me, and to let my father know she was watching" (Doroshow par. 6). This ethics of generous listening is echoed in the autobiographical act itself, where a sympathetic reader to the story being narrated is presumed.[2] In Doroshow's autobiographical project, in particular, this sympathetic listener is not only found in an imagined, anonymous reading public, but in face-to-face encounter: "Through the Kitchen and Beyond" was dictated orally to Audacia Ray, a former sex worker, who typed the manuscript.

While the grandmother-granddaughter resistance will not overturn the heteropatriarchal order of the household, it does unsettle somewhat the organisation of power within the household, securing the autobiographical subject a little more possibility to understand herself and her relationship to others, and to dream of different possible futures. As the protagonist's parents' fighting worsens, her mother finally separates from her husband, leaving the narrator and her brother indefinitely alone and without protection from the abusive father. One day, as the young protagonist returns home from school, her grandmother proposes that her granddaughter make dinner for the family. Thrilled at this idea, the protagonist precipitates to the grocery store to purchase the ingredients for a quiche, while the father remains ignorant of the

grandmother's plan. As dinner is being prepared, he smells the air and turns mistakenly to the grandmother to thank her for the meal, lamenting the loss of homecooked food since the departure of the mother. Thinking that the grandmother has prepared the meal, the father is deceived into eating the loathed effect of his 'son's' apparent femininity.

"My grandmother," the narrator relates, "didn't say anything. My father sat down, he tasted it, and he ate, like, half the pie" (Doroshow par. 6). In a tableau resembling the final scene of *Titus Andronicus*, in which Queen Tamora is deceived into eating a pie made from her sons' flesh, the father is tricked into re-ingesting the expelled product of his child and her 'malformation.' This act subsequently turns processes of abjection inside-out.

> And then my grandmother, grinning, said, 'Your child made that.' He looked like he didn't believe her, and said to me, 'You really made this?' and I said 'Yeah,' in a quiet voice. And I could see the anger. He swelled up because he was mad and confused and maybe a little grateful, like 'Oh my god, *it* was in the kitchen, but oh my god, this tastes really good!' And my grandmother, the look on her face was pride, like she was so happy to stick it to my father in that way. (Doroshow par. 7, emphasis added)

The abject, we recall, is that which is ejected from beyond the border of the body—associated with feces, tears, sweat, menstrual blood—so that the subject may illusorily constitute itself as such, and rigidly recast the borders separating inside and outside. The "son"—whom the narrating "I" imagines the father sees as an "it," not only deprived of the quality of male or female, but of her very humanness —embodies that against which the father negatively constitutes his selfhood: in rejecting his child through injurious speech, as we have seen, the father ejects the parts of himself that he wishes to annihilate. Tricked into re-ingesting the expulsed object, the father becomes, as Kristeva has put it, "literally beside himself" (from the French "*hors de lui*"). [3] Outside/beside: the reincorporation of the abject signifies a collapse of borders, suggesting the subject's death, and shattering the father's sense of self, that which he has until now constituted through exclusion and violence. With this collapse the body "swells up," a symptom of anger, but also an evocation of auto-destruction—or, perhaps, of pregnancy. The abject nourishes in the father the archaic horror of childbirth, that "immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be" (Kristeva 10), and as it is often read of Tamora of *Titus Andronicus*, the "womb" becomes a tomb.

Finally, ingestion, like mutual looking, is also an act of intimacy, of physical and affective proximity, even evoking the coital act ("intimacy" is also

a euphemism for sexual intercourse). Indeed, what is perhaps most unbearable to the father, is the confusion between pleasure and disgust in being penetrated by the abject. If the sign of his child's femininity – a femininity that is perhaps above all feared by the father because it would connotate, within a heterosexual symbolic order, a latent homosexuality – is abhorred and disgusted, it also "fascinates desire"; it brings the subject dangerously close to those suppressed and expulsed elements that the father has denied in order to create his own myth of unified selfhood, of impenetrable interiority. This scene of intimacy—which is also the the narrating subject's most direct communication to her father of her identification with the female sex—echoes another tableau that had occurred previously in the narrative. Made to undress in the boys' locker room, the autobiographical 'I' is trapped repetitively in a situation of both forced exposure and forced looking.

