

# **GENDERQUEER LOGIC AND MAYONNAISE**

**ELLIE RIPLEY (THEY/SHE)**  
**[HTTPS://NEGATION.ROCKS](https://negation.rocks)**

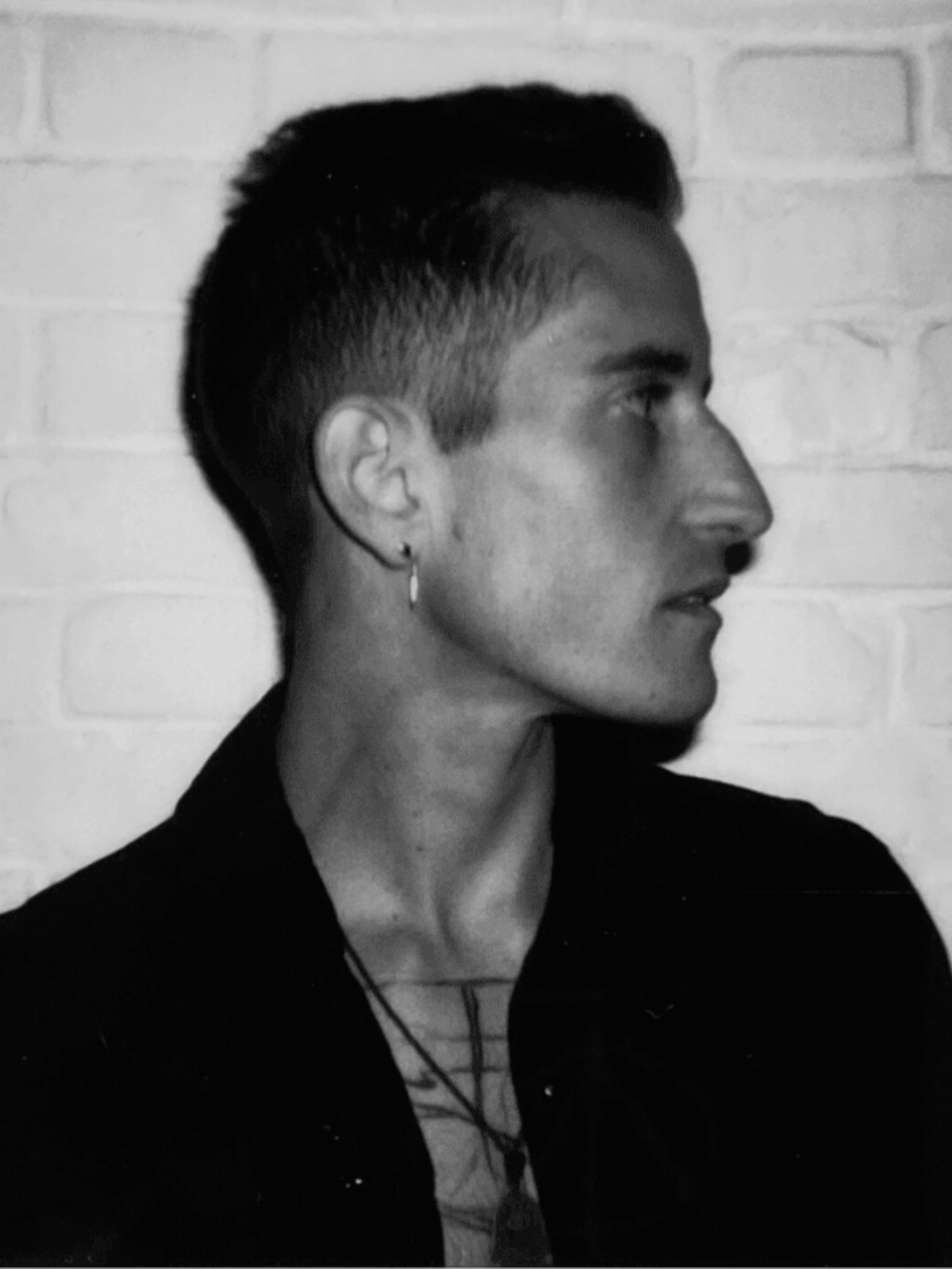
**TRANSGRESSING BOUNDARIES 2026**  
**LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE**

# THE PLAN

- ♀ Dembroff on genderqueer
- ♀ Eckert on genderqueering feminist logic
- ♀ A problem for Eckert in particular
- ♀ Lugones on splitting and curdling
- ♀ A problem for genderqueer logic



