

# The Cass Review and Gender Ahistoricism: Rewriting Trans Pasts to Attack Trans Futures

## Owen J Hurcum

is a PhD candidate in the Department of Archaeology at the University of York. Their research focuses on the ways archaeology propagates contemporary anti-trans politics

✉ [owen.hurcum@york.ac.uk](mailto:owen.hurcum@york.ac.uk)

## James Davison

has recently completed his PhD in the History Department at the University of Liverpool. His research focuses on identifying trans potentiality in mortuary archaeology and connecting it to contemporary trans identities.

## Robert Girling

recently completed his PhD at the University of Liverpool examining musical thinking in Coptic-language literature. His research considered themes of orthodoxy in the formation of early Christian, Gnostic, and Manichaean religious worldviews in late antiquity.

## Dulcie Newbury

recently completed her PhD at the University of Bradford. Dulcie's research explores gender, identity, and diversity in funerary archaeology. Her research focuses on how archaeology can contribute to contemporary discussions around LGBTQ+ identity, inclusion, and wellbeing.

## Ségdae Richardson-Read

has an MLitt in Viking Studies from the University of the Highlands and Islands where their project focused on themes of queerness with Old Norse mythology. They are currently a PhD candidate in the Institute for Irish Studies at the University of Liverpool, where they are examining text sources relating to the practice of *seiðr* and considering how this is a vehicle for queer identity and sexuality within Old Norse texts.

This article provides a critical appraisal of the Cass Review from a heritage position through the lenses of archaeology, heresiology, myth, and literature. The paper introduces the framework of gender ahistoricism, and the authors highlight instances of gender ahistoric revisionism within the Cass Review's final report. Further, they challenge these historical claims of gender through several case studies demonstrating a broader gender multiplicity than allowed for by the final report. This article, as well as furthering criticism of the Cass Review from these new heritage perspectives, also highlights the impact of gendered pasts

more broadly on the material conditions of contemporary trans lives. It underpins and furthers the efforts that must be taken to ensure heritage practices and frameworks become tools of use, rather than oppression, for trans communities.

**KEYWORDS** Cass Review; gender ahistoricism; archaeology; heresy; myth  
**DOI** [10.57814/6j28-nw14](https://doi.org/10.57814/6j28-nw14)  
**LICENSE** Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives ([by-nc-nd](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/))

In 2020 NHS England commissioned an independent review into the care provided for trans children and adolescent trans people considering a perceived significant<sup>1</sup> increase in referrals to their Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS), especially by those assigned female at birth (Cass 2024, 26).<sup>2</sup> Headed by Dr Hillary Cass, the “Cass Review” set out to make findings and provide recommendations in relation to 11 key areas. These notably included the prescription of puberty blockers by the NHS, and the reasons behind an apparent “increase [which] has disproportionately been of natal females” referring to GIDS (Cass 2024, Appendix 1). The Cass Review, which included seven systematic reviews conducted by authors affiliated to the University of York, published an interim report in 2022 before releasing the final report in April 2024.

Concerns about the Review’s rigour were first raised following the 2022 interim report. The interim report, published without peer-review, argued throughout that there was insufficient evidence about the benefits of puberty blocker prescriptions, instead presenting a narrative of their mental health benefits being solely “short-term” (Cass 2022, 10) and their use “controversial” in relation to the supposed “risk” of puberty blockers leading to “irreversible treatments” (Cass 2022, 28). This was criticised by Pang and colleagues (2022), who argued that the interim report failed to engage with any of the studies that demonstrated long-term mental health benefits when gender affirmative care was given to trans youth. Similar criticism about cherry-picking was again levelled at the interim report in March 2024 by Horton (2024), alongside voicing concern that the authors of the commissioned University of York systematic reviews lacked expertise in transgender related healthcare.

In April 2024 the final report was published. This echoed the interim report, arguing that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate the benefits of puberty blocker prescriptions to out-weigh what it saw as the harm of providing them, recommending instead that puberty blockers should only be made available through a clinical trial designed to bridge the supposed evidence gap (Cass 2024). Since publication, the final report has been cited as the exclusive justification for stopping puberty blocker prescriptions in the UK, both on the NHS and privately (Campbell 2024a; Kennedy 2025). As a direct result of the Cass Review and its recommendations, the UK subsequently introduced a permanent ban on the medication in December 2024 (Campbell 2024b; McCool 2024; Thomas 2024).

- 1 This supposed significant rise has been proven to be an incorrect reading of the referral data by both McNamara and colleagues (2024) and Grijseels (2026).
- 2 The names of all those involved have not been disclosed by the Review and references to the Review will therefore appear as (Cass 2024).

Moreover, the Review has had an impact beyond UK healthcare. The Cass Review was cited as evidence in favour of puberty blocker bans for trans youth during recent court cases in New Zealand (Ngā Kōti o Aotearoa Courts of New Zealand 2026) as well as the *United States v Skrametti* case in the state of Tennessee (Supreme Court of the United States 2025a). Despite becoming *the* go-to document for proponents of puberty blocker bans, and having so immediately impacted services in the UK, the Cass Review has been highly criticised by experts in transgender and adolescent health. Numerous academic reviews have been published, pre-papers shared, and rapid responses to the *British Medical Journal* sent. These collectively declared the Cass Review guilty of cherry-picking studies, manipulating key data, misusing participant quotes, inappropriate analytical methods, double standards, prejudice, failing to prove its own claims, having a high degree of bias, departing from scientific best practice, and being of poor scientific rigour throughout (Berner 2024; Grijseels 2026; Horton 2024; Horton and Pearce, 2024; Kohn, 2024; McNamara et al, 2024; Noone et al., 2024). Resultantly, the British Medical Association (BMA) passed a motion in July 2024 to “publically critique” the Review, calling for the implementation of its recommendations to be paused, and puberty blocker prescriptions reinstated, during its evaluation (BMA 2024). This has been subsequently ignored by the UK government.

Whilst reading the final report, it was noted by the authors of this article that alongside the concerns raised by healthcare professionals, the report was also reliant on a distortion of trans history at several key places in its foundational logic. Our criticism of the final report accompanies those from a healthcare perspective by critiquing the Review’s factual legitimacy from an archaeological, historical, and literary perspective, areas of the final report yet to face detailed scrutiny. Our paper will introduce and develop the concept of *gender ahistoricism*, using it to demonstrate why the Cass Review needed to fabricate an ahistoric account of trans history as part of the foundational logic for its analysis. Our article critiques the Review as a highly consequential example of the impact the ever growing (ab)use of heritage has against the material conditions of contemporary trans lives and equalities.

The paper begins with a discussion by Hurcum of gender ahistoricism. Our paper then continues with a series of interconnected segments wherein each co-author evaluates the Cass Review against our framework of gender ahistoricism in relation to their area of specialty. Newbury addresses the impact of gender histories on gender minority stress through the case study of *The Public Universal Friend*. Girling highlights the hallmarks of historical discussions of heresy apparent in the Review. Richardson-Read then discusses the Review as a gender myth and explores alternative stories of gender from Norse mythology. Lastly, Davison discusses burial evidence from two Anglo-Saxon graves which again run counter to the Review’s ahistorical assertions.