> I was late every day to team practices because I was waiting for every boy to get out of the locker room. I felt out of place and I felt wrong for looking–not because I knew I was attracted to men, but because of the shame I felt as a little girl being confronted with something she doesn't understand. I felt damaged from being forced into these situations, like my eyes were burning. (Doroshow par. 3)

Importantly, this passage is the first rendering explicit of the sex of the autobiographical 'I'—that is, the first time that she names herself as a "girl"—making it, like the pie scene, at once a significant narrative 'transition' and a scene of intimacy. Here both the naked body and the face are uncovered, rendering the autobiographical narrator intensely vulnerable to the gaze of the other. But besides being subjected to the other's looking, the narrating 'I' is moreover forced to gaze into the eyes of the other, generating mutual looking or "interocular intimacy," an experience that Silvan Tomkins has said is more intimate than sexual intercourse in itself.[4] Such a breaking open in the circuit of affects represents a scary porousness of the boundary between self and other—all the more so as this opening is unwanted—which may be why that corporeal boundary is so rigidly re-drawn here in the text. Naming herself for the first time in the narrative as a "girl," sexual difference is branded onto the textual body (the eyes were "burning"). Shame, then, locates and materialises sex not primarily in the genitals, but in the face and more specifically the eyes, the bodily site where selfhood is most visible and emblematised. It is then not surprising that, in a more radical version of the lowering of the gaze or the head, the body makes itself entirely absent in reaction to shame. The autobiographical subject must erase herself out of the scene, abject herself, in order to prevent losing herself completely under the alienating gaze of the

other. Yet it is from beyond these borders that the subject begins to find new ways of speaking itself, of partially repairing the felt disaccord between body and sense of self, allowing the subject to raise the head and return the other's gaze.

The intense corporeal shame felt in the locker room contrasts with the triumphant pride shared between grandmother and granddaughter as the father is beaten at his own game. Emblematised in the narrator's gratified voice and the image of the grandmother's grin, pride proves to be, like shame, an affect transformative of selfhood and re-inscriptive of social bonds. Significantly, however, the patriarch is not conquered as a result of this scheme. The relations of power have been exposed and momentarily disrupted, but the father's authority is not relinquished, nor has he accepted his child's identification with the female sex. Perhaps the real force of this dialectical movement comes from the solidification of sex-identity that it fosters for the narrating "I," and the development of the relationship between grandmother and granddaughter that occurs as a result. As a consequence of this alliance, previously impossible wins are realised, though perhaps not in the expected way. Although the pie scheme does not change the father's feelings about his child, it does make him realise that he may prefer to tolerate her time spent in the kitchen, since it results in the home-cooked meals that have been missing in the absence of Doroshow's mother. "Once my father found out I could cook, things changed a little. It was no longer, 'Go get Chinese food.' It was, 'Go to the supermarket.' But he still let me know every day that he was mad about me being in the kitchen" (par. 8) In this way, although the reader is reminded that the quotidian hierarchal structure of the household is preserved ("But he still let me know every day that he was mad…"), the protagonist, having been aided by her grandmother, wins a little more freedom of movement within the heteropatriarchal economy; or, a space just safe enough to allow for the continuing of the dreaming of other possible futures that had begun at the grandparents' home. "Being in the kitchen," the narrator writes, "and being the person who controlled all the meals gave me some safety in the house, but it also made me think more and more about escape" (par. 9).

This early knowledge of the importance of mutual support and the ethics of empathy is crucial to the narrating "I"'s development, as she learns that, if solidarity and acceptance are not to be found within the patriarchal family context, alternative kinship networks can be created elsewhere. She begins working at a cabaret lounge, where she meets other trans women, a key experience in securing her physical and psychical survival. "Since then," she writes, "I have grown family where it needed to grow…Meeting just one person

like you, one person who says, 'I survived, you can too,' changes everything." (par. 24). This emphasis on the practice of telling and listening is made more apparent in the entwining of recipes with narrative prose. Following "Through the Kitchen and Beyond: How I Got Here," the cookbook proper begins, with each recipe named for a person of significance in Doroshow's life. These recipes are sometimes prefaced with a short biographical excerpt about that person, and how they have been a source of inspiration or support for the author. Like the self-story, recipes are offered as a gift, as a means of interweaving lives with the thread of narrative.