**ROBIN DEMBROFF,  
"BEYOND BINARY: GENDERQUEER  
AS CRITICAL GENDER KIND" (2020)**



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- ♀ **Dembroff proposes *critical kinds* as those whose members destabilise core elements of dominant ideology**
  - ♀ **Dominant gender ideology is understood through a four-part model**
  - ♀ ***Genderqueer* people are then said to destabilise the "binary axis" in particular**

# THE BINARY AXIS

- ♀ Dembroff identifies between two and five features of the binary axis:  
"The genders *men* and *women* are [1] binary, [2] discrete, [3] immutable, [4] exclusive, and [5] exhaustive."
- ♀ Of these, 4 and 5 bear the weight

# THE BINARY AXIS

- ♀ **Genderqueer people, then, destabilise an ideology that holds the categories *men and women* to be**
  - ♀ **exclusive: nobody is both a man and a woman**
  - ♀ **exhaustive: everybody is either a man or a woman**

**MAUREEN ECKERT,  
"RE-CENTERING AND GENDERQUEERING  
VAL PLUMWOOD'S FEMINIST LOGIC" (FORTHCOMING)**

A painting of two muscular men wrestling. The man on the left is wearing a white shirt and has dark skin. The man on the right is wearing a red shirt and has light skin. They are both flexing their muscles. The background is a dark, textured grey.

