

## Being Blue: Posthuman Embodiment and Dysphoria Beyond Gender

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### Abstract.

This study examines the ethical, social, and conceptual boundaries of bodily autonomy through the case of Sadie Liath, a transgender woman who seeks full-body blue pigmentation as a form of chromatic affirmation. Drawing on an integrated theoretical framework of transgender studies and critical posthumanism, the research explores whether the logic underpinning gender-affirming care can extend to non-normative embodiments that challenge species-typical appearance. Using qualitative case study methods, the analysis draws on Sadie's public testimonies and social media discourse to investigate the phenomenon of "chromatic dysphoria" and its implications for identity, autonomy, and posthuman becoming. Findings reveal that Sadie's pursuit represents a form of posthuman embodiment that destabilizes fixed notions of the human, while public reactions—marked by astonishment and implicit policing—reflect deeper cultural anxieties about bodily normativity. The study concludes that bodily autonomy remains a selectively applied right, constrained by societal and visual norms, and calls for more inclusive ethical frameworks that recognize diverse forms of embodied self-determination beyond gender and beyond the human.

**Keywords:** [bodily autonomy, chromatic dysphoria, gender dysphoria, posthuman, transgender]

### Abstrak.

Studi ini mengkaji batasan etika, sosial, konseptual dari otonomi tubuh melalui kasus Sadie Liath, seorang perempuan transgender yang upaya memperoleh pigmentasi biru pada seluruh tubuhnya sebagai bentuk disforia kromatik. Dengan kajian kerangka teoritis terpadu antara transgender dan posthumanisme kritis, pada penelitian ini mengeksplorasi apakah logika yang mendasari perawatan disforia gender dapat diperluas ke perwujudan non-normatif yang menantang penampilan khas manusia. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif, analisis ini didasarkan pada testimoni publik serta wacana media sosial Sadie untuk mendalami fenomena "disforia kromatik" dan implikasi terhadap identitas, otonomi, dan proses menjadi posthuman. Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa upaya Sadie merepresentasikan bentuk perwujudan posthuman yang menggoyahkan gagasan tetap tentang kemanusiaan, sementara reaksi publik yang ditandai oleh keterkejutan dan praktik pengawasan implisit mencerminkan kecemasan budaya yang lebih dalam terhadap normalitas tubuh. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa otonomi tubuh masih merupakan hak yang diterapkan secara selektif yang

*dibatasi oleh norma sosial dan visual, serta menyerukan etika yang lebih inklusif untuk mengakui berbagai bentuk penentuan diri yang terwujud, melampaui gender dan melampaui batas-batas kemanusiaan.*

**Kata Kunci:** *[otonomi tubuh, disforia kromatik, disforia gender, posthumanisme, transgender]*

## **Introduction**

The principle of bodily autonomy forms a cornerstone of modern ethics and human rights. It asserts the individual's complete authority over their physical self. Within clinical practice, this principle finds critical application in transgender healthcare. Therapeutic interventions to align the body with gender identity are recognized as medically necessary. These procedures, known as gender-affirming care, address the profound distress of gender dysphoria (Ma et al., 2025). Gender dysphoria refers to the psychological suffering caused by a mismatch between one's internal gender identity and assigned sex at birth. The established medical consensus validates physical transition as a legitimate and often lifesaving treatment for this condition (Wylie et al., 2012).

A compelling contemporary case extends this logic of embodiment into uncharted territory. Sadie Liath is a transgender woman who describes a specific and profound identification with the color blue. In her public testimony, she explains a lifelong feeling of connection to this hue. She reports experiencing acute dysphoria when her skin is not blue. For Sadie, achieving a permanent, full-body blue pigmentation through tattooing is a fundamental requirement for her well-being. She frames this not as a cosmetic preference but as a necessary form of gender-affirming care. Her journey involves seeking specific blue pigments and artists capable of executing this vision, highlighting the material reality of her pursuit.

The case arises out of the ongoing discourse of posthumanism. Critical posthumanist thinking challenges the traditional humanist opinion of a fixed and superior human subject. Rosi Braidotti (2013) argues in favor of a new understanding of the self as embedded within complex systems. This view sees the body as a flexible interface, which opens up opportunities for transformation and hybridization. Donna Haraway (1991), with her seminal cyborg metaphor, serves as a further illustration. The cyborg stands for a dissolution of boundaries:

organism, machine, natural, and manufactured are all blurred. A conscious decision to take on a non-human skin color is a direct expression of this posthuman condition, a conscious move away from what is typical for our species.