From the kitchen to sex work: ambiguous feminist imaginaries

We have seen that in her early family life, the autobiographical "I" experiences the sensation of being "out of place," lacking a sense of home both of and within the body. As she enters adolescence and early adulthood, this metaphoric homelessness is literalised when she leaves her violent father's home and begins "operating from pillar to post" (par. 15)—sleeping in trains, abandoned houses, and public parks. But if the autobiographical subject of Doroshow's childhood is out of *place*, she is also out of *time*—that is, outside of the temporal rhythms that constitute and give structure to normative daily life. Shifting the analysis from the transitioning body to the sexually labouring body, I will now look at the temporalities of *Cooking in Heels*. Through "forging—in the sense of both making and counterfeiting —history differently" by rewriting the story of her arrest and imprisonment, I argue that the text proposes what Elizabeth Freeman has called a "counterpolitics of encounter," where the undoing of time allows for bodies to meet in unexpected ways (Freeman *xi*).

Where her peers' bodies are regulated according to the temporal order of the school day, the days of the adolescent autobiographical subject are set to irregular vacillating, a "coming and going at my parents' and my grandparents' homes a lot…sometimes going to school but not being able to learn," because of her deteriorating family and home life. Where normative middle-class adolescence is characterised by a direct trajectory from education leading to salaried work, the narrator describes this period of her life in terms of nonlinearity—"it was kind of a jagged process," a period that ends with homelessness rather than social integration. When she cannot find refuge elsewhere, the narrating 'I' sleeps in trains, disappearing into a placeless-ness of transition: "We would maybe have a couple of dollars among us and I would buy junk food and we'd ride the train until morning" (Doroshow par. 15). Without a legible future, and still unsure how to narrate

the past, the autobiographical subject is lost in a recursive loop of the present, facilitated by drug use:

> I started doing drugs, to make the days pass more easily and to dull some of the pain of what I was going through—having been rejected by my parents, not able to stay in school, facing violence, and not knowing what kind of future I was going to have. (par. 16)

Assignment to a men's homeless shelter as a trans woman brings this period of vacillation to a crisis, and it culminates in an attack threatening her life. At the encouragement of a mentor, the protagonist circles back to her abandoned education and earns a bachelor's degree, finally finding work as an institutional aide. In the scheme of traditional autobiographical *Bildungsroman*, this might have been the place where the narrative ends: having overcome trials and finally integrated into the public sphere, the narrating 'I' may happily reminisce on the journey that brought her here. Integration into the productive sphere after a period of training or education moreover satisfies neoliberal timelines and discourses of work ethic and self-made success. Doroshow's story, however, does not end in this expected way. Despite the capitalist promise of finding personal fulfillment through linear social ascension and work, she finds herself stretched too thin.

> I gave my clients my all, so much so that it was killing me. My phone rang at all hours of the night, women calling who were in desperate situations and didn't have anywhere else to turn. I made myself sick trying to be there for them, and I was so tired, so burnt out, and so sick that I could no longer work. . . .I had to walk away, because after years of being the caretaker for so many other people, I needed to take care of myself. (par. 23, ellipsis added)

She finds herself trapped now in another kind of recursive present, this time characterised by an exhausting and never-ending state of being 'on call.' While cultural myths of equality and citizenship have been exposed all along Doroshow's life story, this variation from the bourgeois *Bildungsroman* further reveals the illusion of the "American Dream" narrative. Although the autobiographical 'I' had "wanted to make life better for other people" when seeking work as an aide (par. 21), the endless exploitation of her time drains her of the physical and psychical resources necessary to be present for anyone at all.

Seeking a place of recovery, as the kitchen had been in adolescence, the autobiographical "I" turns to sex work. This is not because she presumes that sex work is less burdensome on the psyche and body than other forms of labour. The choice is strategical and carefully weighed against limited options:

sex work promises more return *per-hour* than any other form of labour to a subject who had previously been subjected to profiling and discrimination when seeking employment. In short, what the autobiographical "I" hopes to gain by engaging in sexual labour is less about material gain in itself, but rather, about economic autonomy and precious time:

> I decided to work a little bit as an escort. That way, I could make money to get myself back on my feet, while also being able to spend time resting at home. . .when I just didn't have the energy I didn't have to work (par. 24).