**FUCK  
THE BINARY**

**NONCLASSICAL  
LOGICIANS**

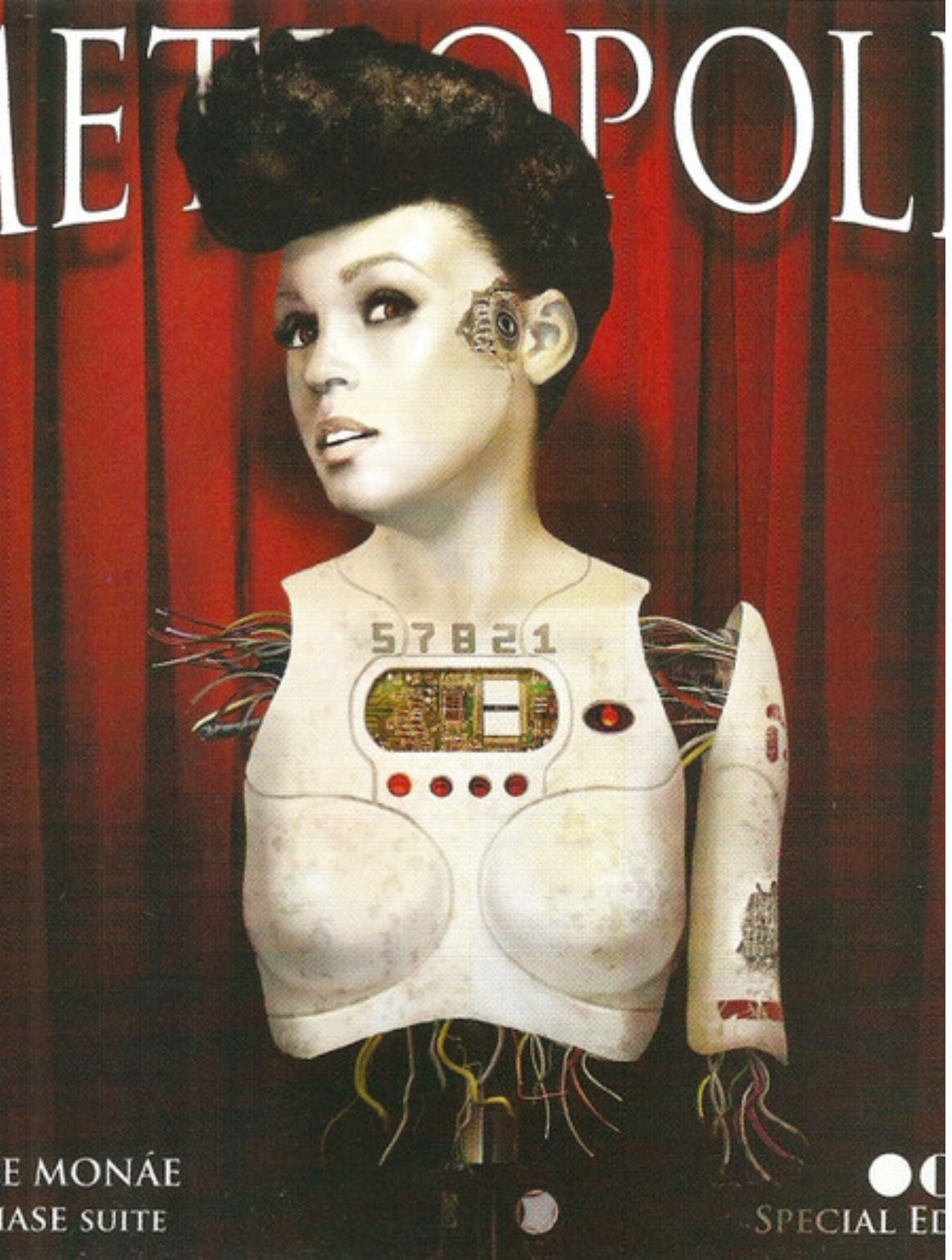
**GENDERQUEER  
PEOPLE**

- 
- ♀ **Eckert provides a logical model of this destabilisation**
  - ♀ **Uses (American-plan) FDE, with four truth values: True, False, Both, Neither**



# **AVOID THIS MISUNDERSTANDING!**

- ♀♂ **Eckert is *not* proposing to understand genderqueerness by simply adding two more genders, bringing us to a grand total of four.**
- ♀♂ **The idea is that for *every* category, each person can be situated with respect to that category in one of four ways.**
- ♀♂ **No commitment to any limitation in the number or variety of categories!**



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# JANELLE MONÁE

- ♀ **"My pronouns are free-ass motherfucker---and they/them, her/she"**