Transgender theory provides a vital framework for understanding Sadie's claim. Scholars like Susan Stryker (2017) articulate the experience of transgender embodiment. They position the body as a site for the authentic enactment of self. From this view, physical modification becomes a powerful act of self-determination. It is a means of claiming existence against normative social dictates. The logic that validates medical transition for gender dysphoria creates a conceptual pathway. It allows for the recognition of other forms of dysphoria tied to bodily morphology, including what may be termed chromatic dysphoria (Eden et al., 2012).

The concept of bodily autonomy serves as the crucial bridge connecting these fields. It is the foundational right to self-determination over one's physical form. This principle supports an individual's choice to modify their body for personal, medical, or expressive reasons. In an alternative care model, based on the principle of informed consent, transgender clients may access gender-affirming treatment by directly engaging with a primary care provider (Gerritse et al., 2021). The same principle extends to broader concepts of morphological freedom advocated in transhumanist thought. This freedom encompasses the right to change one's body, including its shape, capacity, and appearance, according to one's own desires (Lewis & Holm, 2023). Sadie's pursuit stands as a direct test of this principle's scope and societal acceptance.

Societal resistance to Sadie's project reveals deep-seated cultural anxieties. The criticism she faces mirrors historic and ongoing prejudice against transgender people. She is accused of seeking attention, indulging a fetish, or destroying a natural body. This backlash occurs despite wider acceptance of other body modifications like tattoos, piercings, or cosmetic procedures. The hostility surfaces when the modification is perceived as a fundamental rejection of human norms. This reaction functions as a societal policing mechanism (Brady et al., 2021). It defends an unspoken but rigid boundary of what constitutes an acceptable human form. The tension highlights a central conflict between expanding personal autonomy and maintaining traditional ontological categories.

Sadie Liath's case presents a critical boundary for bodily autonomy a human could have. It led to direct confrontation between the established ethical principle of bodily autonomy and the unexamined limits. Her journey is one we call a live ethical experiment that presses the logic of gender-affirming care to its next potential frontier, chromatic affirmation (Quint et al., 2025). This confrontation cannot be fully analyzed through a single theoretical lens. It demands a deliberate synthesis of transgender studies, which provides the framework for understanding identity-driven bodily distress, and critical posthumanism. In which offers the tools to deconstruct the "human" boundaries that are being transgressed. The resulting societal debate becomes a diagnostic tool, revealing where and why society chooses to police the morphology of the acceptable self.

Existing academic research provides strong but separate foundations. Transgender studies offer deep analysis of dysphoria and the ethics of transition. People with gender dysphoria each present a unique ethical dilemma in treatment. Whereas the evidence base is growing, it is important to understand the risks and benefits of both providing or withholding a certain intervention at a certain point in time, as neither decision is a neutral one (Leibowitz, 2018). Critical posthumanism delivers a robust critique of human exceptionalism and explores posthuman futures. Braidotti, through *Posthuman Critical Theory* (2016), argues that the categories of "the human" in history have been constructed through exclusion, giving privilege to certain body images while degrading others that failed to fit in the idea of those "standards." By rejecting those standards, critical posthumanism emphasizes the idea of becoming, relationality, and embodied difference as central to manifesting a better future.

Posthumanism is a theoretical framework that questions the humanist assumption of the human subject as autonomous, biological, and stable. Instead, posthumanist scholars emphasize hybridity and the entanglement of humans with the technology, information systems, and non-human agents. From this perspective, the boundaries between the human body, cultural environment, and technological system are continually and fluidly reconfigured. "The Future of the Literary Text in the Posthuman Condition" examines posthumanism as a cultural and textual condition shaped by digital. Technological mediation transforms not only literary forms but also a broader understanding of subjectivity and meaning-making. The study argues that technological mediation transforms how human

identity and meaning are constructed, suggesting that the human subject can no longer be understood outside the technological network.