These applications together serve to clearly demonstrate the Cass Review’s use of gender ahistoricism to underpin its consequential assertions on contemporary trans healthcare, furthering the pre-existing critical scholarship of the Review from new disciplines. Moreover, each may individually serve as a possible trans inclusive approach that can be taken when studying the archaeological, historical, mythological, and literary record. These diverse approaches are then brought together in a conclusion written equally amongst all the authors that highlights the impact of trans exclusionary historical narratives on the material conditions of contemporary trans lives.

## DEFINING GENDER AHISTORICISM AND ITS FOUNDATIONAL USE WITHIN THE CASS REVIEW (HURCUM)

As Maude and Perisanidi (2024, 225) succinctly put it: “Trans history enjoys the luxury of disbelief.” This statement distils a sentiment which has long been echoed by others within trans history and archaeology (e.g., Everhart 2022; Hollimon 2009; Power 2020), where the claiming of the long dead as cisgendered is considered a fact *a priori*, whilst to suggest the possibility of trans people in the historical/archaeological record requires exceptional evidence. More than this, as Weismantel (2013, 320) contended, this assumption of cisness and denial of trans possibilities acts as “a form of structural violence perpetuated against people, past *and* present, who do not conform to contemporary norms of gender.” I have elsewhere argued further, asserting that this violence is the *raison d’être* for the obfuscation of trans history by means of exceptionalism or flat denialism, through what I termed “cis-supremacist pasts” (Hurcum 2025).

In this section, I shall begin by defining the through-line which holds our individual analyses in this paper together: the framework we have termed *gender ahistoricism*. It was felt during our examination of the final report that pre-existing analytical frameworks didn’t fully fit the type of historical revisionism the Review espoused when mentioning trans history. Cisnormative histories require the disregarding of trans possibilities through assumptions of a universal historic “cisness,” or by requiring exceptional evidence to deviate from such an attribution (Walley 2021; Weismantel 2013). Cis-supremacist pasts are more calculated, wherein individuals or organisations deliberately erase “trans identities from sanctioned historical narratives” for the explicit purpose of politically dominating contemporary trans people (Hurcum 2025, 177). The Cass Review was more subtle than flat denialism or wholesale erasure when it came to trans history. Namely, it didn’t completely deny, erase, or obstruct the entirety of trans history when such history was briefly mentioned. However, on the two occasions trans history was consequentially cited by Cass (2024, 26, 118), the final report brazenly rewrote trans history on a massive scale. Therefore, as we will show throughout this paper, whilst the revisionism may have leaned into cisnormative histories, erased identities, and had the same calculated goal as cis-supremacist pasts, the revisionism itself was conducted differently—through what we consider acts of “gender ahistoricism.”

We came to the term gender ahistoricism as a simple descriptor for the claim repeated on pages 26 and 118 of the final report. Immediately after declaring that referrals to GIDS have switched to be predominantly those assigned female at birth, the Review argues that “[t]he current profile of transgender presentations is unlike that in any prior historical period” (Cass 2024, 118). At no point does the final report discuss historic periods or the demographics of trans people throughout history, nor does it cite academic literature on this topic. Its own data set of referrals only goes back to 2009—hardly all historic periods. Nonetheless, the uncited and somewhat nebulous comment is stated as a foundational fact to keep in mind when understanding the Review’s arguments. This is a clear example of gender ahistoricism, not least because it goes uncited, but primarily for rewriting trans history to declare that gender has universally been a strict binary, that it is those assigned male at birth who predominated the trans community, and that even at less than 1% of the population we are now more populous than in any prior period. The immediate question now becomes why? *Why rewrite trans history in this way?*

The answer to this question is explored by each contributing author in relation to their specialism during their sections. I, myself, contend that the *why* relates to the Cass Review being an example of “transgender trend” scholarship.

“Transgender trend” ideology supposes that people transition because of a social contagion pathologized under the name of Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria (ROGD; see Littman 2018). This pathology claims exposure to any trans people will cause children, in particular young girls, to “become trans.” The concept of ROGD as a real pathology has been heavily refuted by the trans community and peer-reviewed publications alike. Indeed, the only academic paper proposing ROGD, Littman (2018), was heavily criticised for its methodology and described as fundamentally flawed from the outset (e.g., Restar 2020). Moreover, ROGD has been further condemned as being nothing more than “a barren empirical wasteland... attempt[ing] to mobilise scientific language to circumvent mounting evidence in favour of gender affirmation” (Ashley 2020, 792).

Another key element of the transgender trend myth relates to who it proposes as the predominant “victims”—these being primarily young girls (e.g., Shrier 2020). Whilst the Cass Review never directly identifies itself as being “transgender trend” scholarship, its contents betray this intent. It declares throughout that there has been an “exponential” increase in young people, specifically people assigned female at birth, seeking gender transition services. Notably, however, this is a complete misrepresentation of its own data, which instead shows a steady increase in referrals between 2010 and 2018 where they then plateau (Grijseels 2026, 279; McNamara et al. 2024, 17). However, even running with the myth that referrals have exponentially increased, the final report again makes a further questionable statement about its data: said referrals exceed what one would expect from the “normal evolution of acceptance for a minority group” (Cass 2024, 26). What such a “normal evolution” is, and how the Review would expect one to present in its data, is left undefined. The purpose of these statements in the final report is not to be ones of concrete fact, clearly, but to suggest to the reader that acceptance could not have caused referrals to increase—despite this being the view of experts in the field (McNamara et al. 2024).

The final report’s gender ahistoricism serves the same purpose. By claiming historic trans people were always a certain way (predominantly male at birth), but that contemporary trans people are now a different way (predominantly female at birth), Cass evokes what Van Leeuwen (2007) calls the “authority of tradition.” In effect, the Review uses gender ahistoricism in conjunction with its questionable data to differentiate us from trans history and declare us something altogether different. *The trans community is no longer what it has always been, therefore some new “transgender trend” must be responsible for that change.* This then lays the groundwork for the Review to postulate on any number of “other reasons” behind people being trans today and even permits it to offer “solutions” to a “change from normality,” which the final report does plenty, as seen with the following example:

Peer influence during this stage of life is very powerful. As well as influence of social media, the Review has heard accounts of female students forming intense friendships with other gender-questioning or transgender students at school, and then identifying as trans themselves. (Cass 2024, 122).

It is no coincidence that this claim, and others like it, appear within only four

pages of a gender ahistorical claim. That some people, including young people, are simply just trans, and coming out following greater social acceptance amongst their peers, is ignored. After all, as the Review's gender ahistoricism set out to claim, transness today should be seen as wholly novel and divorced from any trans demographics in the past. Therefore we, along with somewhat increased levels of acceptance, must be a trend. This paper finds that the Review is self-evidently "transgender trend" scholarship *par excellence*.

## **TRANS HISTORIES AND CONTEMPORARY WELLBEING (NEWBURY)**

It has been tentatively estimated that there are between 200,000 and 500,000 transgender people in the UK (Sharfman and Cobb 2022), and although queer identities have been entering into societal consciousness, there are many issues relating to gender identity today. These issues, such as inequality and discrimination, perpetuated by sources like the Cass Review, are often amplified by the reliance on binaries in contemporary society (Hyde et al. 2019; Ridgeway 2011) and the erasure of queer histories. This erasure refers to the systematic omission, marginalisation, and distortion of LGBTQ+ histories and narratives in historical records, education, and other cultural representations (Salter 2021). As discussed above, the final report's gender ahistoricism distorts trans history through extreme revisionism. In this section, I explore how this act of gender ahistoricism negatively impacts contemporary trans people by exacerbating gender minority stress.

