

ARTICLE

Exploring young trans people's everyday experiences of 'out-of-placeness' and socio-bodily dysphoria

James David Todd^{1,2} 

¹School of Geographical and Earth Sciences, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK

²East Quadrangle, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK

Correspondence

James David Todd, School of Geographical and Earth Sciences, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK.
Email: james.todd@glasgow.ac.uk

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Abstract

This paper examines how young trans people come to be positioned as, and subsequently feel, 'out-of-place' in certain everyday spaces, particularly in the socio-political context of the contemporary UK. Through the stories of young trans people aged 14–25 collected via participatory research, I question what it feels like to be young and trans and to experience and embody such dislocating feelings as 'out-of-placeness' and socio-bodily dysphoria, and what toll repeatedly experiencing such embodied emotions exacts on young trans people, their bodies, and life trajectories. To do so, the experience of misgendering and deadnaming, others' hostile gazes, and what I refer to as socio-bodily dysphoria, are introduced as examples of common modes of cisnormativity and 'out-of-placeness' experienced by participants. I build on Sara Ahmed's work on the socio-spatial positioning and experience of non-conforming or disruptive bodies to examine how trans youth and marginalised folk more generally become 'out-of-place' and experience 'out-of-placeness' in everyday space-times that are not affectively, socially, or materially structured to expect their bodily presence, facilitate their participation, or enable their active agency, particularly on gendered terms. Importantly, a central contribution of the article involves articulating a spatial conceptualisation of socio-bodily dysphoria. In sum, I develop geographical analyses of young trans people's everyday encounters and crucially build geographical understandings of the emergence and fixity of socio-bodily dysphoria and everyday marginality through the voices and stories of trans youth.

KEYWORDS

'out-of-placeness', dysphoria, everyday life, misgendering, participatory research, young trans people

1 | INTRODUCING 'OUT-OF-PLACENESS'

In this paper, I draw on participatory research with young trans people aged 14–25 to examine how trans youth in the UK are often repeatedly positioned as 'out-of-place', and subsequently experience and (re)embody such dislocating feelings as 'out-of-placeness' and socio-bodily dysphoria. This is a condition 'associated with feelings of spatial and

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temporal disjointedness ... embodied and emotional dislocatedness, unease, discomfort, and disturbance' (Todd, 2023a, p. 772) often arising from how trans youth are viewed and treated across public and private everyday spaces that produces, at various times and to varying degrees, deeply embodied anxiety, discomfort and worry (alongside a range of affects and emotions from ambivalence to pleasure, curiosity, anger and experimentation; Malatino, 2022). Following Sara Ahmed, I illustrate that—as young trans people repeatedly experience and accrue socio-material encounters, affects and emotions connected to 'out-of-placeness' and socio-bodily dysphoria—this feeling becomes attached to spaces where such affects are present and/or regularly absorbed and carried by the body.¹ Such sites, as explored in this paper, become spaces fraught with potential for emotional embodied disturbance, disruption and forms of violence. In turn, embodied and emotional discomfort associated with regularly feeling 'out-of-place' becomes the *anticipated norm* for many young trans people who then feel and direct *anticipatory anxiousness* toward the socio-materialities of everyday spaces.

This paper thus asks: How and why do young trans people come to be positioned as, and subsequently feel, 'out-of-place' in certain everyday spaces? What does it feel like to be young and trans and to experience and embody this 'out-of-placeness'? And what toll does repeatedly experiencing 'out-of-placeness' exact on young trans people, their bodies, and life trajectories? I develop a conceptual, spatial framework for examining young trans people's (and other marginalised folks') experiences of 'out-of-placeness' and socio-bodily dysphoria. I then focus on non-exhaustive modalities of 'out-of-placeness' that my young trans participants (aged 14–25) commonly narrated: misgendering and deadnaming and the 'hostile gaze', before introducing and examining socio-bodily dysphoria in greater depth. In doing so, I follow Brice (2023, p. 3) to consider how a 'trans conception of space' may operate, by 'locat[ing] meaning neither in the body of the individual nor in the structures of social hierarchies but in the mutually formative relational processes through which both individual and milieu are constituted', recognising that socio-political forces, individuals, bodies and experiences of 'out-of-placeness' and socio-bodily dysphoria are co-constitutive.

Crucially, I develop geographies of dysphoria by exploring what I term socio-bodily dysphoria spatially and temporally, both within and beyond trans bodies and communities. For example, I consider how dysphoria emerges, its limiting affects, its use as a paradoxical mechanism to avoid perceptions of 'out-of-placeness', and how it is used by others to police (youth) transness. This argument thus has wider significance for those concerned with the relationship between subject-formation, embodiment, and the ordering of social spaces. Throughout this paper, I return to several participants' stories, particularly those of Rhys (he/they, 14–17), multiple times. I follow individual participant narratives, such as the stories of Rhys, to demonstrate how the multiplicity of forces which produce 'out-of-placeness' are often subsumed by individuals in multiple ways, across myriad spaces of their everyday lives.

1.1 | Researching 'out-of-placeness' in the lives of young trans people

As I explore in depth elsewhere (Todd, 2023a), this research is part of a larger geographical research project that explores the everyday lives of young trans people in the UK. During the research, I engaged young trans people aged 14–25 in 11 participatory action research (PAR)-informed collaborative workshops² (run as, for example, 'half-term workshops') and 19 lengthy collaborative interview spaces termed 'one-to-one sessions' in 2018 and 2019. In total, there were 96 participant engagements in London and urban Scotland.³ Very few academic publications have dealt with recruiting and researching with trans youth specifically (Humphrey et al., 2020). In London, the research was supported and conducted in collaboration with the national charity Gendered Intelligence (GI), who assisted with ensuring the research design was relevant to young trans people, building trust with trans youth service users, recruitment, provision of research spaces, addressing safeguarding concerns, and supporting young people within and beyond research spaces. The research was supported in a similar way by a cognate charity in Scotland. To maximise participant wellbeing, I occupied the position of researcher, 'guest (co)facilitator', ally and safeguarder. Sharing my own queer stories and narratives, in addition to occupying these multifaceted roles, enabled me to develop mechanisms for expressing and sharing queer solidarities with participants. In group workshop settings, a trained queer youth worker was always present to support the safety and wellbeing of participants; in London these youth workers were all trans. In workshop settings, following GI practice, youth were asked to use verbal 'content warnings' to alert other young people to potentially traumatic or emotionally sensitive discussions. A quiet area for withdrawal was provided at all workshops. To maintain participant safety beyond the field site and ensure that trans youth without supportive parents could take part, recognising the competence and agency of many youth, participants aged under 18 (the youngest being 14) were not required to provide parental consent, following consultation with the relevant ethics committee, GI, and ESRC guidance, and the Gillick principle that the *right to confidentiality* of the

young person—and subsequently their potential safety and wellbeing—would be compromised by automatically seeking parental consent (Kennan, 2015; McLaughlin, 2015).

Each research space was constructed to enable young trans people's everyday stories to be shared and heard, and themes connected to 'out-of-placeness' and socio-bodily dysphoria emerged continually throughout the research; specific spaces or methods did not specifically target drawing out 'out-of-placeness' or dysphoric experiences. Workshop themes were diverse and directed by participants and included 'transport and getting around', 'escapism', online spaces, 'waiting' and the body, while interviews focused on exploring individual life stories. The research focused broadly on drawing out participants' everyday life stories, and did not explicitly seek narratives of harm or hostility, but rather concentrated on creating empowering spaces and engaging participants in storytelling-focused methodologies including storying and story-sharing, oral histories, artwork, storyboarding, collective diagramming, object show-and-tell, group discussion and other creative methods. For example, as Figures 2 and 3 show, several participants engaged in body mapping as storytelling devices to explore their bodies' surfaces, spaces, capacities, desires and difference(s), connecting these to their embodied emotions in particular everyday spaces, without being limited by verbal and textual forms of data collection (Furman et al., 2019; McCorquodale & DeLuca, 2020). I prioritised providing spaces for young trans people to socialise, connect and make informed decisions about participating in and contributing to the research (Furman et al., 2019). Trans, non-binary and gender diverse (including gender questioning) youth could attend and take part in collaborative workshop spaces for their enjoyment without needing to contribute directly to the research and no data were taken from or about these young people.