- ♀ **"I'm nonbinary, so I don't see myself as a woman, solely. I feel all of my energy. I feel like god is so much bigger than 'he' or 'she'. And if I am from god, I am everything. I am everything. But I will always, always stand with women. I will always stand with Black women. But I just see everything I am. Beyond the binary."**

# JEFFREY MARSH

- ♀ "[M]y personal feeling has always been that I just have buckets and buckets of gender. I just have a wheelbarrow full. I just have plenty for me and everybody."
- ♀ "I am a special snowflake and so is everybody else on the planet, and we all deserve to be respected in certain ways. And for me to be in conversation with people and have them go "he" and "him" and have that feel, not only not right, but... Like, wow, this person does not really understand me, or know me, or respect me...it just felt like it was time to start asking people for something else."



# ECKERT'S CATEGORICAL VERDICTS:

## Monáe:

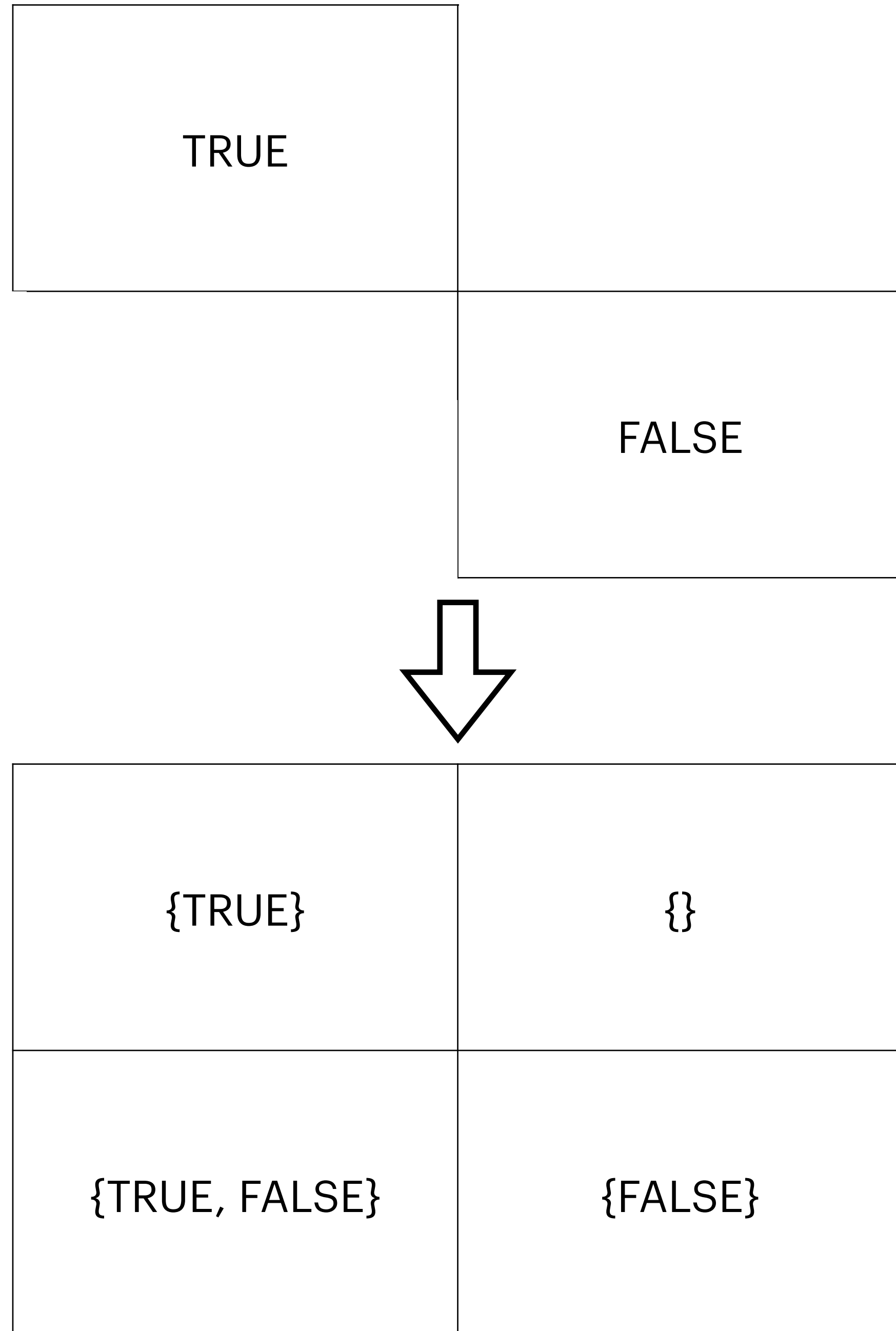
man	F
woman	F
non-binary	T
neither man nor woman	T