Sex work thus signifies a bid to maximise autonomy and personal freedom through a higher return of 'off the clock' time. Like the kitchen, sex work is an ambiguous space for women and within feminist discourse. On one hand, prostitution is a place where women's economic and sexual subjugation to men, as well as the global dispossession of their resources within capitalism play out with particular saliency (this is not unlike the sphere of heterosexual marriage, nor that of domestic and care work, and other traditionally female forms of labour). Also like the kitchen, this is a space where racial and class oppressions are made especially visible[5]—not to mention a place where deadly, transphobic violence is all-too-frequently present. On the other hand, sex work has been reclaimed by some feminists as a means for women to reappropriate the remuneration—traditionally passed between the hands of a husband, father, other male relative, or pimp—exchanged for the right of access to their sexual and reproductive bodies; to become the subjects, rather than the objects of this transaction, in the Lévi-Straussian schema of heteropatriarchal marriage (Tabet).[6] As within feminist discourse, so too is this space ambiguous within the text. While the kitchen figured as a refuge of sorts, while remaining subject to the heteropatriarchal order, sex work provides a parallel retreat from the constraints of neoliberal temporality, while nonetheless remaining subject to overarching dynamics of power. Where the kitchen was at once a space of increased agency *and* a place of subjection to the father, sex work similarly increases the narrator's agency while also exposing her to other forms of masculinist repression—namely, those of criminal justice structures.

Where the trajectory of the adolescent transgender body culminates with homelessness, the trajectory of the sexually labouring body culminates in prison. Both homelessness and prison exist outside of dominant spatial and temporal arrangements. But life writing allows the autobiographical subject to rescript these trajectories, and to provide an alternative account of her arrest than that given in official ways of remembering, such as those given in the local

newspapers. Indeed, the dominant accounts of Doroshow's arrest, retold in *Cooking in Heels*, demonstrate that these official accounts work to secure the illusion of integrity of the social body at the expense and exclusion of the abject body. The narrator reminds the reader that prostitution is a misdemeanor in New York, and that first-time offenses are rarely punished with jail time. "But *because my case was so visible* –" Doroshow writes, "besides being in the paper, it was reported as being part of a series of prostitution busts in the area – the judge decided to make an example of me, and he sent me to prison" (par. 27, emphasis added). Sting arrests punish by way of humiliation and therefore always require a view or theatricalisation of the scene before some other. But Doroshow in particular is abjected from the 'clean and proper' social realm and into prison, not because she has broken the law by selling her time in the form of prostitution, as implied by her conviction, but rather because of how her body appears in the public space—or indeed, because it appeared there at all. Photographs stolen from Doroshow's escorting ad are recirculated in the news, calling the incident a "transsexual sex romp," seeming to imply that the trans body can only ever be 'read' in a sexualised manner. The highly visible circulation of the story of Doroshow's arrest moreover bolsters the state's illusion of timelessness, power, and invulnerability. As suggested by its "being part of a series of prostitution busts in the area," in this narrative, it is through the ongoing abjection of the Black, transgender 'whore' that the police appear dramatically as ever-present, law-enforcing heroes. [7] The display of Doroshow's trial and arrest is, like the locker room, a profound exposure, an intense experience of humiliation, and a stripping away of her of safety: the papers, the narrator tells us, printed "a maps of the neighborhood with a star over my house. They even printed my exact address, so suddenly I wasn't at all safe" (par. 26).

The process of abjection is radically completed in the ordering of the sentence to be carried out in a men's prison, in a nightmarish revisit of that childhood shame and humiliation in the boy's locker room. The prison is an inversion of all of those qualities that the autobiographical 'I' had been seeking in spaces throughout the story of her life: safety from bodily harm, creative freedom, autonomy and agency, the ability to transform the lives of others, and recognition as a human being. Prison is the climax of the narrative of Doroshow's arrest that circulated in the news. For the autobiographical subject, however, the memory of prison is reclaimed as a beginning of a story, rather than its end.