Similarly, "The Posthuman Condition: Consciousness Beyond the Human" further discusses posthumanism as a philosophical condition in which boundaries between human, machine, and information are blurred. The text focuses on embodiment and consciousness, arguing that technology reshapes how bodies and identities are experienced. According to Reddy (2014), this strengthens the perspective by conceptualizing humans as natural-born cyborgs and argues that technological extensions such as prosthetics, medical interventions, and digital systems demonstrate that the human body has always been technologically mediated. Collectively, this study positions posthumanism as a foundational framework for analyzing technologically shaped bodies and identities.

"Transgender" refers to an individual whose gender identity doesn't align with the sex assigned at birth. Contemporary literature stresses that transgender identity itself isn't pathological and doesn't inherently involve distress. Rather than viewing gender as a fixed or biologically determined transgender highlights the study of gender as lived, embodied, and socially negotiated. The "Prager Handbook of Transsexuality" provides a comprehensive overview of transgender experiences from medical, psychological, and social perspectives. The handbook challenges binary understandings of gender and demonstrates that gender identity is shaped through embodiment, social recognition, and personal experience. It situates transgender experiences within broader debates on gender, identity, and body autonomy.

Medical literature such as "The Female-to-Male Medical Treatment" focuses on the clinical transition process, including hormones that enable transgender individuals to align their bodies with their gender identities. This study intervenes not from the physical modification but as practices that significantly influence psychological well being and embodied self-understanding. In addition, Devour (2001) emphasizes transgender identity as a social and cultural experience, discussing issues of visibility, recognition, and power.

This research explores how transgender bodies are regulated or marginalized within the institutional, medical, and cultural frameworks. It also frames transgender identity as a

diverse and embodied experience situated at the intersection of biology, technology, psychology, and social structures.

Gender dysphoria is similar to transgender in that it occurs when an individual's gender identity doesn't align with their assigned sex at birth but has a psychological distress. Significantly, not all transgender individuals experience gender dysphoria. Distress is increasingly understood as emerging from social stigma, misrecognition, and restrictive gender norms rather than from gender variance alone. John et al. (2023) shows a contemporary overview of gender dysphoria, emphasizing psychosocial and developmental factors. It argues that the distress often results from social stigma, discrimination, and lack of affirmation rather than gender variance itself.

This approach situates gender dysphoria within a relational mental health framework that foregrounds context and lived experience. Psychiatric, Losthein (1986) provides a clinical discussion of gender dysphoria through clinical lens, outlining diagnostic criteria and psychiatric perspectives. It situates the gender dysphoria within mental health discourse while acknowledging the evolving approach to care and how medical and psychiatric understandings of gender-related distress have evolved over time.

Beyond the gender-specific frameworks, psychological research demonstrates that bodily perception and self-concept are deeply influenced by socially constructed norms. Butts' (1963) provides on skin color perception and self-evaluation shows that discrepancies between self-perception and socially valued bodily traits can generate psychological distress, particularly among marginalized groups. This work examines a foundational lens for understanding how normative bodily standards contribute to dysphoric experiences. Furthermore, the "Management of Gender Dysphoria" highlights the importance of integrated care involving psychiatry, endocrinology, surgery, and ethics. This research collectively establishes gender dysphoria as a recognized clinical concept shaped by both psychological and social context.

Chromatic dysphoria is introduced in this study as an analytical concept rather than a formal medical diagnosis. It refers to an embodied distress related to chromatic and visual norms, particularly skin color, which intersects with the gendered expectations of the body.

This concept extends dysphoria beyond gender identity to include distress produced through visual regimes and aesthetic regulation. According to Hall (2018), it examines how skin color is constructed as a normalized and measurable bodily attribute through medical imaging and technological systems.

The chromatic norms create a hierarchy that influences how bodies are valued and perceived. By translating skin tone into quantifiable data, these technologies establish chromatic hierarchies that shape how bodies are valued, monitored, and disciplined. Such processes can contribute to experiences of alienation and distress when bodies deviate from established norms. Insights from the posthuman theory, particularly discussed in "The Posthuman Condition," support this analysis by demonstrating how technological visualization systems actively shape bodily perception.

Moreover, the psychological literature on gender dysphoria provides the conceptual grounding for understanding chromatic dysphoria as a form of embodied distress. This study allows the psychological foundations of chromatic dysphoria to be understood as a subordinate and intersecting concept within gender dysphoria, shaped by technological, visual, normative, and cultural regulation of the body.