The following section develops a conceptual language for addressing 'out-of-placeness' in the lives of trans youth.

2 | CONCEPTUALISING 'OUT-OF-PLACENESS' IN THE LIVES OF YOUNG TRANS PEOPLE

For decades, geographers have considered how marginalised individuals and groups have become positioned as 'out-of-place' by reading everyday spaces as engrained with power structures, social texts, atmospheres and encounters that convey to marginalised people that they do not socially or materially belong there (Cresswell, 2014; Kitchin, 1998; Valentine, 2002). This work has implied a normatively regulated place from which certain differences are positioned as 'outside' or 'beyond' through socio-political structures and regimes of power that privilege certain identities and bodies over others.

This geographical research has, for example, examined the bodily 'outsiderness' certain people might feel when being racialised and/or gendered, experiencing the affects of racism, sexism and/or cissexism in academia and academic spaces, or embodying mental ill health (e.g., Ahmed, 2007, 2012, 2017; Doan, 2010; Johnson, 2020), with practices of bodily exclusion and discipline occurring across intersecting axes of difference and oppression. In queer geography, geographers have considered the 'out-of-place' experiences of queer racialised people and their bodies (DasGupta & Dasgupta, 2018), the experience of occupying 'out-of-place' or uncomfortable bodies in queer spaces as research sites (e.g., Bain & Nash, 2006), and queer belonging (or 'non belonging') and embodied (dis)comfort and safety (and lack thereof) in queer spaces, particularly through analyses of racist discourses of certain queer spaces (e.g., DasGupta & Dasgupta, 2018; Goh, 2018; Held, 2015; Nash, 2011; Rosenberg, 2015). This work demonstrates, for instance, how 'having the "right" body and wearing the "right" clothes becomes important in lesbian and gay spaces in order to gain a sense of comfort' (Held, 2015, p. 37), and has introduced the 'queer unwanted'; those 'pushed out' of queer sites because of body-policing spatial practices and dynamics (Casey, 2007).

More recent work in trans geographies has begun to highlight that everyday spaces can both 'materially, socially and symbolically anchor identities, values, relationships and emotional attachments [... and] offer protection, belonging and safety' and produce 'insecurity, vulnerability and alienation' for trans people (Marshall, 2017, p. 183). In other words, such work has called for us to move beyond binary conceptions of everyday space that understand such sites as solely exclusionary or inclusionary for trans folk and marginalised people more broadly. This paper builds on this literature by examining young trans lives more specifically, and by developing a conceptual language for exploring dislocating affects and embodied emotions connected to 'out-of-placeness' and socio-bodily dysphoria that does not simply attend to the varying forms of (dis)belonging people feel at particular times and in particular spaces.

My conceptualisation of 'out-of-placeness' draws on the work of Sara Ahmed, and particularly her examination of how Black and queer bodies, and the 'feminist killjoy' figure, are formed, positioned and experienced in everyday spaces. Ahmed's thinking closely aligns with Puwar's (2004, p. 8) notions that certain spaces and bodies mismatch, such that

supposedly neutral everyday spaces are never ‘blank and open for any body to occupy’. Ahmed (2019, p. 60) draws on this understanding to explain that ‘[y]ou have a fit when an environment is built to accommodate you[;] [y]ou are a misfit when there is an incongruous relation of your body to thing or body to world’ (see also Garland-Thomson, 2011 on ‘misfit[ting]’). I take this forward to argue that one becomes and feels ‘out-of-place’ when the affective and socio-material composition of spaces they occupy and move through, bodies (both human and more-than-human) they encounter, and wider political/discursive forces they are impacted by (Colls, 2012) do not align with, are hostile to, or do not expect, their body or its presence in a given space. Following Ahmed, certain bodies of marginalised people become ‘out-of-place’ by being repeatedly positioned and read as disruptive of norms and spatial equanimity in normative spaces. Their mere presence within, and entering of, particular spaces activates ‘a whole series of processes which signal that they are “space invaders”’ (Ahmed, 2019, p. 10; Puwar, 2004). In other words, when a body is read or constructed as disruptive of social expectations, (other) bodies and affects present in everyday spaces react to signal their ‘out-of-placeness’. Such bodily expectations thus become ‘somatic norms’ (Puwar, 2001, 2004) inscribed within/around particular spaces. In other terms, the bodies of those positioned as ‘out-of-place’ in these sites feel and hold onto the experience of ‘out-of-placeness’ beyond their immersion in them.

Crucially, Puwar and Ahmed’s work recognises that the bodies of marginalised folk are subtly and overtly societally, socially and spatially reinforced as disruptive, as bodies that disturb structural power regimes designed to *always-already privilege and expect the arrival of the most privileged bodies*: variously those of, for example, white, non-disabled, cisgender, male, non-working class and/or straight folk. As I argue throughout this article, logics of cisnormativity, transphobia and exclusion often position trans youth as bodies disruptive of socio-spatial norms of everyday sites, particularly in a UK context that is paradoxically experiencing growing trans community cohesion, spaces for trans joy, and positive forms of visibility alongside increased hostility and transphobia wherein trans folk are ‘subordinated to a contested public consensus over who trans people “really” are’ (Berlin & Brice, 2022, p. 9). Indeed, Berlin and Brice (ibid.) argue that such gender relations produce ‘cisnormative territorialisations’—spatially engrained forces that are ‘destructive to trans bodies and lives’ as trans people’s agency is eroded and cisnormativity is upheld. Trans youth, who experience conditions of cisnormativity, binary gender expectations, and so on within everyday spaces (often, importantly, alongside gender euphoria, banal experiences, joy, and so on; ibid.), thus often come to both feel and *expect* embodied discomfort that non-conformance within the atmospheres such sites can cause.

Similarly to the experience of exhaustion (Todd, 2023a; Wilkinson & Ortega-Alcázar, 2019), I note that the implications of experiencing and embodying ‘out-of-placeness’ augment each time one feels and/or is positioned as ‘out-of-place’. Indeed, this effect has been noted in recent trans geographies literature, with Berlin and Brice (2022) noting that events, affects and spatialisations of cisnormativity that produce experiences such as ‘[t]he stares, the comments, the harassment, the dysphoria, [and] the violence [become] singular events [that] add up to wear away and to prevent thriving’. This is an ongoing affective process intensified and embedded in particular space-times (indeed one participant described such affects emerging in particular ‘genres of place’), and upon/within ‘out-of-place’ bodies through repetition and habituality. Such mechanisms initiate what I argue is an ‘out-of-placeness’ feedback loop (illustrated in Figure 1), which recognises that *those positioned as ‘out-of-place’ come to expect to feel ‘out-of-place’, thus increasing their feelings of ‘out-of-placeness’*.