It has been well documented how by erasing, or distorting, transgender and nonbinary contributions and experiences throughout history, society loses valuable aspects of history and heritage, weakening community bonds and collective identity within these queer communities (Namaste 2000; Weismantel 2013). Gender minority stress (GMS) is a framework to understand the elevated risks of mental health disorders within the trans community as not inherent to "being trans," but a consequence of an anti-trans society (Hendricks and Testa 2012; see also Fish 2020; Sadowski and Gaffney 1998). GMS scholarship therefore prioritises deconstructing and challenging these external stressors, highlighting every instance where anti-trans society may contribute towards stress within the trans community.

The study of sex and gender identities within archaeology is useful in enhancing the understanding of the past, however it also plays a role in the present by opening-up discussions and providing historical evidence of diversity. Such evidence can be used to directly challenge and counteract marginalisation and discrimination faced as a result of the erasure of queer history and can confront our contemporary biases (Schofield 2010). Case studies, such as those discussed in this article, that demonstrate the history and complexity of gender and identity can also provide marginalised individuals a voice in constructing their own past (Dowson 2000, 165). This challenges where GMS arises from historical erasure and may improve attitudes towards transgender and nonbinary individuals by promoting awareness and acceptance.

Along with the erasure of queer history by society in general, transgender and nonbinary people are often born into a heteronormative, gender conforming family, which may result in them feeling a lack of trans history and heritage through queer isolation (Abraham 2019, 135). This is equally a GMS stressor. Using archaeological ev-

idence to show trans history and heritage is important for individuals within this dynamic, for knowing gender diverse individuals have always existed challenges myths of presentism and restores a community that is otherwise missing (Bauer et al. 2009; Morris 2019).

The Cass Review does not support transgender and nonbinary individuals (Horton and Pearce 2024) and will lead to discrimination. The use of historical sources to promote awareness and acceptance can make gender diverse individuals safer in the knowledge that positive representation and information is being used to challenge contemporary biases and negative attitudes, such as those in the final report. This support and recognition can result in individuals feeling accepted and understood, as well as reducing the stigma and discrimination prevalent in society (McDonald 2018). Below is a case study that demonstrates the complexity of identity that can be used to open-up discussions around gender and provide a sense of history and heritage for individuals today. Moreover, it is an example of gender history to directly challenge the final report's gender ahistoricism.

The Public Universal Friend (or simply "The Friend") was an American preacher born in Rhode Island in 1752 who, in 1776, after becoming unwell with a fever, claimed to have died and been resurrected by the Spirit of the Lord as a genderless person, neither male nor female, named the Public Universal Friend (Larson 2014). After 1776, the Friend dressed in androgynous clothing, shunned both birth name and gendered pronouns, and had an androgynous hairstyle for the time (Moyer 2015, 94). They began to preach about their spiritual awakening and became part of the New-Light Baptist movement.

Throughout history, the Friend has been misgendered and misrepresented, with some historians suggesting that the clothing and rejection of gender identity by the Friend is a sign of mental instability (Schmidt 2020). This narrative, a clear example of the erasure of genderqueer history, feeds into issues with contemporary mental health and wellbeing of individuals whose identity comes under criticism from others in the same way that people question and criticise the identity of the Friend. By studying the Friend and including their story in the history of gender diversity, we can see that nonbinary and genderfluid people are present in the past and led fulfilling lives. By using this case study in discussions around gender identity today, we can provide evidence of diversity in the past which can be used to support genderqueer individuals today, counteract the transphobic argument that genderqueer identities are a "modern fad" (Bellot 2021)—or indeed "unlike that in any prior historical period" (Cass 2024, 118)—and provide people with a sense of history and heritage and a voice in constructing their own past (Dowson 2000, 165). This, in turn, can help improve contemporary mental health and wellbeing today by promoting awareness and acceptance of diversity.

As emphasised, transgender and nonbinary communities often face a higher risk of developing mental health problems due to the issues faced within society as a result of their identity (Fish 2020). It is imperative that society works towards improving the lives of transgender and nonbinary people in the social, political, and economic climate in which we live, to reduce these societal issues. Case studies from history, such as the Public Universal Friend, can be used to challenge biases and preconceptions and can play a role in removing the stigma and discrimination that the transgender and nonbinary communities face, and therefore contribute to improving contemporary

mental health and wellbeing. Case studies that demonstrate the existence of diverse identities throughout history can help normalise diverse sex and gender identities today, by providing support and validation for the queer community.

### **THE CASS REVIEW IN THE CONTEXT OF HERESIOLOGY (GIRLING)**

Multiple studies have criticised the accuracy of claims in the Review about its impartiality (e.g., Grijseels 2026; Horton 2024; Noone et al. 2024). A further argument can be made that there is a theme of “gender heresiology” in its partiality. The study of heresy, or heresiology, can be understood as “the political claim of an exclusive ideology made through the demonisation, exclusion and silencing of ‘the other’” (Lyman 2008, 296). Initially, the connection between heresiology, a genre of theological literature, and a state-sanctioned medical review of trans healthcare may appear unusual in the secular context of the Cass Review. However, the deployment of a variety of heresiological strategies interlocking “science” and “religion” has been identified as a symptomatic reaction at times of rapid social and historical change (Flower and Ludlow 2020).

Understanding the heresiological functioning of the Review requires appreciating how it operates within a phenomenon of “cultural insecurity” (Eriksen 2019), which often identifies diversity as ahistorical, and which then engenders works performing heresiology. The Review’s final report emerges not as an individual work but as part of a series of inter-propagating discussions by cultural forces identifying transness as a kind of “gender heresy” (Morgan 2023). Concerning its influences, the foreword to the final report (Cass 2024, 12) states: “The review has not been conducted in a vacuum. There have been many moving parts and a significant often challenging public debate/” One of these “moving parts” includes the scale of religious anti-trans financing (Morgan 2023). Ciobanu (2021), for example, demonstrates that funding for “anti-gender” groups totalled 700 million dollars from 2009 to 2018. In the context of this considerable cultural force, regardless of any personal religious associations, the final report operates like any work of heresiology throughout history: it is prompted by, contributes to, and provides grounds for politico-religious opposition to diversity, in this case to transness.

The perception of gender heresy, then, intersects two worlds of discourse surrounding and concerning cultural (in)security: sociology and religion. The labelling of transness as a kind of heresy is something that has even united previously disparate groups with a common “enemy.” Morgan (2023, 32) has demonstrated the “unlikely alliance” between so-called “gender-critical feminists and certain, traditionally anti-feminist, evangelical Christian groups. This is founded on their “intersecting fundamental opposition, on grounds of moral intuition rather than empirical principle, to dualistic philosophies that separate the mind or soul or spirit from the body.”

Transness is perceived by these groups as “a slightly different formulation” of this dualism “that separate[s] biological *sex* from sociological *gender*” (Morgan 2023, 33). Dualistic philosophies are taken to imply a belief in the subservience of the body to the mind, which has been historically received as heresy. The theorisations, implications, and manifestations of dualism are contentious, and their comparability with trans experiences of embodiment are debatable. However, Morgan (2023, 38–39) identifies these comparisons in a foundational document of gender-critical feminism from

1979, Janice Raymond's *The Transsexual Empire*. It considers body/mind dualism to be a cardinal problem of trans identity and key proof of trans illegitimacy under feminist critical analysis, concluding that transness poses a threat to women (Morgan 2023, 42). These comparisons equating transness with the heresy of dualism function as acts of gender heresiology operating on a secular or cultural level.