However, a significant gap exists at their intersection. Current literature does not synthesize these frameworks to analyze real-world cases of non-human chromatic embodiment. The phenomenon of "chromatic dysphoria" remains unnamed and untheorized within scholarly discourse. Furthermore, social responses to such embodiments are often dismissed as fringe curiosities. They are not critically examined as revealing case studies in the policing of the human body. This study identifies and addresses the gap in the ethical boundary of bodily autonomy even when it challenges species-typical appearance, and where is the line before a person could be categorized as posthuman or cyborg. Also, it aims to seek whether changing skin color into non-human skin colour or race is categorized as body dysphoria, or we can call it with its new term, "chromatic dysphoria." It positions Sadie Liath's journey as a pivotal case for an integrated theoretical analysis.

## **Methods**

This study uses qualitative analysis as its research method. It applies a case study design to examine one specific situation in detail. The main goal is to understand the complex ideas within Sadie Liath's story. The research focuses on analyzing language and text as its primary material.

The primary data for this analysis is from Sadie's personal X account, @sadieliath. In her personal account, she tells her story of her journey in being blue, being a trans woman, her feelings, and the way she felt chromatic dysphoria when she was not being blue. She also actively helps people who want to get transformations like her and even guides them personally. She talks a lot about her experience and explains her view that being blue is a form of gender-affirming care. The comments she gets also record the negative reactions from other people and make a discussion wondering about the boundaries in bodily autonomy.

The study uses a specific theoretical framework to analyze the data. This framework combines ideas from transgender studies and critical posthumanism. The analysis follows a clear process with four steps.

The first step we do is analyzing and identifying the main information in her claims from her X account. We look for repeated ideas and important claims. These include the concept of chromatic dysphoria. They also include arguments about bodily freedom and notes about public criticism.

Second, we apply our theoretical lenses to these themes. We use ideas from transgender theory about the body and identity. We also use posthumanist ideas about breaking human boundaries. These theories help us interpret the deeper meaning of Sadie's story.

Third, we examine the social backlash as a form of discourse. We analyze how people talk about Sadie's choice. We look at how these comments try to define what is a normal or acceptable human body. We compare this criticism to other kinds of prejudiced language.

Fourth, we explore the bigger ethical questions this case raises. We consider what it teaches us about personal freedom over the body. We think about the limits of concepts like gender-affirming care.



This research is interpretive. It builds a detailed understanding of a single, important case. The study connects real-world experiences to larger theoretical conversations. It aims to show how one person's journey can challenge our ideas about identity, the body, and what it means to be human.

## Results

### *Being Blue as Posthuman Embodiment*

Sadie's desire for being a "Blue" human is a strong example of posthuman embodiment within gender studies. Posthuman embodiment challenges humanocentric assumptions that define the human body as something that are natural, fixed, and biologically determined (Ferrando, 2019). By deliberately altering skin color, one of the most visible markers of human identity, Sadie Liath destabilizes the idea that the body must remain within the boundaries of human realism to be considered valid or authentic.

In this framework, posthuman embodiment does not undermine gender identity, but instead, it reveals its limitations. Gender is still an important part of Sadie's identity, but it is no longer able to explain her embodied self. The need to transform into a blue person is an attempt to transcend gender identity to reach an embodiment that calls into question what it means to be human in the first place. This implies that posthuman embodiment can be achieved as a continuation of the gender transition process, in contrast to seeing it as separate.



Figure 1. [Sadie's X post on 10 October 2025]

In one of her X posts on 10 October 2025, she announced that she would start blue tattooing. The transition from temporary body painting to engaging with permanent blue tattooing is one step further into the commitment of such embodiment. This is because temporary tattooing or painting is experimental, while permanent tattooing reveals a long-term investment in something that defines the body and turns it into something else. This

indicates that being posthuman is not just symbolic or a representation of meaning but is actually physical (Braidotti, 2019). The depth of such desires redefines the body into something else.

Thus, Sadie's partial blue tattoos ought not to be interpreted as being incomplete. This represents posthuman transformation in process. Moreover, the body does not become posthuman instantaneously; it is created through intentional, bodily acts that accumulate over time. This intentional decision to embody permanent color to facilitate her own alignment with the universe represents Sadie's decision to position her body within the posthuman paradigm of having identity not lived but inscribed on the skin.