## Marsh:

man	T, B, N, or F
woman	T, B, N, or F
non-binary	T
neither man nor woman	T, B, N, or F
both man and woman	T, B, N, or F

# THE UPSHOT

- ♀ **Each categorisation comes with four options**
- ♀ **"[F]our-valued logics precisely capture the destabilization of, and resistance to, the exclusive and exhaustive gender binary categories..."**
- ♀ **"[C]lassical logic cannot capture the critical component that defines Janelle and Jeffery's [sic] experience."**



**A PROBLEM FOR THIS PARTICULAR  
APPROACH**

# FDE AND THE BINARY AXIS

♀ **Exclusion and exhaustion  
between *men* and *women* are  
the keys to the binary axis**

♀ **But: two truth values can *already*  
handle overlap and underlap  
between *men* and *women***

♀ **No need (or use) for  
nonclassicality here!**

{man}	}
{man, woman}	{woman}

# FDE AND THE BINARY AXIS

♀ FDE goes beyond classical:  
offers over/underlap between  
each category and *its negation*

♀ This correctly describes some  
genderqueer people (and  
others)

♀ But it doesn't capture or model  
resistance to the binary axis!

{man}	}
{man, not man}	{not man}

# CONFLATION AND THE BINARY

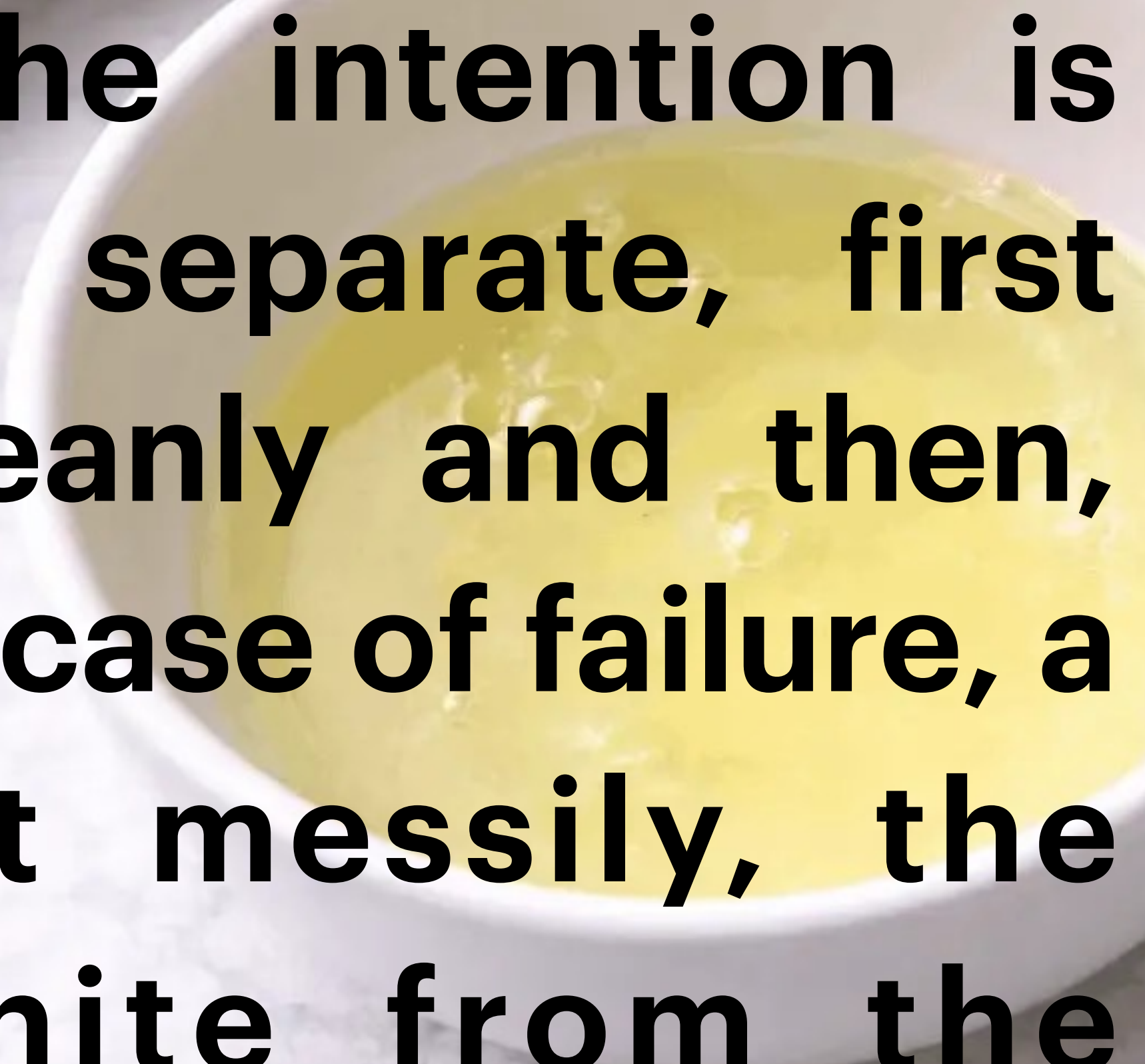
- ♀♂ **The binary axis also *conflates*: treating *men* and *not-women* as the same, and vice versa**
- ♀♂ **Overlap/underlap between *men* and *women* is the same, from the point of view of the binary axis, as between *men* and *not-men***