Consequently, in this article I attend to how affects and atmospheres implicated in ‘out-of-placeness’ (and indeed socio-bodily dysphoria) are carried by young trans people and bodies beyond the space(s) in which they were first produced or felt. Table 1 shows only a small fraction of the myriad ways that bodies may emerge as ‘out-of-place’, and embody, feel and respond to this ‘out-of-placeness’, by demonstrating common language that Ahmed (particularly 2004, 2007, 2010a, 2012, 2017, 2019) uses to emphasise the vast, messy nexus through which bodies can emerge as ‘out-of-place’. Each term, drawn from Ahmed’s work, is relevant to at least several participants’ stories. The table’s three rows demonstrate how certain bodies might be positioned—intentionally or otherwise—as ‘out-of-place’ (row A), how these bodies might experience places in which they feel ‘out-of-place’ (row B), and how such bodies might (consciously or subconsciously) react to these emotions and embodied states (row C).

The *similarity* and *pervasive layering* of the structures, bodily encounters, atmospheres and other mechanisms of ‘out-of-placeness’, and the unconscious and conscious *familiarity* with which they are encountered by the ‘out-of-place’, become affective forces that permeate most everyday spaces (albeit with varying intensities). For example, Ahmed’s language enables us to examine how trans youth might be constantly questioned, feel the emotional force of entering a room and causing an atmospheric disturbance, or ‘stick out’ from compulsory cisnormative expectations and norms. Furthermore, as Ahmed (2006, 2007) describes, particular spaces’ atmospherics can create ‘impressions’ on bodily surfaces that can be fleeting or more permanent. This language allows me to further emphasise that the more that trans youth experience ‘out-of-placeness’, the more that their body feels or shows the toll of being ‘out-of-place’.

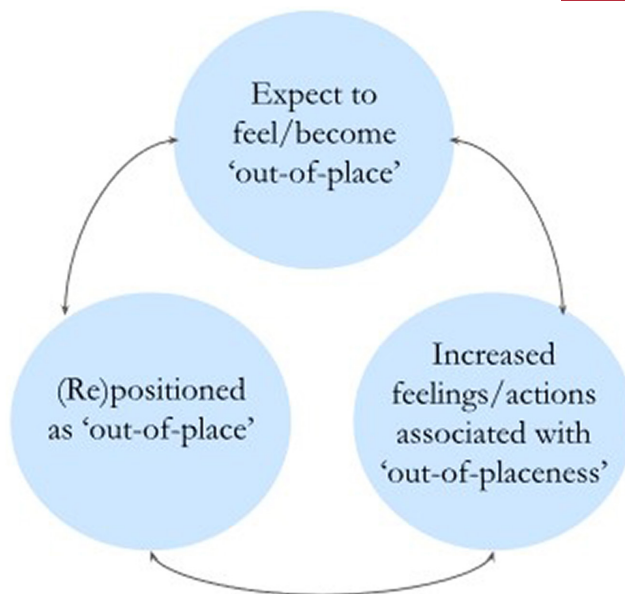


FIGURE 1 The 'out-of-placeness' feedback loop.[Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

TABLE 1 Selected phrasing Ahmed uses to describe what it means to become, feel like and respond to becoming an 'out-of-place' body.

Outcome	Exemplar mechanisms and descriptors
A: Bodies emerging as 'out-of-place'	Being negated; coming up against expectations, norms and ideals; occupying the structural position of a 'guest' or focal point in space; causing discomfort to other bodies; sticking out from dominant structures such as compulsory heterosexuality and whiteness; hyper-visibility; not meeting others' demands for conformance; routine, habituality and accumulation of these experiences
B: The emotional, embodied and felt dimensions of 'out-of-placeness'	Discomfort; disorientation; labour; feel(ing) noticeable; (lack of) motility/mobility; a 'fidgety feeling'; receding; restlessness and uneasiness; work and 'political labour' to maintain the comfort of (privileged) others; being a 'sore point'; feeling categories you 'failed to inhabit'; what is in the background/unnoticed (for/by the comfortable) gathering in front of you; arriving <i>after</i> others
C: Responses to being positioned as 'out-of-place'	Collective action; desire; resistance; refusal (to promise/to fulfil); displace(ment); killing joy; complaint; withdrawal; emotional work ('to make others comfortable even though you have already made them uncomfortable'); avoidance; the 'world opening up'

3 | EXPLORING STORIES OF 'OUT-OF-PLACENESS'

For participants, continuously experienced 'out-of-placeness' often originated from embodied emotions connected to interwoven forms of everyday violence and exclusion, including misgendering, others' hostile gazes, and the cisnormative/binary-gendered or trans-hostile affective atmospherics of certain everyday spaces. Many participants' stories demonstrated that high(er) frequency experiences of hostility or discomfort can become so normalised that they might be only subconsciously felt. These experiences play a large role in constructing trans youth and their bodies as 'out-of-place', and in influencing their constant embodiment of 'out-of-placeness'. In the following section, misgendering and deadnaming are explored as specific experiences of often public and/or more overt mechanisms of young trans people's 'out-of-placeness'.

3.1 | The everyday and prolonged impacts of misgendering and deadnaming

Misgendering and deadnaming refer to (often deliberate) acts involving referring to a trans or gender diverse person using a name they no longer use or associate with their authentic self (often described as a 'deadname') or by using incorrect pronouns. These acts can be interpreted as denying trans people's lived realities and selfhood, and/or the ability

to embody their authentic selves, and can therefore become felt as stigmatising violences that indicate a lack of respect for trans autonomy. Misgendering can trigger painful embodied memories or result in trans people being forced to self-advocate to potentially hostile others. As Mearns et al. (2020, p. 5, citing Storrie & Rohleder, 2018) describe, repeatedly mentioning a deadname 'can convey hostility, while perpetuating heteronormativity; combining into an oppression damaging to both physical and mental health'. Often this linguistic violence is internalised by trans youth, who might come to experience feelings of 'out-of-placeness' in—and anticipatory anxiousness toward—spaces where misgendering/deadnaming took place or commonly occurs. Indeed, as Brice (2020, p. 667) describes, 'sensation[s] of incongruity' associated with dysphoric emotions can surface 'by virtue of persistent misgendering'. For many participants, recalling deadnaming and misgendering was an extremely emotionally demanding task. By exploring a small proportion of participant stories, I hope to do justice to their emotional labour.

Non-binary participants in particular told of experiencing misgendering/deadnaming as particularly common/intense experiences that shaped their spatial experiences and contributed to feeling, as Rhys (they/them, 14–17) describes, for example, 'really uncomfortable ... really unsafe and [that] no one knows how to handle it'. Misgendering, for non-binary participants in particular, was an experience coupled to others' policing of other markers of gender and identity, and to the attempted removal of non-binary participants' agency and autonomy to determine their self-presentation, names and pronouns. As Jack (they/them, 18–21) described of their experiences of misgendering in school:

Because I'm non-binary I felt like I was treated as a binary guy when I'm not. Like my headteacher ... she, she ... I had to ask permission to wear shorts when it was summer ... my parents emailed in and I got an email back being like 'yes Jack can wear long shorts to the knee because Jack *cannot* wear long dresses or skirts'. And that really ... irked me, because why *can't* I wear dresses? It's not that I'm physically incapable ... but she shouldn't even reinforce these male stereotypes on me, when you know I'm not identifying as a man, when you know I'm identifying as non-binary, people can wear whatever they want, so can men [laughs] it was quite frustrating ... it just didn't make sense, why can't I just wear what makes me comfortable? I'm not going to come in like short shorts. I don't know there's a lot of bullshit around school uniforms, especially when it comes to trans students. Uhm. And like my head's not great, I help out on a school panel, on an open day thing and she misgendered me in front of the whole audience, she called us a group of girls and I was like 'great, thanks' [laughs]. She misgendered me in front of my parents on parents' evening and I walked out.