The “exclusive ideology” that the Cass Review has been criticised for is cis-supremacism (Horton 2024). In their critique of the Review, Horton (2024, 4) demonstrates how the final report supported non-affirmative therapies and “creating a climate in which different therapeutic approaches can be discussed and developed without fear of vilification, legal action or complaints being brought,” as evidence of cis-supremacism operating within the Review. Perceiving the heresiological themes that underpin the Review reveals the espoused “climate” to be trans-exclusionary healthcare. Furthermore, if transness is equated with gender heresy, statements such as those regarding the “therapeutic approaches” it wishes to pursue “without fear of vilification” are reframed as a step towards allowing practices of transphobic conversion therapy. In these ways the Review presents gender-critical scepticism of trans existence as neutrality. Although its argument here for more radically exclusionary implementations to be pursued may be inadvertent, the Review itself functions as a justification for subsequent works of gender heresiology to further the creation of that “climate.”

This ideology is rationalised by Butler's (2024) concept of a psychosocial phenomenon called the “phantasm of gender.” It can be understood as a formation of another of Lyman's heresiological strategies: the demonisation of “the other.” The inflated, “phantasmatic” conceptualisation of so-called gender is underpinned by associative logic, which helps to explain Morgan's “unlikely alliance.” Despite differing values and concerns between anti-trans feminists and evangelicals, “the contradiction itself is what works, in effect ‘emancipating’ people from the task of developing a rational position, a pathway to fascism” (Butler 2024, 60). Butler continues:

When people are already living with fear, and they are told that there is in fact more to fear, and that the source of their fear can be named, then the name contains and neutralises the contradictions, serving now as a “cause” of ongoing and ultimate destruction, one that must be rooted out.

The fear on the part of healthcare professionals that is evidenced by Horton's (2024) article is that of litigation. Recommending the removal, or indefinite delaying, of the option of gender-affirming care specifically for trans people is how the final report proposes to protect professionals from that insecurity. As no such recommendations are made for cis gender-affirming care, the recommendations for gender-affirming care going forward operate heresiologically as “hostile exclusion.” This contributes to the growing phantasmatic conceptualisation of transness and its demonisation in wider cultural discourse. In this way, discourses of gender heresiology can focus on trans people at the same time as both perpetrators and victims, metaphorically, of a societal “demon.”

The function of heresiology, in summary, is to evangelise with cherry-picking evidence for the “hostile exclusion” and “silencing” of an “other.” Down to the subconscious ways in which it has been conducted, the Review is influenced by, performs,

and furthers a heresiological response to transness. Appreciating the role of gender heresiology in the influences, and influence, of the Review allows insight into its wider cultural impact: engendering further studies and policy changes for the suppression of transness. This is demonstrated by how, as discussed in the introduction to this article, the final report as an officially commissioned document has been cited as *the* justification for the removal of trans healthcare globally. Even the UK Government has persisted with its recommendations, despite the BMA's call to publicly critique and pause their implementation.

The advantages of observing the heresiological function and functioning of the Review, then, are limited. The intensifying psychosocial phantasms of "gender," like "transgender trend" ideology discussed earlier, are seemingly impervious to expert criticisms as they continue to prevail. To critique and dispel the ideologically exclusive, heresiologically motivated construction of gender ahistoricism, it is not sufficient to *only* point out the flaws or history of gender being examined in such a way (Butler 2024, 9). Nonetheless, such critique may yet contribute towards the solution identified by Butler (2024, 9–10): "defeating this phantasm is a matter of affirming how one loves, how one lives in one's body, the right to exist in the world without fear or violence or discrimination." Unearthing the evidence of transness from history that the Review rewrites with gender ahistoricism and identifying this suppression as a symptom of gender heresiology, helps to "affirm the rights and freedoms of embodied life that we can, and should, protect" (Butler 2024, 10).

## **TRANS MYTHOLOGIES VERSUS THE MYTH OF GENDER AHISTORICISM (RICHARDSON-READ)**

The approach of the final report and cisheteronormative scholarship to trans lives, and bodies, is not new; rather it is an established pathologizing perspective on those who do not conform to cisheteronormative restrictions (Gazzoli 2024, 462). As outlined by the prior contributions to this article, the Review fabricates trans history through gender ahistoricism and related heresiology. In this section, I demonstrate how this fabrication acts as a form of mythmaking, and counter with older myths to challenge the one built by the final report. I use examples sourced from medieval literature around Old Norse myth highlighting the inherent gender ambiguity that has been present for longer than the final report admits to, an approach that avoids pathologizing or categorising genders but supports the open interpretation of identities.

The Old Norse sources in question present complications, not unlike the Cass Review, having been subject to cisheteronormative scholarship that is rooted in the foundations of far right movements (Jefford Franks 2019). In the same way that the final report misrepresents and ignores the evidence and the inherent harm of its position, so too has the scholarship of medieval Scandinavia with Old Norse myth and history. However, despite previous misrepresentations, gender fluidity *is* present in these medieval sources, and this directly refutes the final report's assertion of the current "presentations" being markedly increased now over any previous period in history. For the purposes of this section, the term "gender fluid" will be used as defined by Holleb (2019, 134) which indicates a "gender which is not static" and moves away from the associations of what is ill-fitting or unsuitable found in definitions of incongruence.

Myths are stories told as a society and culture, enabling understanding of the world and environments. Myths are open to interpretation, allowing for individuals and society to be reflected within. The Cass Review is part of a mythology of vilifying trans people that is paraded across media, serving as propaganda. Here are presented two opposing Old Norse myths that enable us to see ourselves reflected in a way that encompasses many identities. These myths demonstrate gender fluidity, predating the present day significantly, both highlighting the final report's gender ahistoricism and proving its "transgender trend" partiality.

The sources used here are from the *Poetic* and *Prose Eddas*, both dated to approximately the thirteenth century. These sources represent the majority of what is known regarding Old Norse myth. Written centuries after the Old Norse peoples existed, there is often a drift in meaning and context that permits interpretation. Medieval scholarship has struggled with what Lara Ghisleni and colleagues (2016) refer to as "binary binds." This term describes where scholarship has historically ignored lives and experiences outside of cisheteronormativity (Ghisleni et al. 2016). Within Old Norse studies, the material and lived nature of myth has been carefully considered, and the question asked: What do these myths mean to those who lived them? Connecting the evidence of materiality and lived experience is difficult but there have been interdisciplinary efforts to do so in this field (Wikström af Edholm et al. 2019). Frog (2019, 270–71) interrogates Old Norse text sources to determine how myth, and the symbols within, provided a means of understanding the body in the Viking Age. Frog (2019, 270–71) draws on the supernatural and shape-shifting *berserkr* as one example of how people in the Viking Age understood bodies like and unlike their own and found a means of contextualising those understandings in a way that was accepted within their mythology. Bodily change and, more importantly, difference in bodies was understood as part of Old Norse myth once again highlighting the history of these concepts which are ignored in the final report. Presented below are two examples of Old Norse deities for whom bodily change and identity were fluid, which reflect, and reinforce, possible Old Norse beliefs in how identity could be understood through the Old Norse mythological world.