# CLASSICAL DESTABILISATION

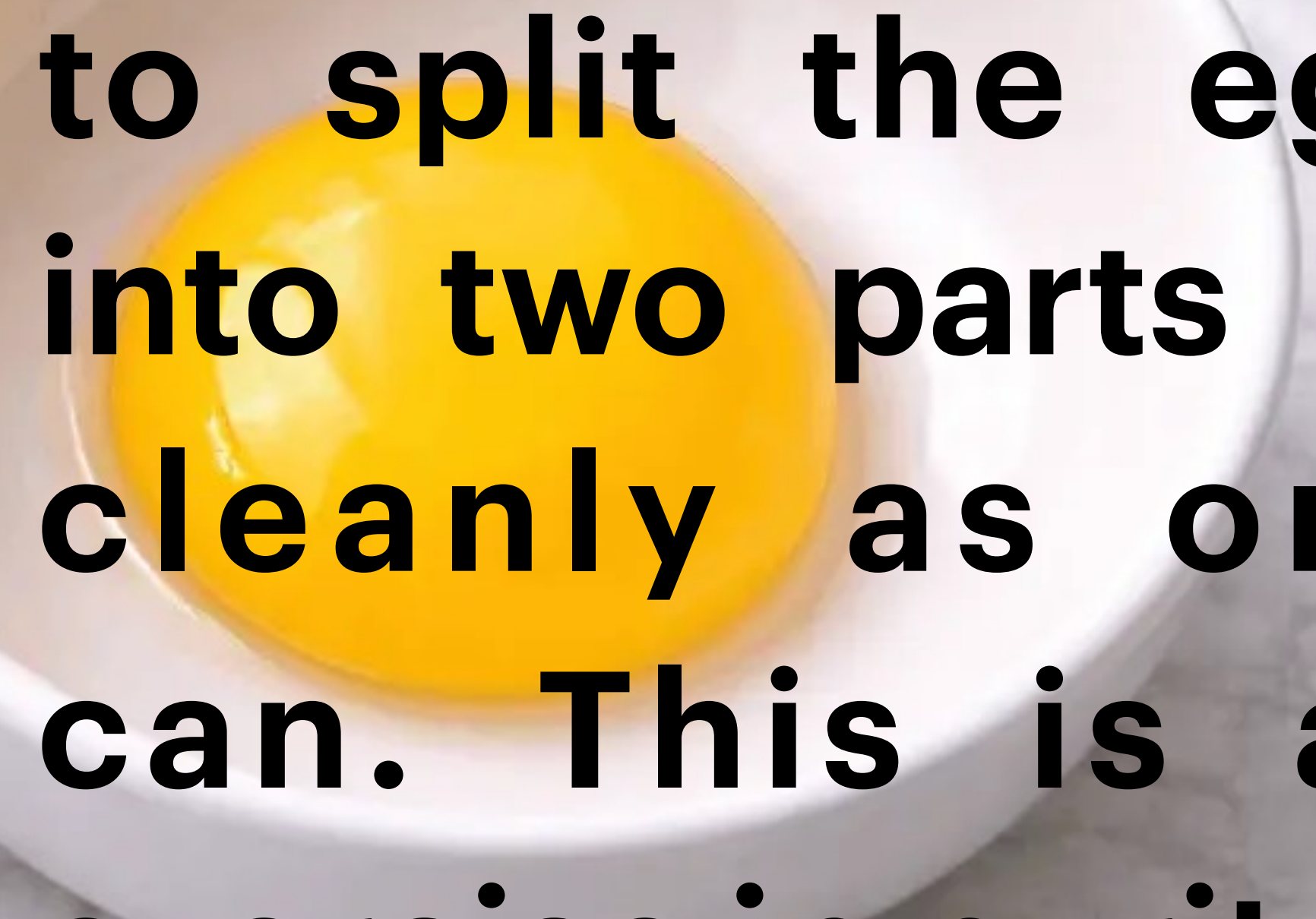
- ♀ Insisting on a classically-understood overlap or underlap between *men and women* is thus doubly destabilising:
- ♀ It pushes against exclusion or exhaustion between these categories,
- ♀ and it also pushes against the conflation