Through Jack's story, and those of the group above, we see that the impact of misgendering is often unconfined to a single moment/event: for example, Jack's headteacher's misgendering results in normative masculine gender roles and expectations placed upon them despite their openness about being non-binary. This constitutes an erasure built around trans-hostile assumptions and misinformation around non-binary lives that even limits the clothing Jack can wear at certain times and their comfort in everyday spaces such as school. We also see, again, how misgendering and 'out-of-placeness' it induces can take multiple forms with varying degrees of intensity—from private communication, the repeated misgendering by a parent in the home, to public misgendering 'in front of [a] whole audience'. In a cruel paradox, many participants described frequently feeling that a *burden* is placed on them and trans people more widely to constantly educate those who misgender them, ironically including those responsible for their care and wellbeing. This responsibility, while seemingly affording agency to young trans people to articulate their own realities or knowledge of gender diversity, can paradoxically initiate or increase feelings of 'out-of-placeness' as they become, following Ahmed, subject to questioning that requires young people to engage in emotional/political labour to maintain the comfort of privileged others who initiated the 'out-of-place' mechanism.

For several participants, misgendering and deadnaming had a deep-seated *bodily impact*, particularly when repeatedly encountered. Phil (he/him, 22–25), for example, told me that 'once I've been misgendered, my heartrate increases and I sort of feel *very angry* at the world.' This impact is *exacerbated in particular spaces*, particularly those co-created through bodily surveillance and institutional power. For example, participants accessing gender affirming healthcare often described how both misgendering and embodying certain gendered subjectivities or engaging in particular everyday life activities were seen by some practitioners as incongruous with (binary-)gendered expectations or with young people's autonomy. Several participants noted that these assumptions resulted in the denial of or delay in receiving particular healthcare treatments. Consider the following conversation between young people discussing their experiences of the NHS England Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) in London:

Eddy (pronouns unrecorded, 14–17): At the Tavistock [GIDS], I got asked 'do you watch trans YouTubers?' and at some points I've been like 'yeah I do'. Just because I love feeling that there's someone, somebody else

out there who's like me. But because of [saying] that they ended up prolonging my hormone blockers, and I still haven't got them, because they were like 'you're copying them, we want you to make your own path'. But I'm like 'what if my path is the one that they [the vloggers] have, what if it is?' ...

Marty (he/they, 14–17): [interrupts] At the end of the day, people don't decide that they're trans because of trans YouTubers ... A lot of people who know who they are, it's because *they have this suspicion* [that they might be trans]

Eddy: It's also the fact that the Tavistock, and other doctors I've been told by older trans people from GI and other places, that even if they want top surgery without going on testosterone, they won't do it if you're not on testosterone. And the Tavistock ... are telling these people that you can't make your own path, to only then meet doctors when you're over 18 who are telling you that *there actually is a path*. And so I'm now being denied the one thing in life that I want so much because I watch other YouTubers—where is the logic in that? And [they've] now put this logic in my mum's mind but *I do* [want the treatment] and it's like *nobody listens to me* ... My first set of clinicians, one of them has left the service for the year ... the other one has left too, so I've had to [palpable frustration] *explain everything to them over again* so ... the first eight sessions I had were useless! ... So not only am I educating people in general life I'm also educating these clinicians who have *power over my life* ... I've been a tomboy till I came out and I was only a tomboy because I didn't know what the term 'trans' meant. *And that's 15 years of knowing who I really am* and I come here with a waiting list of *two years* [only] for you to deny me ... And they say 'and the course of actually getting hormone blockers takes eight months' and I'm like 'so I'm *already gonna be 16* by the time I'm on hormone blockers, I'm not gonna get them before I'm 17 now'. I don't wanna wait until I'm 18 because [very emotively] *I want top surgery more than anything else in the world, I want that more than testosterone* and the doctors won't allow it, and it's *sooo* frustrating ... I'm fed up, I've been in this service [Tavistock] since I was 13, now I'm 15 and you've just finished my assessment because I've had all these changes and it's like 'this is not my fault!' And you're not listening to me because on the off chance I might be non-binary.

This conversation illustrates how young trans people are often made to feel 'out-of-place' through misgendering and lack of trust in their ability to self-determine their gender. In Eddy's story, for example, engaging in online content around trans issues, despite the virtual platform YouTube offering the ability to feel 'that there's someone ... else' like them, is taken as a sign of their uncertainty or incapacity and is used to justify limiting their bodily autonomy. In other terms, we see a tension between the two places involved in Eddy's story: with GIDS being a site of 'out-of-placeness' emergent from this experience and frustration associated with repeatedly 'explaining everything' to new practitioners, and YouTube—a virtual space where information around trans topics is disseminated to trans people by trans people—becoming a safe vehicle for Eddy to develop a sense of belonging. GIDS—in 2023 currently undergoing a decommissioning process and not offering new first assessment appointments (note that waiting times for services in England for those aged 18 and over in August 2023 were at an average of between 28 and 90 months; BBC, 2023)—becomes felt as a site of restriction because of the upholding of binary gendered norms and the experience of denial and power imbalance Eddy describes.

Eddy's speech also further emphasises that trans youth are often asked to constantly advocate for themselves to those who hold power over their bodies and lives. This involves, as Eddy describes, feeling that they are both 'educating people in general life' and educating those such as 'clinicians who have *power over*' their everyday life experiences within and beyond sites of institutional power. Following scholarship on trans temporalities (see e.g., Malatino, 2022; Rosenberg, 2017; discussion in Todd, 2023a), we also see that time scales until treatments are offered—and the increased likelihood of feeling *in place*—are stretched, particularly when altered by external, ever-changing actors who can place barriers and restrictions in front of the progress of treatment. Indeed, conditions within such medical and institutional spaces including GIDS left these young people and others who voiced similar concerns throughout the research feeling that misgendering themselves by describing themselves in binary-gendered terms would optimise their access to treatment, their ability to avoid extended periods of intrusive questioning, or simply to avoid feeling as though their transness caused spatial disturbance or public discomfort. This mechanism relates to Ahmed's (Ahmed, 2010b, p. 4) recognition that '[m]aintaining public comfort requires that certain bodies "go along with it." To refuse to go along with it ... is to be seen as causing trouble, as making others uncomfortable'. Indeed, this research repeatedly uncovered instances of trans youth actively impeding their own embodied comfort to avoid disrupting the dominant cisnormative spatial order.

3.2 | The experience of feeling others' hostile gazes

Throughout the research, participants described feeling often negative, antagonistic and otherwise hostile gazes others directed toward them in everyday spaces that produced feelings aligned with 'out-of-placeness'. I use 'gaze' here to refer to how young trans bodies are policed, surveilled and made (in)visible through (micro)aggressions and watchfulness (whether conscious or otherwise), anxiety attached to (anticipated or felt) hostile gazes, and hyperawareness and hypervigilance, and desire to become invisible, which those receiving hostile gazes embody (Mearns et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2013). I argue that such hostile gazes, as a form of embodied discrimination, can vary in intensity and can be produced collectively, publicly (i.e., when originating from multiple bodies and subsumed/radiated by the surrounding socio-material context), and individually (i.e., when directed toward particular trans youth from individuals/groups). Feeling and/or expecting the impact of hostile gazes and microaggressions forms a constant embodied presence for many trans youth. Kane (he/him, 18–21), a young person who travelled with his partner to live in the UK, discussed experiencing others staring at him 'up and down', encapsulating how it feels to fear and anticipate the consequences of these interactions:

Kane: I used to get really bad about it, like: [I'd think] 'they're gonna hurt me, they're going to follow me home, they're going to like say something and I just won't be able to handle it'.

James (researcher): What do those fears feel like?

