In Embodying the Monster (2002) Margrit Shildrick suggests that vilifying the monstrous other is an attempt to protect ourselves from our vulnerability to what is uncertain or unstable in our sense of self. Threatened by the strangeness of the other, one response is to strengthen the boundaries between self and other, to disparage the other as somewhat less than human. Some feminist approaches to transsexuality have followed this trajectory, insisting that the use of technology to modify trans bodies is at best an unfortunate and misguided effort to embody a normative conception of gender. The goal of this approach is to negate or to undermine gender, not to strengthen it by becoming other. For theorists such as Janice Raymond and Bernice Hausman, transsexual desires to embody an intelligible and recognizable otherness are antithetical to feminist goals that are intended (correctly, in their view) to destroy gender altogether. Judith Butler's work in Undoing Gender (2004) is more complex, although it too has been read as privileging the transgender celebration of forms of gender embodiment as fluid, shifting, and inherently unstable, and therefore as expressing contempt for those transsexuals who desire to pass as other through incarnating its material signifiers on the body.

On the other hand, compelling analyses that recognize the desire at work in multiple forms of "(un)becoming other" (Sullivan, 2006) have emerged. Such analyses complicate the issue of whether gender ought to be the coherent basis for identity or deconstructed. In arguing for an "ethics of transmogrification" Nikki Sullivan suggests a way to overcome the oppositions that have been established between "the normal and the strange, between conformity and transgression, between being and becoming, and between self and other" (2006). And Robyn Wiegman (2006) insists that the desire for gender is operative in all projects including those that imagine they are queering, ending, or transcending gender.

In the interest of investigating what might be read as productive failures to solve the impasse between feminists around ts/tg debates on embodiment, my discussion will centre on the question of whether, or to what extent, a more promising ethics might emerge from recognizing the basis of our mutual investments in being who we are, or in (un)becoming other.