**MARÍA LUGONES,  
"PURITY, IMPURITY, AND SEPARATION" (1994)**

# **SPLIT-SEPARATION**



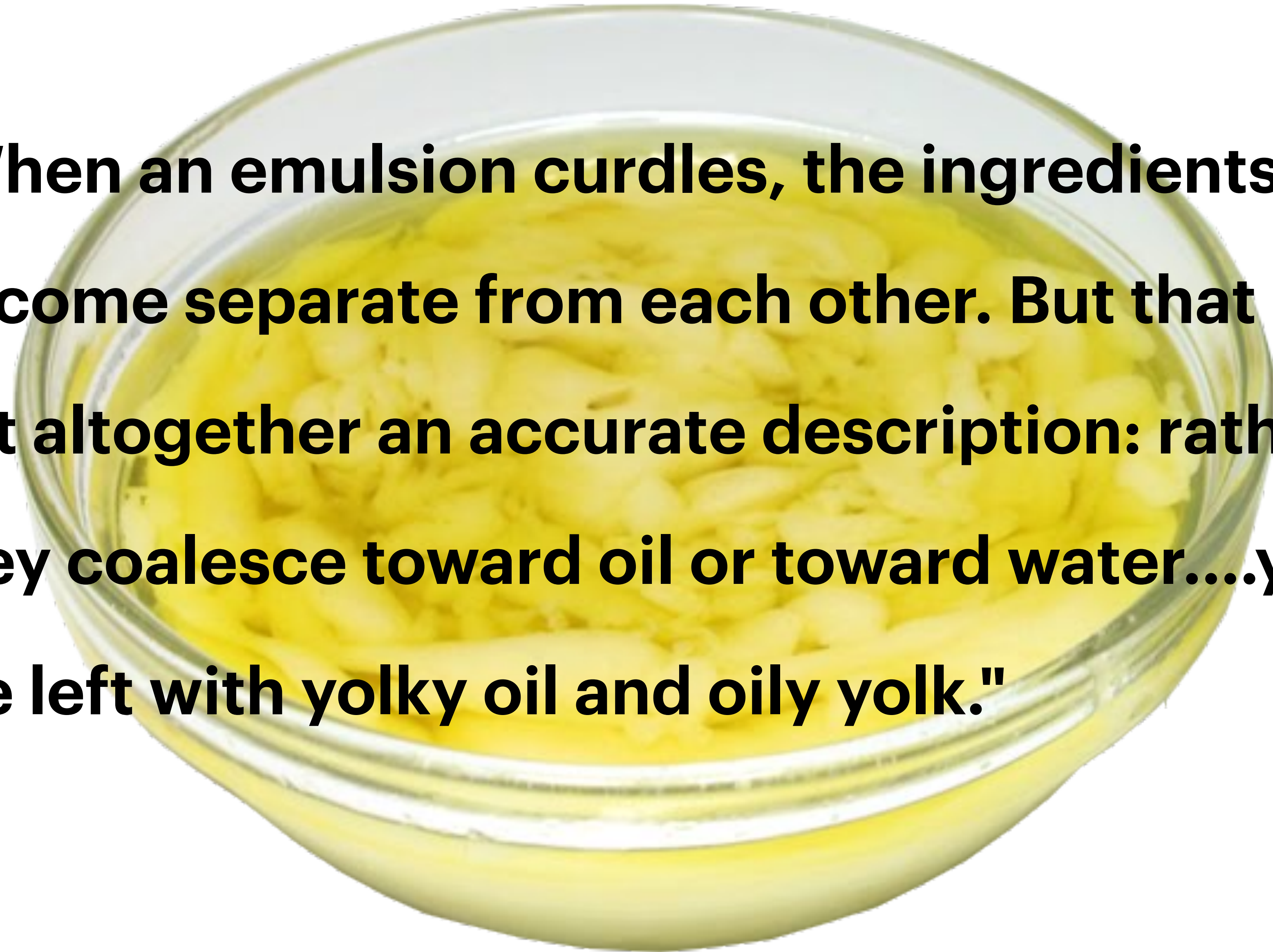
**"The intention is to separate, first cleanly and then, in case of failure, a bit messily, the white from the yolk,**



**to split the egg into two parts as cleanly as one can. This is an exercise in purity."**

# **CURDLED-SEPARATION**

**"When an emulsion curdles, the ingredients become separate from each other. But that is not altogether an accurate description: rather, they coalesce toward oil or toward water....you are left with yolky oil and oily yolk."**



- ♀ **Split-separation is associated with clean boundaries, control, precision, rationality, abstraction, categorisation**
- ♀ **It leads to conceptions of people as fragmented, composed of distinct parts**
- ♀ **eg my whiteness is the same as other white people's whiteness, and there is a "rest" of me besides that part**





- ♀ **Curdled-separation is associated with messiness, ambiguity, hybridity, impurity, transition, liminality**
- ♀ **It leads to conceptions of people as multiple rather than fragmented**
- ♀ **It provides for internal diversity within groups in part by refusing sharp boundaries**

# **SPLIT-SEPARATION AND POWER**

- ♀ **A well-known risk of line-drawing: the *inside* of the line gets homogenised**
- ♀ **Certain members of a group are taken to stand in for the group as a whole: the "needs, interests, ways" of other members are understood as not group-related**
- ♀ **Doubling down on split-separation just reproduces the issue**
- ♀ **But avoiding categories altogether obscures the role of race, gender, class, etc**



We're all unique individuals and there's nothing more to say.

Oppressive power is uniform racism + uniform sexism + maybe two or three more things like that.