Kane: Yeah it was just really scary especially when I first came here [to the UK], and my partner would be at work and I wouldn't work and we were living [in a hostel]. And it was like I couldn't stay in the room all day and I had to go somewhere and explore [outdoors but] the only person I knew would be at work. I was really scared that someone would hurt me or rob me and sometimes I'd get looks and I'd be like 'are they looking at me because I'm trans or because I'm young and I'm fresh meat? Why are they looking at me?' And just like I had thought at one point that like, I was like I'm gonna get murdered here'. Like I'd go back to the room and kinda chill there for a bit. Now that I've been out and about a bit more it's really good ... [talks about how he has crafted a positive space at home and by visiting safe spaces wherein he could 'be whoever I wanted to be when I was there'].

In Kane's story, we see the deep-seated impact that fearing being visibly trans in public space, and the consequences of this visibility, can exact. As a result of the 'looks' he received, and the violence he imagined and anticipated would subsequently occur, Kane repeatedly questioned others' gazes and subsequently restricted his movements in public space. This vigilance and anticipatory anxiousness around how to navigate everyday space—a common experience among participants—gives rise to particular spatial experiences and subjectivities. However, a theme of resilience in spite of 'out-of-placeness' continues here: Kane develops coping mechanisms—accessing spaces that alleviate his worries and fears and developing a more positive home environment—to live with everyday conditions wherein hostile gazes can be expected. Indeed, Kane later told me he now lives by a mantra of 'not caring' whether people will stare at him—rationalising the gaze to move beyond feelings of insecurity—even using a trans-themed sticker on his phone to publicly 'out' himself as trans. However, the ability to develop such resilience could be considered an outcome of relative privilege attached to improved socioeconomic conditions, living an urban life, and perhaps being a white trans man: Kane later described that he could only develop this resilience once moving beyond the hostel environment and moving to London. Here, we see that the mobilities enabled and restricted at times through the presence of hostile gazes, and the subsequent 'out-of-placeness' they exact, vary according to intersectional differences and relative privilege within young trans communities and between young trans subjects.

Kane's story can be compared to the participant artwork in [Figure 2](#). Using writing and imagery, the young person illustrates how they feel that '[p]eople don't make me feel comfortable to be me ...' while travelling in London, and shows themselves subject to public assumptions around gender performance policed through hostile gazes. Indeed, the quotes present on the artwork—including 'you still look like a woman', 'why are you wearing eyeliner', and 'I assume you're appealing to men who want to be with a woman'—illustrate, alongside the seemingly whispering, uncomfortable bodies seated behind (and projecting this discomfort toward) the main figure, how gender binaries are both expected and reinforced by potentially hostile others while young trans people move through public space. These quotes also reflect the repeated and seemingly constant questioning (or imagined future questioning) many



FIGURE 2 Participant artwork produced in body mapping exercise. [Colour figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1475-661.0.0)]

participants described experiencing, particularly when not conforming with binary gendered expectations associated with normative masculinity and femininity. The artwork also alludes to difficulties certain young trans people experience in other spaces, such as while dating even within broader LGBT+ communities ('I'm not into women, I'm gay'/'But I have a beard?!'). The young person in the artwork, however, maintains their resilience within, and develops resistance to, these norms and the public gaze of hostile others by maintaining their beard and working toward an authentic future self ('maybe me one day'), imagining or reflecting on living through space authentically using clothing as a marker of selfhood and identity. In doing so, they subvert their past experience and future expectations of receiving hostile gazes—and the anticipatory anxiousness they feel toward travelling on public transport as a result—to reduce their feelings of 'out-of-placeness' in the present moment.

As with Kane, who described anticipating hostile gazes within hypermasculine spaces, other participants talked of expecting such microaggressive gazes when in contact with particular individuals or groups, again most commonly cis men. Several participants described altering their behaviours ahead of contact with cis men to avoid potential conflict, in essence to alleviate the effects of 'out-of-placeness' around such bodies. As Rhys (he/they, 14–17) described:

... when it comes to people our age, I don't know what it is, it's just like ... it feels different, it feels like suddenly I don't like standing out, looking different to everybody else because I feel unsafe. Or I feel like people aren't gonna want to talk to me, or people are gonna judge me or like I dunno. I just kind of, I feel like I want to make myself more uncomfortable to make them more comfortable because I don't like the thought that like my existence is making them uncomfortable. Which is ridiculous, it's so stupid but it's just like the automatic thing. Like I don't want extra eyes on me so if I'm like thinking I look—, or I like this outfit and then I'm hanging out with those kind of people I'm like 'haaaa I don't like this outfit anymore'. Yeah I find like I act like them and dress like them and just like make them more comfortable which is quite stupid because they probably don't even recognise. But it's just so prominent in my head that I'm like 'I need to not act different to them', you know.

In this story fragment, to avoid a particularly intense hostile gaze from other young people (particularly cisgender men, as he reflected elsewhere) who might place 'extra eyes' on him, Rhys 'act[s] like them and dress[es] like them' only to increase the comfort of others, at the expense of Rhys' own comfort. Rhys' story demonstrates again how the (anticipated) actions of cis people to uphold cisnormativity and gender binaries and visibilise and ostracise those who transgress such expectations, leaves certain young trans people feeling 'out-of-place' and subsequently 'unsafe'. Rhys, careful to avoid 'the thought that [their] existence mak[es others around] them uncomfortable', 'feel[s] like [he] wants to make [themselves] more uncomfortable'—by 'not act[ing] different'—to increase others' comfort. In other terms, this self-regulatory performance of normativity both paradoxically increases Rhys' comfort in space (as a result of others' hostilities being suppressed/avoided) and increases their own internal feelings and embodied emotions associated with 'out-of-placeness'. However, the spatial comfort this quasi self-othering and conformity paradoxically affords Rhys reinscribes and reinforces cis privilege in particular spaces, and establishes young trans people as bodies and subjects that must always-already conform to cisgender norms to avoid the affective transmission of hostility. In other words, an outcome of this paradoxical system involves trans youth becoming charged in many settings with alleviating their own feelings of 'out-of-placeness'. Ironically, this means that trans youth must often work to become somewhat 'out-of-place' in order to feel less 'out-of-place'. Such moves, as Berlin and Brice (2022, p. 15, my emphasis) importantly describe, are often 'not oriented towards or away from governing norms but towards reducing friction, that is, towards *creating the conditions in which to thrive relatively unimpeded*'. This viewpoint is crucial as it allows us to understand how even when trans youth seem to be focused on others' comfort, there are often moves toward reclaiming agency, thriving, and self-comfort that underpin such spatial negotiations. In other terms, what may seem like becoming 'out-of-place' on the surface may actually be an effort to move through life with greater embodied ease. However, this mechanism does not always alleviate 'out-of-placeness' and can often only benefit the spatial and embodied comfort of others. As Karl (he/him, 22–25) explained:

I would rather myself be hurt than someone else and that was part of the reason why I was so desperate to try and be a woman. To try and be what would please people around me and society. What was easier for other people.

In the following section I focus on participants' experiences of socio-bodily dysphoria—a set of embodied experiences rarely examined through a geographical lens (March, 2021). I ask whether dysphoria can be spatially located, or understood in terms of its emergence and flourishing in certain sites, at certain times, or in relation to particular actors/socio-materialities. This approach allows me to conceptualise participants' dysphoric experiences as both contributing to, and emerging from, their experiences of 'out-of-placeness'.