Living socially

Judith Butler's notions of "precariousness" and "grievable life" can be useful in reading the textual body of Doroshow's life writing. In *The Frames of War*, Judith Butler has analyzed the cultural buttresses of some violent forms of coercive power "as attempting to maximize precariousness for others while minimizing precariousness for the power in question." For Butler, this unequal precariousness is "at once a material and a perceptual issue": increased precariousness at the material level might signify physical harm, incarceration, or even death, while increased precariousness at the perceptual level involves failing to regard some lives as valuable, or "grievable." The material and perceptual qualities of power and precariousness are always unfolding simultaneously, Butler reminds us, and the failure to consider the "grievability" of certain lives enables their destruction (Butler 25). In the official accounts of Doroshow's arrest, she is interpellated precisely as "un-grievable"—as the monstrous and abject—while the state is constructed as an invulnerable panopticon.

Doroshow's life narrative, on the other hand, emphasises the necessary precariousness of the body and of life, not as a pretext for oppressive vicissitudes of power, as in state-sanctioned ways of remembering, but as a necessary quality of living socially. This vulnerability to others is emphasised through repetitive imagery of crying and hopelessness—"I couldn't believe [the sentence]…I just cried and cried. I couldn't stop crying. I felt so low…[in prison] I was surrounded by men. There were big men, murderers, violent offenders everywhere, and then girly, crying me" (Doroshow par. 28). But if the sharing of the public space is the context that enables the autobiographical subject's arrest (her body was too visible there), the social bonds that had been made in shared spaces are what enable her survival despite imprisonment. The inmate in the cell next to hers happens to be Drew, the nephew of a man whose son the protagonist had cared for, who knows of her culinary reputation. Through her connection with Drew, the repetitive nature of prison life, in which each day is reproduced without divergence – here signified by endless crying – is broken. "And then he said, kind of shyly, through my crying (which at this point had been going on for a few days), 'Um, you know the food in here is horrible. What can we do to fix up jail food?'" (par. 30). While the father, the state, and the media have all reflected the image of the autobiographical 'I' as an "*it*"—or a *what*—Drew's seemingly banal question signifies the recognition of the protagonist as a human person with a unique, narratable history. In other words, he recognises her not as a *what* but as a *who*: Drew

knows, from her connection to his uncle, that Doroshow likes to cook. Adriana Caverero, drawing upon the work of Hannah Arendt, identifies this attention to the *who* rather than the *what* as politically valuable. Paul A. Kottman writes in his introduction to *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood* (2000):

> If one understands "politics" in Arendt's sense, argues Caverero – that is, as a "plural and interactive space of exhibition" – then the scene of narration, of telling each other life-stories, takes on the character of political action. Moreover, through such a suspension of the disjunction between discourse and life, it becomes possible to imagine a relational politics that is attentive to *who* one is, rather than to *what* one is. (Kottman xxiii)

Drew's question effectively transforms both the protagonist and her relationship with the other inmates. "I knew I could turn small things into miracles. I started out by telling the other inmates, 'OK, if you mix this with this and this and this, it will taste so much better'" (Doroshow par. 31). She begins writing down recipes, which fills her mind with something "besides terror and starvation and sadness." The writing of recipes turns almost simultaneously to writing autobiographically, though not with the retrospection that classically defines autobiography, [8] but rather as a synchronic capturing of the life story as it unfolds.

> I suddenly became very interested in writing – I really wanted to write down everything that was going on. So I started writing the recipes down on scraps of paper – paper bags, toilet paper, magazines. And I started discussing the food with the men near my cell. It was like a fantasy, everyone all talking about the things they wanted to eat, if they could have anything. We talked about our favorite dishes, the things our mothers and grandmothers had made us when we were little, favorite meals we shared with friends. (par. 32)

The sharing of recipes and the telling of one's life story become coinciding gifts that enable the subject's survival through its dependency on the listening other, rather than her exclusion. *Who* someone is, following Caverero, is inevitably bound up in the self's relation to others—not in the other's exclusion, as in the selfhood-constituting practices demonstrated by Dorsohow's father, whose subjecthood is secured through abjection. The autobiographical subject's cooking and writing insist upon the necessity of the other, not only as the generous listener to one's life story, but as an other narratable self to listen to in turn, as demonstrated here by the sharing of interconnected recipes and life stories with the men in prison. In the final lines of "Through the Kitchen and Beyond," as Doroshow is released from prison, she holds hands with her cellmate through the bars and makes a promise to keep writing. The answer

to the problem posed by the autobiographical 'I' at the beginning of the narrative— "I didn't know how to talk about who I was" (par. 3)—is ultimately found, not in the interiority of a self-knowing subject, but in the mouths and ears of others.