Neil Price (2019, 267) offers an assessment of Loki's role as a "trickster" which lends itself to the themes of identity discussed here, where Loki enables "socially sanctioned deviance" and this becomes gender fluidity. Loki's ambiguity in the sources, including descriptions of shape- and gender-changing, means that they are separate from the cisheteronormative framing of the narrative that attempts to, restrictively, define them. In this sense Loki as a character of myth refutes gender ahistoricism with their presence in these narratives. Lar Romsdal's (2018) novel interrogation of Loki's sexuality and gender presents a nuanced view, suggesting Loki's ambiguity of body "performs a dual function of both subverting *and* enabling the other god's functions." Loki's "socially sanctioned deviance" is an essential function of the pantheon and is only possible because of Loki's shifting in gender and broad sexuality (Romsdal 2018). Descriptions of gender fluidity are seen in *Lokasenna* in the *Poetic Edda*. Here Loki enters the hall of the *Æsir* uninvited and proceeds to demand a place at their table by insulting each of the deities present who, in turn, respond. Óðinn then responds with what scholarship has interpreted as an *accusation* of changing gender.

yet eight winters you were, beneath the earth,  
a milchcow and a woman,  
and there you bore children (Larrington 2014, 84)

Romsdal (2018) summarises this as by defying “binary constructions of gender and sexuality, Loki gives permission for those in society to do the same.” Loki’s changing gender is essential in Old Norse myth; they present the possibility for the society these myths reflect to hold the same understanding of gender fluidity. It is also worth noting the additional example in *Gylfaginning*, where Loki transforms into a mare to seduce a stallion and ultimately gives birth to Sleipnir, the famed eight-legged horse later gifted to Óinn (Byock 2005). This nuanced identity is evidenced in sources that pre-date the Cass Review by almost a millennia and, theoretically, reflects a society of that period. To suggest gender is immutable, and to be determined by oppressive societal structures, is itself a “new” idea, and newer myth, and is refuted even by the examples of mythology discussed above.

*Þrymskviða*, in the *Poetic Edda*, is regarded in traditional scholarship as a comedy (Acker and Larrington 2001, 492-4). I have presented elsewhere an interpretation highlighting trans narratives within, noting that this presents a tragic story of Þórr’s exploration of gender which is ultimately rejected out of fear (Richardson-Read 2021). The assumed comedy relies on viewing Þórr, as a cross-dressing bride, as humorous and, using Cass’s (2024) term, as “incongruent” (Bullough and Brundage 2000, 226–8). This is simplistic and restrictive, and evidence of Ghisleni and colleagues’ (2016) “binary binds.” I draw parallels here between the approach of cisheteronormative scholarship to Old Norse sources and the approach of the Review to the lives of trans people, neither is nuanced or exploratory of the subject in question. In *Þrymskviða* Þórr is asked to present as a bride to convince the giant Þrym to return the hammer Mjöllnir (Larrington 2014, 93).

Then said [Þórr], the vigorous god:  
“The Æsir will call me perverse,  
if I let you tie a bridal head-dress on me” (Larrington 2014, 95)

Þórr’s concern about a change in identity threatens Þórr’s sense of safety within the community of the Æsir. As I noted, Þórr’s acceptance is dictated by the Æsir and any deviation is determined to be perverse (Richardson-Read 2021). However, there is corroboration of Þórr’s new identity from others. Firstly, in Loki’s offer to support Þórr in this new expression.

Then said Loki, Laufey’s son:  
“I’ll go with you to be your maid,  
we two shall drive to Giant-land.” (Larrington 2014, 96)

Second, it is Þrym who offers Þórr validation in desire for Þórr.

Then said [Þrym], lord of ogres:  
“Bring in the hammer to sanctify the bride,  
lay [Mjöllnir] on the girl’s lap,  
consecrate us together by the hand of Var!” (Larrington 2014, 97)

A queer reading of *Þrymskviða* tells a different story of identity and desire as an individual who is ambiguous in their gender albeit in the context of a society that may reject difference and precariously support individuals outside cisheteronormativity. Northcraft (2022) argues for a consideration of *Þrymskviða* for its “trans innovations,”

despite the possibility of viewing Þorr comedically, in that this text still creates a space for trans existences, and in how gender is constructed in reading. Despite the precarity of Þorr's trans existence, Northcraft's (2022) reading supports such an existence no matter how *Þrymskviða* is read and thus reveals the source as trans mythology.

In developing our understanding of myth and story, there is room to evolve stories as our society does the same. This has been demonstrated with the previously discussed examples from Old Norse myth, typically known for its cisheteronormative framing. Gender fluidity is not a new "trend," as the Review's gender ahistoricism would suggest but is, in fact, present throughout history.

## **BONES TO PICK: EARLY ANGLO-SAXON CHALLENGES TO SEX/GENDER ESSENTIALISM (DAVISON)**

As many of the artefacts found in burials from the early Anglo-Saxon period are considered expressions of gender in material culture, they are used by archaeologists and historians to assign a gender to a burial. Broadly, weaponry and equestrian equipment are considered to indicate a male burial; while dress ornaments, beads, amulets, and spinning equipment indicate female burials. Brooches, buckles, and knives are found in masculine and feminine assemblages so are considered neutral items, not expressive of gender (Evison 1987, 82; Marzinzik 2003). These expressions of gender are assessed alongside skeletal features which are considered to be sexually dimorphic. In most cases the gendering of the goods matches the bodily evidence of sex (Härke 1992, Stoodley 1999). There are, however, burials which do not conform to this pattern. Here, I focus on those dated between the fifth and the eighth centuries, the "early" and "conversion" stages of the Anglo-Saxon period, in cemeteries across the early English zones of influence in Britain (Härke 1992; Knüsel and Ripley 2000; Lucy 1997, 2002, 2011; Stoodley 1999).

In a dataset containing 2,243 inhumation burials from 21 Anglo-Saxon period cemeteries, 71 burials were identified where the sex estimated on the basis of skeletal features were in contrast to the gendering of their accompanying artefacts. Of the estimations of skeletal sex, 94% were confident or probable, making it likely that this contrast was deliberate, and it can be argued to harmonise with transness as it is understood in the twenty-first century. A closer examination of two examples explores insights available into transness in this early medieval context, and tests how closely it relates to modern transness.

The person buried in grave 50 in Buckland Cemetery in Dover, whom we will refer to as "50," died between 525 and 575 AD, and was buried in the second phase of the cemetery's use between the late fifth and seventh centuries, and before the establishment of Christianity. They were tall, at around five foot and nine inches, and were classified as "adult or ?adult age unknown" (Evison 1987, 128). They were buried alongside a Frankish spearhead inlaid with silver, a Frankish buckle, a knife, and an iron pin with the top of the shaft curled into a spiral, in what is described as a "medium rich male grave" (Evison 1987, 175).

While much of 50's skull had been damaged, the mandible remained intact, as did the pelvis. These are considered the most dimorphic bones, and their presence allowed for 50's skeleton to be sexed, in apparent contrast to the masculine assemblage,

as “definitely female” (Cox and Mays 2000, 117–19; Evison 1987, 125). The alkaline nature of the soil at Buckland has eroded the human remains in this cemetery to such an extent that both dental enamel and post cranial skeletons were “too eroded to show surface morphology” (Evison 1987, 197–98). This precludes observations of indicators of stress and trauma which can offer details into an individual’s life and experiences. All that we can reliably extrapolate from the available skeletal remains is that 50 had reliable access to sufficient nutrition to reach their full growth potential, which aligned with the status suggested by their goods, and had skeletal features that are considered sufficiently feminine to have been archaeologically estimated as female.