4 | YOUNG TRANS PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF SOCIO-BODILY DYSPHORIA

4.1 | Introducing geographies of socio-bodily dysphoria

In this section, to avoid pathologising trans people by associating dysphoria solely with transness (or indeed to avoid 'render[ing] dysphoria the constitutive criteria of transness'; Malatino, 2022, p. 102), I distance my analyses and participants' stories from clinical or psychological dysphoria conceptualisations used in medical settings (see Pearce, 2018). These approaches to dysphoria involve medical practitioners pathologising trans people and 'procur[ing] the trans body

as demonstrating the authority of a “real” cisgender body’ by problematically attaching certain meanings to trans people’s dysphoric experiences (Moon, 2020, p. 198) or assuming that all trans folk experience dysphoria. Instead, I seek to recognise the social origins of dysphoria, ‘triggered by a plethora of forms of aggression, violence, marginalization, disciplining, harassment, and by a spectrum of highly gendered environments which must be navigated by people every day’ (March, 2021, p. 464). Indeed, dysphoria is an inherently geographical experience, one which can manifest as ‘essentially a kind of placelessness within oneself’ (ibid.: 462). Dysphoria, from this perspective, often occurs at moments at which past, present and future memories and bodily realities coalesce. Dysphoria, among other emotions, can be felt as a friction (Berlin & Brice, 2023) or yearning (Malatino, 2022). In phrasing in alignment with several participants’ descriptions, dysphoric feelings can emerge or be forced upon trans folk ‘at random times and in random places, and surface even years after transition is ostensibly complete’ (March, 2021, p. 462). For these reasons, dysphoria ‘can feel like being “outside” of time, and even reality’ (Morrigan, 2017, p. 56; see also Fournier, 2014). Indeed, there is much value in exploring dysphoric geographies, by understanding, for example, its spatially (dis)locating effects and bodily tenets, and how it influences, is felt, and accrues through time and in different spaces/places.

Participants often referred to two interwoven forms of dysphoria, namely social dysphoria and physical/bodily dysphoria (see also Brice, 2020). I refer loosely to bodily dysphoria as ‘distress a trans person may experience due to aspects of the body itself’ (Vincent, 2018, p. 62; rather than a more fixed definition supposing a direct dislocation between gender and the material body), whereas I use the term social dysphoria to describe dysphoric experiences emergent from social interactions, encounters and atmospheres that produce young trans people as ‘out-of-place’ and reinforce their exhaustion (Todd, 2023a). Recognising that participants often spoke about the messy, complex ways in which these forms of dysphoria were entangled and often worked in tandem, I introduce the term *socio-bodily dysphoria*. I do so to capture this entangledness, recognise how dysphoria is socially (re)produced and lived through as an ‘individuating’ experience (Malatino, 2022),⁴ and reflect that dysphoria can both emerge from feelings around one’s own self/body and from uncomfortable or dislocating spatial experiences. The following stories introduce moments of dysphoria brought about through acts of potentially hostile others, deep-rooted feelings of embodied dysphoria that emerge from and are connected to a multiplicity of past, present and imagined future experiences, and those that arise from feeling incongruous or ‘out of step’ with spatially embedded societal expectations.

Trans youth stories attest to the often highly limiting nature of social and bodily dysphoria with any number of negative impacts on young trans people’s everyday lives. I also argue that dysphoria can also paradoxically produce mechanisms of trans recognition while acting as a system of trans oppression. For example, vocalising dysphoria might, for some trans youth, produce validating reactions from others or lead to the creation of trans spaces or forms of trans solidarity and connectedness. As Billie (she/her, 18–21) explained, referencing dysphoria and not ‘passing’ as a trans woman, ‘sometimes I think, “OK, [people] see me as a guy, I don’t care. My friends in GI love me, they see me as a trans woman, or just a woman in fact without the word trans in it”’.

The origins of dysphoria as often lying spatially beyond the body is clear in the following conversation between romantic partners Axel (he/him, 22–25) and Wren (they/them, 22–25). In Wren’s story, their dysphoria and bodily discomforts are typically tied to such actions of others as misgendering and more general social conditions, whereas Axel’s dysphoria more commonly emerges out of witnessing currently unattainable positive representations of trans people deeper into transition. In these excerpts we also see that dysphoria around the body itself is often not a strong or present force in many young trans people’s everyday lives (indeed many participants described having no dysphoria or experiencing dysphoria only at irregular intervals), demonstrating the value of affirming trans lives in everyday life:

Wren: So my like physical dysphoria isn’t really a main problem I have, it’s not really a strong problem, or something that I struggle with that much. So I kind of came at it from a perspective that uhm er, like the problems that people have with their bodies matching up with their gender came from like an outside perspective, with people looking at them, misgendering them based on their body. So like, as I didn’t really have that like physical dysphoria kind of like experience, it just meant that from quite early on I had not a disconnect, but I was [already] starting to remove body from gender, and that sort of thing. Not to say that people who have dysphoria are not doing that, but yeah ...

Axel: For Wren it’s more social dysphoric, like being when people say like ‘ladies’ and stuff.

Wren: Yeah that’s what causes more problems for me, coming from an external input rather from within myself.

Axel: ... for me, it's more like realising the first way I knew I was realising I had physical dysphoria, and was just really uncomfortable. In like body and stuff. And so er, thinking about how watching [trans people further on in their transitions on] YouTube [on one hand] makes me feel, it's really kind of bittersweet because it's oh that, it makes me really happy because I could look like that one day but it [also] makes me feel really bad that I don't look like it yet. But it just makes me, it gives me really strong feelings.

Here, we see that Wren's dysphoria is tied to particular moments where they do not 'pass' from the perspectives of others. Axel's dysphoria, conversely, is tied to complex emotions entangled in his imaginations of a future self, brought about through encountering audiovisuals of trans people further in a transition process. As other participants attest, these distinct forms of dysphoria are implicated in a wider system of 'out-of-placeness' when they arise, or are carried between, particular spaces.

4.2 | Socio-bodily dysphoria and 'out-of-placeness'

To continue exploring how dysphoria functions as a set of mechanisms that induce 'out-of-placeness' for trans youth, I want to turn to a workshop in which a small group of participants were creating body maps (see Figure 3) reflecting the embodied experience of socio-bodily dysphoria and an array of experiences linked to 'out-of-placeness'. In these sessions, I talked with the young people as they crafted their 'maps':

James (researcher): What about yours [reading from body map] what is around me' ... what's this arrow pointing at there?

Sammy: Oh just like, well this is all like certain dysphoric stuff. So everything's too small. But sometimes I feel like I'm too big for stuff as well ... it's like when I walk in a room and [I'm] like 'I really want out of here', because I feel like I'm taking up such a big place. And it can be something as simple as someone just looking



FIGURE 3 Sammy's (left) and Rhys' (right) body maps illustrating elements of socio-bodily dysphoria. [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