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[1] For an analysis of the body as it is constructed within abolitionist and sex worker rights discourses, see Szôrényi, Anna. "Rethinking the Boundaries: Towards a Butlerian Ethics of Vulnerability in Sex Trafficking Debates." *Feminist Review* 107 (2014): 20–36.

[2] See Adamson, Joseph, and Hilary Clark, editors. *Scenes of Shame: Psychoanalysis, Shame, and Writing*. State University of New York Press, 1999. "The writer seeks some degree of display, even when she is in hiding, and must be able to trust in an audience, in the willingness of others to see her as she is without undue fear of overexposure or invasion or rejection" (28).

[3] To revisit that passage: "There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark revolts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated. It beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire, which, nevertheless, does not let itself be seduced. Apprehensive, desire turns aside; sickened, it rejects…Unflaggingly, like an inescapable boomerang, a vortex of summons and repulsion places the one haunted by it literally beside himself…The abject has only one quality of the object—that of being opposed to I" (Kristeva 1).

[4] Tomkins writes that "intimacy is in fact greater in interocular experience than in sexual intercourse *per se*." He also disagrees with psychoanalysis' emphasis on the witnessing of the primal scene as the first and most significant contribution to the taboo on looking, but rather attributes this taboo to cultural injunctions on "direct…expression and communication of affect," which he maintains exist to some degree in every culture (Frank and Sedgwick 144).

[5] For analyses of the specificities of race and racism within the sex trade, one might begin with, for example: Aarens, Blake, et al. "Showing Up Fully: Women of Color Discuss Sex Work." *Whores and Other Feminists*, edited by Jill Nagle, Routledge, 1997; Kempadoo, Kamala, and Jo Doezema. *Global Sex Workers: Rights, Resistance, and Redefinition*. Routledge, 1998; or Brooks, Siobhan. *Unequal Desires: Race and Erotic Capital in Exotic Dance*. Suny Press, 2010.

[6] Here I will recommend just a few texts concerning specifically the relationship between sex work, feminism, and capitalism. First, Morgane Merteuil's "Le travail du sexe contre le travail" examines the notion of "sex work" from a Marxist perspective, arguing that the conceptualisation of prostitution as *work* makes visible the interrelatedness of the exploitation of women's sexual and domestic labour, especially that of women of colour and "Third World" women (Merteuil). Second, in the final chapter of her book *Le grand théâtre du genre* (2013), "Le Legs de Roxane," Anne Emmanuelle Berger takes the *myth or fantasy* of the "sex worker"—specifically as this myth figures within feminist discourse—as a point of departure for her discussion on the intertwined relationship between liberal ideology and contemporary feminism(s) (Berger). Third and finally, Paola Tabet's sociological study of sexual labour *La Grand Arnaque : Sexualité Des Femmes et Échange Économico-Sexuel* seeks to elucidate the dynamics of power present in the global continuum of what she calls "economico-sexual exchanges." Tabet's study notably asks, why do "economico-sexual exchanges" almost universally take the form of *female* sexual labor in exchange for *male* material compensation? (Tabet).

[7] See for example Peter K. Manning: "[R]ecent work on the police has presented rather convincing and consistent evidence of the inefficacy of police efforts to suppress or eradicate crime. It would appear that much of policing action is an attempt on the part of the police to dramatize certain of their actions and to conceal or make less than salient their other more frequent but less impressive activities" (Manning 487).
[8] Lejeune is classically invoked to circumscribe the limits of traditional "autobiography": "retrospective narrative in prose that someone makes of his own existence, when he places the main emphasis on his individual life, in particular on the history of his personality" (Lejeune 4).

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