How, then, should 50’s life be understood from this evidence? Conventional explanations might be that 50 was a cisgender man who has been mis-sexed due to feminine features, or perhaps instead a cisgender “warrior woman” who adopted masculine modes of expression but remained female to herself and her community. This is certainly how the now famous occupant of Birka chamber grave Bj.581 has been represented since the publication of their genomic data in 2017 revealed them to have been “female” (Price et al. 2019). I argue that we must also consider the interpretation that 50 was comparable to what we understand as a transgender man or transmasculine person, whose passage into manhood was signified by an association with weaponry and masculine forms of objects worn by both men and women, and whose community signalled their respect for his identity by dressing and equipping him appropriately in death. Which of these interpretations is closest to the truth is impossible to know, but unless we consider them all intimately, we are doing a disservice to those we study.

We will now turn to Grave 63 in the sixth- to seventh-century cemetery in Norton, one of the “highest-ranked female assemblages” in the cemetery (Sherlock and Welch 1992, 91). Its occupant, “63,” died between the ages of 25 and 35, likely in the sixth century. In the grave was found a rich array of grave furnishings. They had been buried with beads in a garland across their chest, wearing a cruciform brooch either to fasten a scarf, veil, or light cloak, over a tubular or *peplos* dress fixed at the shoulders by an annular brooch—an outfit that could not be more typically of Anglian style at the time (Sherlock and Welch 1992, 39, 163–64). The grave goods found give 63’s burial a Number of Artefact Types (NAT) score of 8, impressive against the average of >5 for comparable female burials from the same age range in the cemetery (Sherlock and Welch 1992, 19). It is the number, variety, and quality of these goods that makes 63’s burial high-ranking, and the associations of the items make it a thoroughly feminine burial.

Their skeleton was well preserved, with a complete skull and pelvis, and was estimated to be “definitely male” (Sherlock and Welch 1992, 163–64). This makes the only convenient trans-exclusive explanation for this burial, that 63’s sex has been incorrectly estimated and they were in fact a cis woman, unlikely. While the figure of the warrior woman is well known enough to be a convincing explanation for burials like 50’s, which does not challenge some essential “femaleness,” there exists no counterpart, no “domestic man,” which can hold burials like 63’s comfortably within cisnormativity. Again, I argue that we must also consider the possibility that 63 was comparable to what we understand as a transgender woman or transfeminine person, who lived into middle age and was buried by her community in fine clothes and jewellery representing their life-long acceptance of her and her own high-status in life. The lack of alternatives that can fit within cisnormativity for transfeminine burials is why trans-

femininity appears to be more prevalent in our interpretations of history, which may explain why the final report felt more secure in presenting an ahistoric gender history with trans men written out.

This is not to suggest that every Anglo-Saxon burial like the examples discussed above—the total number is uncalculated and perhaps incalculable—represents a life that equates exactly to transness. The conclusion is rather that we cannot discount evidence for a way of being in the early Anglo-Saxon period, particular to that cultural context, which had meaningful resonances with transness. It is equally true that to be a man or a woman in the same period is not directly comparable to the modern medicalised understanding of men and women today, but meaningful resonances between the two conceptualisations exist. The broader array of explanations that exclude transness for 50, unlike 63, might also offer insight into the final report's claims that there is a recent upsurge in transgender boys and young transmasculine people presenting to gender services. There are simply more ways to frame such people in history in a way that does not challenge cisnormativity. If we strive to be rigorous in our historical and archaeological practices, we must refuse to be satisfied and must strive to incorporate more nuance and possibility into our practices when they are offered.

## CONCLUSION

Since the publication of its final report, the Cass Review has drastically shifted the landscape of trans healthcare in the United Kingdom and beyond. The Review is responsible for the UK's puberty blocker ban, and global attempts to do likewise. We have noted throughout our paper the outstanding criticism that the Review has faced from experts in adolescent and trans healthcare. Further, our paper offers new criticism against the final report on the grounds of history, archaeology, myth, literature, and heresy-making. The gender ahistoricism seen throughout the final report has been done for a purpose. The erasure of gender multiplicity across deep time propagates anti-trans myths of transgender presentism. This presentism is, in turn, used as evidence for the transgender trend myth and "corrective" approaches to transition.

The final report's revisionisms of trans perspectives through gender ahistoricism have been demonstrated as hallmarks of heresiology, contributing to cultural discussions treating transness like a heresy. Moreover, the narrative of gender ahistoricism was further expounded by reading it as a work of mythopoesis, constructing an anti-trans myth that runs counter to historic mythology and the archaeological record; a construction that drives GMS. The sections in our paper demonstrate significant issues with the consequential recommendations of the Review. However, as cautioned, simply highlighting these facts won't break anti-trans ideology on its own, but we hope by presenting them here they become building blocks to be used in the effort to dismantle anti-trans bigotry writ large.

Furthermore, whilst the Review was the focus case study for this paper, our work has highlighted how and why gender ahistoricism might present itself in any work of gendered history that seeks to attack trans presents. Our paper challenges us to think more critically of revisionisms of history in this area, which may not appear as obvious as outwardly cis-supremacist historic exclusion, and to challenge anti-trans assertions from every avenue at our disposal.

## REFERENCES

- Abraham, Amelia. 2019. *Queer Intentions: A (Personal) Journey Through LGBTQ+ Culture*. London: Picador.
- Acker, Paul, and Carlyne Larrington, eds. 2001. *The Poetic Edda: Essays on Old Norse Mythology*. New York: Routledge.
- Ashley, Florence. 2020. "A Critical Commentary on 'Rapid-Onset Gender Dysphoria.'" *The Sociological Review* 68 (4): 779–99. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038026120934693>.
- Bauer, Greta R., Rebecca Hammond, Robb Travers, Matthias Kaay, Karin M. Hohenadel, and Michelle Boyce. 2009. "I Don't Think This Is Theoretical; This Is Our Lives': How Erasure Impacts Health Care for Transgender People." *Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care* 20 (5): 348–61. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jana.2009.07.004>.
- Bellot, Gabrielle. 2021. "Think Being Trans Is a 'Trend'? Consider These 18th-Century 'Female Husbands.'" *The Guardian*, September 10. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/sep/10/transgender-history-18th-century-female-husbands>.
- Berner, Alison. 2024. "Rapid Response: Medical Institutions Should Not Unquestioningly Accept the Conclusion and Recommendations of the Cass Review." *BMJ* 385: q1189. <https://www.bmj.com/content/385/bmj.q1189/rr-1>.
- British Medical Association. 2024. "BMA to Undertake an Evaluation of the Cass Review on Gender Identity Services for Children and Young People." British Medical Association, July 31. <https://www.bma.org.uk/bma-media-centre/bma-to-undertake-an-evaluation-of-the-cass-review-on-gender-identity-services-for-children-and-young-people>.
- Bullough, Vern L., and James A. Brundage, eds. 2000. *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*. New York: Garland.
- Butler, Judith. 2024. *Who's Afraid of Gender?* London: Allen Lane.
- Byock, Jesse, trans. 2005. *The Prose Edda*. London: Penguin.
- Campbell, Denis. 2024a. "Children to Stop Getting Puberty Blockers at Gender Identity Clinics, Says NHS England." *The Guardian*, March 12. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/mar/12/children-to-stop-getting-puberty-blockers-at-gender-identity-clinics-says-nhs-england>.
- Campbell, Denis. 2024b. "Delayed Puberty Blocker Clinical Trial to Start Next Year in England." *The Guardian*, August 7. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/article/2024/aug/07/delayed-puberty-blocker-clinical-trial-to-start-next-year-in-england>.
- Cass, Hilary. 2024. *Independent Review of Gender Identity Services for Children and Young People: Final Report*. <https://cass.independent-review.uk/home/publications/final-report/>.
- Ciobanu, Claudia. 2021. "Ordo Iuris: The Ultra-Conservative Organisation Transforming Poland." *Balkan Insight: Reporting Democracy*, June 22. <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/06/22/ordo-iuris-the-ultra-conservative-organisation-transforming-poland/>.
- Cox, Margaret, and Simon Mays, eds. 2000. *Human Osteology: In Archaeology and Forensic Science*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dowson, Thomas. 2000. "Why Queer Archaeology? An Introduction." *World Archaeolo-*