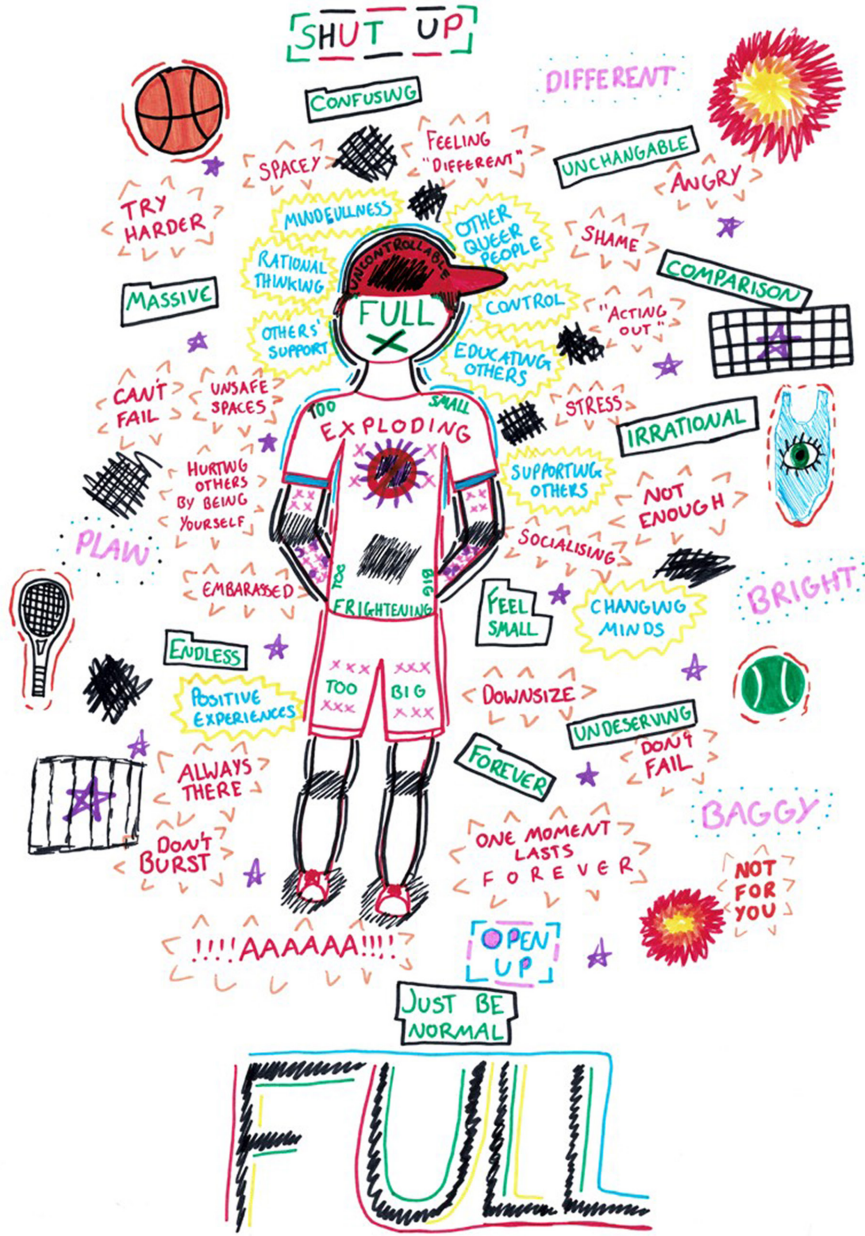


FIGURE 3 (Continued)

at me, or like if I go into a room, my shoes that I wear for school, my Doc Martens, they're really squeaky. And I really hate having to walk across classrooms and such, especially when people are sitting down, just because of the sound. And I can feel people's eyes on me, which I can understand, like people aren't [nec- sarily] looking at me like 'oh what are you doing?' but it's just like looking to see where the noise is coming from. But that makes me feel like people are looking ...

In this excerpt, and in Sammy's artwork, we see their spatial-altering experience of dysphoria laid bare. In the art piece, phrases such as 'you can't escape me', 'deep breaths' and 'keep to a [heart] beat', along with the clouded brain, separation of the torso from the legs, emphasised heart, lungs, and other organs, body surfaces, and imagined/felt body lines that indicate flashpoints of emotional intensity illustrate how dysphoric feelings are felt by, and performed through, (aspects of) their body. Meanwhile, the presence of the insult of being referred to as 'that', along with the invasive internal dialogue of feeling 'not enough' and 'embarrassment' combine with these effects to intensify and amplify the experience of dysphoria and subsequent 'out-of-placeness'. Sammy's powerful words also speak to the impact of ongoing dysphoric feelings in terms of their relationship to and embodied (dis)comfort within certain

spaces. Describing themselves as ‘feel[ing] like I’m taking up such a big place’ when ‘walk[ing] in a room’ evokes Ahmed’s thinking around the hypervisibility of ‘out-of-place’ bodies, the atmospheric change the ‘out-of-place’ feel they cause when entering certain spaces, and the discomfort trans youth are made to feel they are causing to others with their presence. Indeed, Sammy describes feeling that their body is physically too large and takes up ‘such a big place’ because of the bodily tension they feel and their anxious anticipation (based upon previous experiences) of receiving hostile gazes and creating tension among others, merely through inhabiting space. This illustrates how socio-bodily dysphoria and other mechanisms producing ‘out-of-placeness’ can often work in tandem to drastically reduce young trans people’s feelings of being able to merely occupy or move through everyday spaces. Indeed, other participants described feeling the contours of their body did not align with the events and atmospheres they felt in certain everyday spaces.

Rhys’ artwork tells a similar story to Sammy’s in its highlighting of particular body parts and surfaces—shoulders that are ‘too small’, hips and thighs that are ‘too big’, and the feeling of an ‘exploding’ chest and ‘uncontrollable’ brain—they feel dysphoric about or where flashpoints of emotional intensity are situated, and illustrates how such bodily dysphoric feelings connect to other forms of social dysphoria and feelings associated with ‘out-of-placeness’. In Rhys’ work, again, we see emotions that both emerge from and reproduce ‘out-of-placeness’): including ‘hurting others by being yourself’, ‘shame’, ‘stress’ and ‘feeling “different”’ (although there are allusions to mechanisms of alleviation such as ‘mindfulness’, ‘rational thinking’, ‘other queer people’, ‘supporting others’ and other examples rendered in blue text). These emotional experiences, alongside Rhys’ internally and externally produced social and bodily dysphoria, lead to a sense of emotional uncontrollability, fear and an overwhelming fullness and need to, similarly to Sammy, ‘downsize’. As Rhys told me:

that’s kind of what I try and do when I feel out of place I kind of try and feel smaller and look smaller and that’s when I like start to wish that I wasn’t wearing such bright clothing and stuff like that. Cos it’s like, I’m just trying to be as small as possible.

Such attempts to draw attention away from themselves—as visibly trans, as a potential outsider, or as a potential locus for hostility—were behaviours that several participants described engaging in. Similarly, participants also developed mechanisms of spatial/emodied withdrawal, including using such materials as headphones and fiddle toys for deep, sensory distraction from anxieties imbued in everyday spaces, engaging in ‘character creation’ for a similar embodied withdrawal, and by leaning into dissociative techniques and modes of being.

4.3 | Dissociation

Several participants expanded on their experience of dysphoria and dissociation, an experience that can involve consciously or unconsciously ‘detaching physically, psychologically, and emotionally from spaces, institutions, situations, relationships’ and the body (Malatino, 2022, p. 35). For example, Jack (they/them, 21) told me ‘when I *see my body* there’s just a massive disconnect because I don’t *see me* ... myself and my body aren’t like *the same thing to me*’. This is not always an intensely sensory and bodily experience. As Jón described:

Quite often, like with dysphoria and everything, I tend to become very dissociated. As like a coping mechanism. And so I tend to feel very detached from my body a lot of the time. And so it’s not very much like a, a physical thing. I’ve always ever since being a kid had a very, very strong imagination. And I’ve always just kind of like imagined myself in other situations and imagined how I perceive myself and how I would like to be and stuff ... it’s a very much like a living in my head kind of thing. It’s very much like a not like a physical weight ... [laughs] but erm almost like an emptiness and that kind of detachment, almost. Cos you’re constantly like trying to reach the thing that you’re waiting for, but it’s ... you’re waiting for it, it’s like a *lack* of something.

Following Ahmed, we can see this dissociation involving disorientation and withdrawal from normatively inhabiting space in order to focus on imaginative future or alternative embodiments as a consequence and driver of ‘out-of-placeness’. Malatino (2022, p. 77) describes such numbing coping mechanisms as space-clearing mechanisms that enable the navigation of memories and dislocating affects and as modes of ‘turning down the volume on our sensorium’. In other terms, feeling and emanating a lack of affect through bodily detachment can become a phenomenological orientation that trans youth adopt to alleviate overwhelming or dislodging affective dynamics and navigate everyday life scenarios.

