

LaVelle Ridley

PhD Candidate

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Department of Women's and Gender Studies

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EDUCATION

2023 (anticipated)

Ph.D., English & Women's and Gender Studies, University of Michigan

2019

M.A., English Language and Literature, University of Michigan

2016

B.A., English Literature with a minor in Africana Studies, *magna cum laude*,
University of Toledo

DISSERTATION

Title: Desiring Bodies, Imagining Selves: Black Trans* Life Narratives and the Erotics of Imagination

Committee: LaKisha M. Simmons (co-chair), Ruby C. Tapia (co-chair), Megan L. Sweeney, Andrea Bolivar, and Marquis Bey

Abstract: This dissertation argues that 20th and 21st century life narratives produced by black trans* women employ what I term a *critical trans* imagination* in order access what Audre Lorde describes as “erotic power and knowledge.” Deploying imagination as a multisensory and interdisciplinary bridge between the spiritual and the political realms, these life writers actively theorize and reimagine the relationship between structural transmisogynoir and other possible organizations of life for trans and queer people of color. By attending to both the affinities and tensions within this understudied archive, this project upends the hegemonic narrative foundations embedded within institutionalized transgender studies and demonstrates how centering black, trans*-generated knowledge aids in crafting new pathways to actualizing radical social transformation.

PUBLICATIONS

Edited Volumes

Forthcoming

Paradise on the Margins: Worldmaking by Trans Women of Color.

Edited by Lexi Adsit, Nava Mau, LaVelle Ridley, Raquel Willis, and Eriqun Zhang.

Refereed Journal Articles

2019

“Imagining Otherly: Performing Possible Black Trans Feminist Futures in *Tangerine*.” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 6.4 (November 2019): 481-490. (Accepted with revision).

Book Reviews

2019

“The Arrival of Black Trans Mattering.” Review: C. Riley Snorton’s *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 25.4 (October 2019): 667-669. (Solicited book review).

AREAS OF INTEREST

20th and 21st Century African American Literature, Life Writing, Black Feminist Theory, Queer of Color Critique, Transgender Studies, and Prison Abolition Studies

FELLOWSHIPS & GRANTS

Spring 2021	Sweetland/Rackham Dissertation Writing Institute Fellowship
2019-2022	Rackham Merit Fellowship
2017-2019	Rackham Conference Travel Grant
2017	Rackham Professional Development Grant
	Rackham Diversity Allies Program Reading and Writing Group Grant in Transgender Studies
2016	Rackham Merit Fellowship
	Rackham Excellence in Recruitment Award
2015	Schomburg-Mellon Humanities Summer Institute Research Fellowship
2014	Summer Research Opportunity Program, University of Michigan

CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

Sessions Organized

2021	<i>Roundtable organizer:</i> “Black Trans Imaginaries: Politics of imagination and Futurity for Black Trans Lives,” American Studies Association, November 2021 (Withdrawn due to COVID-19)
2018	<i>Roundtable co-organizer:</i> “Trans of Color Emergences and Futures,” American Studies Association, November 2018, Atlanta, GA

Papers Presented

2019	<i>Roundtable participant:</i> “Field Formations, Field Futures: Transgender Studies and the Foundational Work of Susan Stryker,” National Women’s Studies Association, November 2019, San Francisco, CA
	<i>Panel participant:</i> “Reading is Fundamental, Darling?: Reading the Black Canon While Trans,” Modern Language Association, January 2019, Chicago, IL
2018	<i>Panel participant:</i> “Trans Women of Color Writing Against ‘The Movement,’” “TRANSforming Queer,” 11 th Annual DC Queer Studies Conference, April 2018, College Park, MD
2017	<i>Panel participant:</i> “Trans is the New Black, But Not Really: Media Analysis of Trans Women of Color’s Relationality to State Violence,” Ohio State University Queer Places, Practices, and Lives III, May 2017, Columbus, OH.
	<i>Panel participant:</i> “Historically Disruptive: Trans of Color Survival Organizing,” LGBTQ Scholars of Color Conference, April 2017, New York, NY

INVITED TALKS & LECTURES

2022	<i>Invited talk:</i> “What Does ‘Centering Our Most Vulnerable’ Really Mean?: Inclusive Teaching from a Black Trans* Perspective” Kent State University at Tuscarawas, March 2022
2020	<i>Guest lecture:</i> “New Direction in Black Trans Studies.” Women’s, Gender,

and Sexuality Studies 171A: Transgender Studies, V Varun Chaudhry, Brandeis University, November 17, 2020.