- gy 32 (2): 161–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00438240050131144>.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. 2019. "Security and Insecurity in Fragile Urban Fabrics: A Suburb in Norway." In *The Routledge Handbook of Anthropology and the City*, edited by Seta M. Low, 167–81. New York: Routledge.
- Everhart, Avery. 2022. "Bones without Flesh and (Trans)Gender without Bodies: Querying Desires for Trans Historicity." *Hypatia* 37 (4): 601–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/hyp.2022.50>.
- Evison, Vera. 1987. *Dover: Buckland Anglo-Saxon Cemetery*. Archaeological Report no. 3. London: English Heritage.
- Fish, Jessica N. 2020. "Future Directions in Understanding and Addressing Mental Health among LGBTQ Youth." *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology* 49 (6): 943–956. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15374416.2020.1815207>.
- Flower, Richard, and Morwenna Ludlow, eds. 2020. *Rhetoric and Religious Identity in Late Antiquity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Franks, Amy J. 2019. "Valföðr, Völur, and Valkyrjur: Óðinn as a Queer Deity Mediating the Warrior Halls of Viking Age Scandinavia." *Scandia: Journal of Medieval Norse Studies* 2: 28–65.
- Frog, Mr. 2019. "Understanding Embodiment through Lived Religion: A Look at Vernacular Physiologies in an Old Norse Milieu." In *Myth, Materiality, and Lived Religion in Merovingian and Viking Scandinavia*, edited by Klas Wikström af Edholm, Peter Jackson Rova, Andreas Nordberg, Olof Sundqvist, and Torun Zachrisson, 269–301. Stockholm: Stockholm University Press.
- Gazzoli, Laura. 2024. "Medieval Literature as Trans Literature." In *The Routledge Handbook of Trans Literature*, edited by Douglas A. Vakoch and Sabine Sharp. New York: Routledge.
- Ghisleni, Lara, Alexis M. Jordan, and Emily Fiocoprile. 2016. "Introduction to 'Binary Binds': Deconstructing Sex and Gender Dichotomies in Archaeological Practice." *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 23 (3): 765–87. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10816-016-9296-9>.
- Grijseels, D. M. 2026. "Biological and Psychosocial Evidence in the Cass Review: A Critical Commentary." *International Journal of Transgender Health* 27 (1): 278–288. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2024.2362304>.
- Härke, Heinrich. 1992. "Changing Symbols in a Changing Society: The Anglo-Saxon Weapon Burial Rite in the Seventh Century." In *The Age of Sutton Hoo*, edited by Martin Carver, 149–67. Woodbridge: Boydell Press.
- Holleb, Morgan Lev Edward. 2019. *The A–Z of Gender and Sexuality*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Hendricks, Michael L., and Rylan J. Testa. 2012. "A Conceptual Framework for Clinical Work with Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Clients: An Adaptation of the Minority Stress Model." *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* 43 (5): 460–67. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029597>.
- Hollimon, Sandra. 2009. "Gender and California Archaeology: You've Come a Long Way, Maybe." *SCA Proceedings* 22: 1–6.
- Horton, Cal. 2024. "The Cass Review: Cis-Supremacy in the UK's Approach to Healthcare for Trans Children." *International Journal of Transgender Health*, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26895269.2024.2328249>.

- Horton, Cal, and Ruth Pearce. 2024. "The U.K.'s Cass Review Badly Fails Trans Children." *Scientific American*, August 7. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-u-k-s-cass-review-badly-fails-trans-children/>.
- Hurcum, Owen. 2025. "Cis-Supremacist Pasts: Constructing a History against Contemporary Trans Equality." *International Public History* 8 (2): 175–80. <https://doi.org/10.1515/iph-2025-0019>.
- Hyde, Janet S., Rebecca S. Bigler, Daphna Joel, Charlotte Chucky Tate, and Sari M. van Anders. 2019. "The Future of Sex and Gender in Psychology: Five Challenges to the Gender Binary." *American Psychologist* 74 (2): 171–93. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000307>.
- Kennedy, Natacha. 2025. "Harming Children: The Effects of the UK Puberty Blocker Ban." *Journal of Gender Studies*, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2025.2521699>.
- Knüsel, Christopher, and Kathryn Ripley. 2000. "The Man-Woman or 'Berdache' in Anglo-Saxon England and Post-Roman Europe." In *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, edited by William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrrell, 157–91. London: Continuum.
- Kohn, Raphael. 2024. "Rapid Response: Re: Medical Institutions Must Treat the Cass Review as a Significant Event and Act upon It." *BMJ* 385: q1189. <https://www.bmj.com/content/385/bmj.q1189/rr-2>.
- Larrington, Carolyne, trans. 2014. *The Poetic Edda*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Larson, Scott. 2014. "Indescribable Being': Theological Performances of Genderlessness in the Society of the Publick Universal Friend, 1776–1819." *Early American Studies* 12 (3): 576–600. <https://doi.org/10.1353/eam.2014.0020>.
- Littman, Lisa. 2018. "Parent Reports of Adolescents and Young Adults Perceived to Show Signs of a Rapid Onset of Gender Dysphoria." *PLOS ONE* 13 (8): e0202330. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0202330>.
- Lucy, Sam. 1997. "Housewives, Warriors and Slaves? Sex and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Burials." In *Invisible People and Processes: Writing Gender and Childhood into European Archaeology*, edited by Jenny Moore and Eleanor Scott, 150–68. London: Leicester University Press.
- Lucy, Sam. 2002. "Burial Practice in Early Medieval Eastern England: Constructing Local Identities, Deconstructing Ethnicity." In *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales*, edited by Sam Lucy and Andrew Reynolds, 72–87. London: Society for Medieval Archaeology.
- Lucy, Sam. 2011. "Gender and Gender Roles." In *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology*, edited by Helena Hamerow, David A. Hinton, and Sally Crawford, 688–703. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lyman, Rebecca J. 2007. "Heresiology: The Invention of 'Heresy' and 'Schism.'" In *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, edited by Augustine Casiday and Frederick W. Norris, 296–314. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maude, Ilya, and Maroula Perisanidi. 2025. "Transmisogyny, Ableism and Compulsory Cisness: Case Studies from Byzantium." *Past & Present* 268 (1): 225–49. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtae034>.
- Marzinzik, Sonja. 2003. *Early Anglo-Saxon Belt Buckles (Late 5th to Early 8th Centuries A.D.): Their Classification and Context*. British Archaeological Reports, British