A further participant, Karl, described bodily dissociation as a ‘mask of pretending’ as ‘coping mechanism[s] for deal[ing] with dysphoria’, life events he ‘wasn’t able to keep up with’, and his other physical health conditions:

I dealt with my dysphoria for years through dissociation. Like *extreme* dissociation. So I ... when I thought about myself, I thought about myself like a floating head. Like literally, didn’t have a body, couldn’t wash, couldn’t do all sorts ... could barely [function], would have to go somewhere so far away to do these basic things like get dressed and wash and this sort of thing. Erm, completely steered away from sex, couldn’t deal with it ... I couldn’t take care of myself physically because I couldn’t even be comfortable with the reality of my physical body because of my gender, [my] dysphoria.

Here, dissociation works as both a conscious and unconscious coping mechanism and spatial practice that allows young people to mentally detach from a physical and/or cognitive presence in spaces where dysphoria arises; the surfacing of dysphoric and dissociative embodied emotions even limits Karl’s bodily functions (dressing, washing, sex). As Israeli-Nevo (2017) writes, such dissociation dislocates trans folk who experience it from ‘cis linear temporality’ as they are encouraged to ‘put [their] trust in the distant future’. Moreover, although the body is defined through its lack of presence and absence of felt dimensions—a kind of ‘out-of-bodiness’ (particularly in Karl’s story)—it becomes an important space itself through which trans youth can perform and inhabit differentially in relation to specific events and encounters or from which trans youth can cognitively detach. This dissociation is thus both a means of alleviating and seeking respite from ‘out-of-placeness’ and a means of becoming physically ‘out-of-place’ by mentally detaching from the body or certain body parts. In other terms, this dissociation can involve removing oneself from the space and place of the body itself, halting bodily sensations, disrupting the flow of body–space interactions, and/or projecting to imagined (other) selves and past, present or future (alternative) space-times. As Malatino (2022, p. 36) describes, this dissociation often comes to have a lasting imprint on both the bodies of those who experience it and ‘the multiple milieu they move with and within’. Such ‘flat’ affective and bodily detachments, and indeed a much wider range of orientations toward embodiment beyond binary, cisnormative bodily conceptions and experiences that emerge through ‘out-of-placeness’, deserve a greater deal of geographical attention.

5 | CONCLUSIONS

In this work, I have examined young trans people’s experiences of being positioned as ‘out-of-place’, and subsequently feeling and (re)embodying the dislocating affects of and embodied emotions associated with ‘out-of-placeness’ within a breadth of everyday spaces and times. Building on Ahmed’s work to continue considering how a ‘trans conception of space’ might operate (Brice, 2023, p. 3), I have developed a conceptual language that can recognise how young trans people and bodies emerge as ‘out-of-place’, and experience and react to spatialised and embodied ‘out-of-placeness’ and socio-bodily dysphoria through co-constitutive relationships between individuals, bodies, socio-political forces, particularly those hostile to trans youth in the UK. This reading enabled me to consider my participants’ experiences of misgendering and deadnaming, encountering others’ hostile and microaggressive gazes, and socio-bodily dysphoria as non-exhaustive ways that they experience and embody ‘out-of-placeness’ in the current socio-political context of the UK. My attention to the geographies of socio-bodily dysphoria reflects some of the myriad ways that dysphoria emerges and is embodied and encountered spatially. This spatial concept of dysphoria opens novel modes for considering the body–space interactions of marginalised people positioned as ‘out-of-place’ and experiencing ‘out-of-placeness’ beyond (cis)normative frameworks, for example by examining how the space of the body can be detached or dissociated from or experienced and lived as a shrinking and growing space, absent presence, resistive tool, coping mechanism and more.

Throughout this work, I have examined the temporalities of ‘out-of-placeness’, particularly by attending to how trans youth often *repeatedly* become and feel ‘out-of-place’ within and beyond, for example, everyday space-times that are not affectively or socio-politically structured to expect or facilitate the presence of (young) trans bodies. I have reflected on how hostile affective atmospheres can be sparked for and felt by trans youth specifically in certain everyday spaces and moments, a reading that allowed me to recognise how participants may feel anticipatory anxiousness around and toward such spaces and times. This anticipatory anxiousness, as participants’ stories attested, recognises again how many trans youth constantly expect to become positioned as ‘out-of-place’, and thus encounter and perform through particular spaces with a heightened awareness of their ‘out-of-placeness’. Such mechanisms initiate a feedback loop that recognises how trans youth that are positioned as ‘out-of-place’ come to expect to feel ‘out-of-place’, thus increasing their feelings of ‘out-of-placeness’. As I explore elsewhere, although this can be a

particularly exhausting and spatially and temporally unsettling experience, it can paradoxically initiate potentialities for trans joy and resilience, resistance and restoration (Todd, 2023a). Indeed, as Rosenberg (2017, p. 92, my emphasis) recognises, such non-linear, layered experiences of time initiated by 'out-of-placeness', the disciplining of trans bodies, and living through specifically trans temporalities of everyday life can also paradoxically offer 'moments of reprieve, remind [trans folk] of our pain and open *pathways for survival*'.

As participants' stories also attest, many trans youth are often repeatedly reinforced as though they are spatially and socially disruptive. For example, participant narratives indicate how trans youth might constantly experience questioning and disbelief around their transness and/or gender, regularly feel the emotional force of entering a room and causing an atmospheric disturbance, or regularly feel the dislocating experience of being a focal point in cisnormative space. As such, trans youth can be paradoxically placed as responsible for alleviating their own 'out-of-placeness' through, for example, avoiding certain spaces, attempting to 'pass' and/or limit their authentic selves, educating/confronting others who misgender/deadname them or otherwise perpetuate hostility and exclusion, or affectively or sensorily dissociating from everyday space and the body. In a cruel paradox, trans youth must often work to become 'out-of-place' in order to feel less 'out-of-place': in other words, oftentimes they must conform to cisnormative and gendered norms and expectations to avoid encountering hostile or displacing affects. Through the similarity and pervasive layering of 'out-of-placeness'-producing affects across many everyday sites, young trans people's experience of 'out-of-placeness' can, again, become bound to certain space-times toward which they may subsequently feel such emotional conditions as anticipatory anxiousness and socio-bodily dysphoria. The embodied experiences discussed in this article through trans youth stories, the impact of the current UK and wider societal context on trans communities more broadly (Todd, 2023b), and the more affirming and restorative practices and spaces trans folk engage in as a result, must be given urgent and broad attention by social scientists committed to trans liberation.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Research data are not shared.

ORCID

James David Todd  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7496-8634>

ENDNOTES

¹This framework establishes my conceptualisation of the relationship between emotions and embodiment, one focused on the accrual of affects and emotions associated with 'out-of-placeness' over time and through space.

²Collaborative workshop spaces were always supported by the presence of a trans and/or queer specialist youth worker.

³The majority of participants were trans men and non-binary people (although some were trans women), reflecting the average service user attendance. The charity in Scotland shared that the majority of their service users are from 'disadvantaged' or working class backgrounds; all participants in Scotland were white. In London, there was a mix of participants who were local and those who travelled from much further afield (including one who travelled from beyond England), reflecting the limited provision of services across the UK; several young people of colour were participants, and participants disclosed a range of class backgrounds.

⁴Malatino (2022, p. 103) proposes that we focus also on 'envy' and 'yearning' as 'barometer[s] of desire and disenfranchisement'. This can be an empowering experience as to recognise envy 'is to admit that we want what we want: a different kind of embodiment, another gendered modality of being in the world, at least some measure of comfort in ... our enfolded and carnal selves'.

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