INVITED PANELS & KEYNOTES

- 2021 *Panel participant:* Book launch for Eric A. Stanley's *Atmospheres of Violence: Structured Antagonism and the Trans/Queer Ungovernable* (Duke University Press, 2021), University of California, Berkeley
- Keynote roundtable organizer:* "Paradise on the Margins: Lessons and Dreams from Trans Women of Color," Queertopia Graduate Conference 2021, Northwestern University
- 2020 *Panel participant:* Dialogues on Diversity: "All Black Lives Matter: An LGBTQIA+ Dialogue", Division of Student Affairs, University of Toledo
- Pride TGIT: A Conversation with LaVelle Ridley and Dr. Susan Stryker, Google, Inc.
- Keynote:* Welcome Address, 2nd Annual LGBTQA Issues Conference, University of Toledo (cancelled due to COVID-19)

CAMPUS TALKS & PANELS

- 2021 *Panel participant:* "New Works, New Questions Book Series: *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography*, edited by Blake Gutt and Alicia Spencer-Hall," Institute for Research on Women and Gender
- Guest lecture:* "Writing Black Trans Futures," American Culture 498: Trans Futures, Scott Larson
- Panel participant:* "Understanding the Mental Healthcare Needs of Transgender and Non-binary Youth," Community Health Access Initiative (CHAI), School of Public Health, University of Michigan
- Panel participant:* "Critical Conversations: Dissertation Showcase," Department of English Language & Literature, University of Michigan
- 2020 *Panel participant:* LGBT Rights in Healthcare and Employment: Taking Stock of *Bostock v. Clayton County*, Institute for Research on Women and Gender
- Feminist Futures Roundtable Discussion, Institute for Research on Women and Gender, University of Michigan (cancelled due to COVID-19)
- 2019 *Guest lecture:* "Current Questions in Black Trans Studies," Women's Studies 258: Introduction to Transgender Studies, Andrea Bolivar
- 2018 *Panel participant:* "LGBTQ (of Color) Experiences with Health Professionals" Women's Studies 300: Men's Health, University of Michigan (October 30, 2018)

Discussion facilitator: QTPOC CenterSpace, U-M Spectrum Center, October 23, 2018

2017 *Guest lecture:* “Trans Women of Color Writing Against “The Movement.”” English 311: What is Transgender Literature?, Cassius Adair

2016 *Panel participant:* “Intersectionality: Approaches and Challenges,” Critical Intersectionality Rackham Interdisciplinary Workshop, December 5, 2016

Panel participant: “Storytelling Highlighting Trans Women, Trans Femme, and People Experiences,” University of Michigan Spectrum Center, November 17, 2016

Discussion co-facilitator: Doing Queer Studies Now Reading Discussion on Transfeminism, November 2, 2016

COMMUNITY EDUCATION & ORGANIZING

2021-present *Committee member:* Health Advocacy Committee, Toledo-Lucas County Department of Health, Toledo, OH

2020 *Public invited talk:* “The Intersection of Black Lives Matter and LGBTQ Issues,” Thomas Reuter, Ann Arbor, MI

Moderator: Transgender Day of Remembrance, Equality Toledo, Toledo, OH (November 20, 2020)

Panel participant: LGBTQ Healthcare and COVID-19, Equality Toledo, Toledo, OH

Workshop facilitator: “An Introduction to Polyamory,” Toledo Mpowerment, Equitas Health, Toledo, OH

2016 *Panel participant:* “Transgender Experiences,” Social Work 4980: Interpersonal Practice with LGBTQ Individuals, University of Toledo, Toledo, OH (October 18, 2016)

TEACHING

Instructor of Record

Winter 2019 English 125: “Writing through Struggle.” English Department Writing Program (EDWP)

Collaborative Teaching

Fall 2021 Women’s and Gender Studies 240: “Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies”

Fall 2018 *Graduate Student Mentor:* Women’s and Gender Studies 240: “Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies”

AY 2017-2018 Women’s and Gender Studies 240: “Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies”

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Student Research Assistant

- 2020 Transgender Health Research Initiative, Institute for Research on Women and Gender, University of Michigan
- 2017 “Trans of Color Literary Studies,” Professor Victor Mendoza, University of Michigan

Public Humanities Research

- 2017 Institute for Social Change, Rackham Program in Public Scholarship

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE EXPERIENCE

- 2021 – present *Moderator:* WE Pride Seminars, WE Communications, Inc.
- Committee member:* Michael Lynch Service Prize Committee for Queer/Trans Caucus of ASA and GLQ Caucus of MLA
- 2020-present Associate Editor of Book Reviews, *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, Duke University Press
- 2020 *Humanities expert:* National Endowment for the Humanities Grant application for *Transcripts* podcast

Referee On Journal Articles

- GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian & Gay Studies*
QED: A Journal of GLBTQ Worldmaking
TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly

DEPARTMENTAL/UNIVERSITY SERVICE

- 2019-2021 *Co-coordinator:* Black Research Roundtable
- 2017-2019 Lesbian-Gay-Queer-Research Initiative Steering Committee
- 2017 Transgender Awareness Week Planning Committee

MEDIA COVERAGE

- 2021 *Expert consultant:* “[‘Pose’ is ending. What’s the future for transgender representation on TV?](#)” by David Oliver. *USA Today*. 6 June 2021.
- Expert consultant:* “[7 books by trans and nonbinary authors to read this Pride Month.](#)” by Hannah Good. *The Lily*. 29 May 2021.
- Radio interview:* “[LaVelle Ridley on Academia & Black Trans Women](#),” Partnership with Black Trans Media, Inc. and OUT FM
- Podcast interviewee:* “[‘Black Trans Narratives’ with LaVelle Ridley](#),” *Queer Lit*, Lena Mattheis, University of Duisburg-Essen

LANGUAGES

- English: native
Spanish: excellent

French: conversational

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Studies Association
The Marsha P. Johnson Institute
Modern Languages Association
National Women's Studies Association

REFERENCES

LaKisha M. Simmons, PhD
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