- Series 357. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- McCool, Mary. 2024. "Scotland's Under-18s Gender Clinic Pauses Puberty Blockers." *BBC News*, April 18. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-68844119>.
- McDonald, Kari. 2018. "Social Support and Mental Health in LGBTQ Adolescents: A Review of the Literature." *Issues in Mental Health Nursing* 39 (1): 16–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01612840.2017.1398283>.
- McNamara, Meredith, Kellan Baker, Aron Janssen, Johanna Olson-Kennedy, Ken C. Pang, Ayden Scheim, Jack Turban, and Anne Alstott. 2024. *An Evidence-Based Critique of the Cass Review*. Yale Law School. [https://law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/documents/integrity-project\\_cass\\_response.pdf](https://law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/documents/integrity-project_cass_response.pdf).
- Morgan, Rebecca J. 2023. *Gender Heretics: Evangelicals, Feminists, and the Alliance against Trans Liberation*. London: Pluto Press.
- Morris, Adam. 2019. "The Person Formerly Known as Jemima Wilkinson." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, March 26. <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/the-person-formerly-known-as-jemima-wilkinson/>.
- Moyer, Paul B. 2015. *The Public Universal Friend: Jemima Wilkinson and Religious Enthusiasm in Revolutionary America*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Namaste, Viviane K. 2000. *Invisible Lives: The Erasure of Transsexual and Transgendered People*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ngā Kōti o Aotearoa Courts of New Zealand. 2026. *Professional Association for Transgender Health Aotearoa Incorporated v Minister of Health*. <https://www.courtsofnz.govt.nz/assets/cases/2026/2026-NZCA-8.pdf>. [Missing case number/court designation if desired.]
- Noone, Chris, Alex Southgate, Alex Ashman, Élc Quinn, David Comer, Duncan Shrewsbury, Florence Ashley, Jo Hartland, Joanna Pashdag, John Gilmore, Natacha Kennedy, Thomas Woolley, Rachel Heath, Ryan Goulding, Victoria Simpson, Ed Kiely, Sibéal Coll, Margaret White, D. M. Grijseels, Maxence Ouafik, and Quinnchukqut McLamore. 2024. "Critically Appraising the Cass Report: Methodological Flaws and Unsupported Claims." *OSF Preprints*. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/uhndk>.
- Northcraft, Theo Zolton. 2022. *Reclaiming Premodern Icelandic Literature: The Trans of Þrymskviða and Hrólfs saga Gautrekssonar*. Master's thesis, University of Iceland.
- Pang, Ken C., Jeremy Wiggins, and Michelle M. Telfer. 2022. "Gender Identity Services for Children and Young People in England: Landmark Review Should Interrogate Existing International Evidence and Consensus." *BMJ* 377: 0825. <https://www.bmj.com/content/377/bmj.0825>.
- Power, Miller. 2020. "Non-Binary and Intersex Visibility and Erasure in Roman Archaeology." *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* 3 (1): 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.16995/traj.422>.
- Price, Neil. 2019. *The Viking Way: Magic and Mind in Late Iron Age Scandinavia*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Price, Neil, Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson, Torun Zachrisson, Anna Kjellström, Jan Storå, Maja Krzewińska, Torsten Günther, Verónica Sobrado, Mattias Jakobsson, and Anders Götherström. 2019. "Viking Warrior Women? Reassessing Birka Chamber Grave Bj.581." *Antiquity* 93 (367): 181–98. <https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2018.258>.

- Restar, Arjee J. 2020. "Methodological Critique of Littman's (2018) Parental-Respondents Accounts of 'Rapid-Onset Gender Dysphoria.'" *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 49 (1): 61–66. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-019-1453-2>.
- Richardson-Read, Ségdae. 2021. "The Marriage of Þórr: Violence and (Trans) formation." Paper presented at Mystical Transformations: Gender in Mythology and the Occult, October 25.
- Ridgeway, Cecilia L. 2011. *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Romsdal, Lar. 2018. *Loki: Thoughts on the Nature of the God, a Queer Reading*. Master's thesis, University of Auckland.
- Sadowski, Hartwin, and Barbara Gaffney. 1998. "Gender Identity Disorder, Depression, and Suicidal Risk." In *A Stranger in My Own Body: Atypical Gender Identity Development and Mental Health*, edited by Domenico Di Ceglie and David Freedman, 126–36. London: Routledge.
- Salter, Sarah H. 2021. "History, Activism, Erasure: Archival Paradox as Institutional Practice." *Journal of Feminist Scholarship* 19: 24–41. <https://doi.org/10.23860/jfs.2021.19.03>.
- Schmidt, Samantha. 2020. "A Genderless Prophet Drew Hundreds of Followers Long before the Age of Nonbinary Pronouns." *The Washington Post*, January 5. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2020/01/05/long-before-theythem-pronouns-genderless-prophet-drew-hundreds-followers/>.
- Schofield, John. 2010. "Archaeology in Contemporary Society: Introduction." *World Archaeology* 42 (3): 325–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00438243.2010.497335>.
- Sharfman, Amanda, and Pamela Cobb. 2022. "Families and Households in the UK: 2022." Office for National Statistics, May 18. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/people-populationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/bulletins/familiesandhouseholds/2022>.
- Sherlock, Stephen, and Martin Welch. 1992. *An Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Norton, Cleveland*. Council for British Archaeology Report no. 82.
- Shrier, Abigail. 2020. *Irreversible Damage: The Transgender Craze Seducing Our Daughters*. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing.
- Stoodley, Nick. 1999. *The Spindle and the Spear: A Critical Enquiry into the Construction and Meaning of Gender in the Early Anglo-Saxon Burial Rite*. British Archaeological Reports, British Series 288. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.
- Supreme Court of the United States. 2025a. *United States v. Skrametti*. [https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/24pdf/23-477\\_2cp3.pdf](https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/24pdf/23-477_2cp3.pdf).
- Thomas, Rebecca. 2024. "Health Secretary Wes Streeting Announces 'Indefinite' Ban on Puberty Blockers for Children." *The Independent*, December 11. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/puberty-blockers-ban-wes-streeting-health-children-b2662590.html>.
- Van Leeuwen, Theo. 2007. "Legitimation in Discourse and Communication." *Discourse & Communication* 1 (1): 91–112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481307071986>.
- Walley, Meghan. 2019. *Incorporating Nonbinary Gender into Inuit Archaeology: Oral Testimony and Material Inroads*. New York: Routledge. [Full first name missing.]
- Weismantel, Mary J. 2013. "Towards a Transgender Archaeology: A Queer Rampage through Prehistory." In *The Transgender Studies Reader 2*, edited by Susan Stryker

and Aren Z. Aizura, 319–34. New York: Routledge.  
Wikström af Edholm, Klas, Peter Jackson Rova, Andreas Nordberg, Olof Sundqvist,  
and Torun Zachrisson, eds. 2019. *Myth, Materiality, and Lived Religion in  
Merovingian and Viking Scandinavia*. Stockholm: Stockholm University Press.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The authors would like to take this opportunity to thank Miller Power and acknowledge their contributions to the preliminary meetings during the original formation of this article.