# **CURDLED-SEPARATION AND RESISTANCE**

- ♀ **Lugones offers curdled-separation as a way forward**
- ♀ **Not an avoidance of categories, but an attitude toward them**
- ♀ **Getting messy, avoiding clean lines, remaining open to surprising company, "people who deny purity and are looking for each other"**

# STRATEGIES OF CURDLING

"festive resistance"

♀ multilingual experimentation

♀ caricaturing the selves we are in the worlds of our oppressors, infusing them with ambiguity

♀ practicing trickstery and foolery

♀ categorial blurring and confusion

♀ withdrawing our services from the pure or their agents whenever possible and with panache

♀ revealing the process of producing order if we cannot help producing it

**A PROBLEM FOR GENDERQUEER LOGIC**

# LOGIC AND SPLIT-SEPARATION

- ♂ ♀ **Logical tools fit split-separation perfectly**
- ♂ ♀ **We logicians often deal with messiness in categories either by ignoring it, or else by cleaning it up**
- ♂ ♀ **Precision is the name of the game!**

# WHAT DOES LOGIC CAPTURE?

♀ Boole, *The Laws of Thought* (London, 1854), introducing negation:

"Thus if  $x$  be taken to represent men, and  $y$  Asiatics, i.e. Asiatic men, then the conception of "All men except Asiatics" will be expressed by  $x - y$ .

...

Still representing by  $x$  the class "men", and by  $y$  "Asiatics," let  $z$  represent the adjective "white." Now to apply the adjective "white" to the collection of men expressed by the phrase "Men except Asiatics" is the same as to say "white men, except white Asiatics." Hence we have

$$z(x - y) = zx - zy$$

This is also in accordance with the laws of ordinary algebra."

# READING LOGIC WITH SUSPICION

- ♀ To be sure, Boole is not trying to describe gender or race
- ♀ But that's what he reaches for to illustrate the kinds of categorisation logic is suited to handle
- ♀ In London. In 1854.
- ♀ This should make us at least a little suspicious, right?

# WHY DESTABILISE THE BINARY?

- ♀ **Genderqueer thinkers are keen to destabilise, among other things, exclusion and exhaustion between *men and women***
- ♀ **But for a reason: there's something rotten behind the way gender categories are applied (ie nonconsensually) and used (ie abusively)**
- ♀ **Destabilising the binary axis *alone*, leaving all else fixed, is no victory**

# CISHETEROPATRIARCHAL RECAPTURE

- ♀ **Certain contemporary institutions allow exhaustion between *men* and *women* to fail, while disturbing as little else as possible**
- ♀ **"Ok, three categories now, whatever; back to business as usual"**
- ♀ **Split-separated models of gender help this work smoothly**

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# MARQUIS BEY

FROM "NO NEED FOR GENDER" (2026)

**"Gender's administrative life--its checkboxes, its forced declarations, its protocols of legibility---is not an unfortunate add-on to an otherwise neutral social order; it is a *colonial* technique of world-making, a way modernity learned to sort bodies into governable units and then pretend that sorting is nature."**



# **THE "CLASSIFICATORY APPETITE"**

- ♀ The clean lines of split-separation serve bureaucratic, administrative, and social control**
- ♀ What about "withdrawing our services" instead?**
- ♀ Genderqueer resistance often takes the form of curdling**

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# RIKI ANNE WILCHINS

FROM "IN YOUR FACE" 1 (1995):

**"It's about *all* of us who are genderqueer: diesel dykes and stone butches, leatherqueens and radical fairies, nelly fags, crossdressers, intersexed, transsexuals, transvestites, transgendered, transgressively gendered, and those of us whose gender expressions are so complex they haven't even been named yet."**



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# RIKI ANNE WILCHINS

FROM "IN YOUR FACE" 1 (1995):

**"More than that, it's about the gender oppression which affects *everyone*: the college sweetheart who develops life-threatening anorexia nervosa trying to look 'feminine', the Joe Sixpack dead at 45 from cirrhosis of the liver because 'real men' are hard drinkers. But maybe we genderqueers feel it most keenly.."**



# WHAT ARE WE CAPTURING?

- ♀ This messy alliance can't be captured by rolling out precise categories
- ♀ That's good! I have no intention of being captured; I would prefer to remain at large

# CURDLING VIA LOGIC

- ♀ I hope logic can *join in* the festive resistance, rather than taxonomising it. But how?
- ♀ Taking a formal model of gender and mathfucking it? (Mangraviti 2023, Ch. 5)
- ♀ Revealing ways possibilities for self-understanding are foreclosed? (Kosten 2025)
- ♀ A common feature: models proposed "lightly"?

# SUMMARY

- ♀ **FDE isn't well-motivated to capture genderqueer destabilisation**
- ♀ **Classical logic is already suited to capture almost all the same phenomena**
- ♀ **Logical models use split-separation, miss out on curdling-separation**
- ♀ **They *can't*, therefore, capture genderqueer destabilisation**
- ♀ **Good! We shouldn't want them to**
- ♀ **If logic has a role here, it's to *join in* the destabilisation**