Figure 2. [Sadie's X post on 18 October 2025]

In an X post on 18 October 2025, Sadie deliberately disputes the discourse that describes her extreme body modification as practices of a spectacle or an attention-seeking behavior. Rather, it is shown that posthuman embodiment can be a practice of self-affirmation that is similar to gender affirmation. Both practices modify the body to alleviate dysphoria in order to achieve congruence between self and body. While gender affirmation aims for congruence between self and body through recognition in social gender binaries, posthuman embodiment aims for congruence between self and body that transcends social gender binaries (Ferrando, 2019).

### *Dysphoria When Not Blue*



Figure 3. [Sadie's X post on 18 October 2025]

Quoting from her X posts on 18 October 2025, Sadie said she feels dysphoric when she is not blue, which expands the traditional understandings of dysphoria within gender studies. Based on the American Psychiatric Association (2013), gender dysphoria has been understood to be distress that results from a mismatch between gender identity and sexed bodily characteristics. However, Sadie's experience suggests that her dysphoria can continue even after the actual transition of gender, which insinuates that the cause of discomfort cannot be located only using gendered anatomy.

Sadie explains that she experiences discomfort when her body is uncolored, framing the experience as dysphoria rather than discontent or aesthetic preference. In that case, 'the desire to be blue' is positioned as a response to embodied distress rather than personal taste or performative display. The body's continued semblance as fully human becomes a source of misalignment, suggesting that dysphoria can function on levels beyond gender and into questions of humanity and bodily normativity (Shildrick, 2023).

This experience can be understood through the emerging concept of "chromatic dysphoria," a term that is used informally within certain trans communities to describe distress related to body color. Chromatic dysphoria has not been clinically defined or medically recognized yet; however, its repetition among the users discloses the limitation of existing diagnostic frameworks in accounting for diverse lived experiences. Chromatic dysphoria is approached in this paper not as a diagnosis, but as a community-based articulation of body dysphoria, one that extends the scope of the gender dysphoria discourse.

In this context, Sadie's action of colouring herself blue reduces her dysphoria. Coloring the body in such a manner lets Sadie align more with her sense of self, which, if necessary, does not fit into existing human or gendered categories. To this, one would add that dysphoria needs consideration not only as an aspect of medicine but also of experience and demands cultural norms, body expectations, and the limits of available identity frames.

### *Digital Space as a Site of Posthuman Becoming*

The findings show that Sadie Liath's posthuman becoming is not limited to bodily transformation but is deeply shaped through digital space. Her identity as a "Blue human" emerges from the interaction between her altered body, visual technologies, and repeated engagement on the X platform. Digital space enables her posthuman embodiment to move from a private experience of chromatic dysphoria into a publicly negotiated identity that gains meaning through visibility, repetition, and audience interaction.

The results indicate that Sadie's posthuman identity is constructed through digital practices such as sharing images of her blue body, narrating dysphoria, and responding to public discourse. These practices demonstrate that posthuman becoming operates relationally, rather than biologically alone. Sadie's body exists simultaneously as a physical body and a digital body, creating a form of distributed embodiment in which identity is produced and stabilized through circulation across images, texts, and online interactions.

Furthermore, Sadie's posts function not only as self-expression but also as active identity assertion. By combining visual displays of her blue body with affirming narratives and explicit plans for permanent modification, she rejects interpretations that frame her transformation as attention seeking. The digital space thus operates as a site where her posthuman identity is defended, legitimized, and sustained against reductive or stigmatizing readings.

From a gender studies perspective, the findings reveal that Sadie's posthuman becoming extends beyond gender transition. Digital space allows her to negotiate the legitimacy of a body that exceeds normative human appearance, indicating that post-transition identity formation may involve broader challenges to dominant definitions of humanity itself.

However, the results also show that digital space functions as a site of regulation. Public reactions characterized by shock, curiosity, and confusion position Sadie's blue body as visually and socially abnormal. Although not overtly hostile, these responses act as soft policing mechanisms that question the boundaries of acceptable human embodiment. This demonstrates that posthuman subjects remain embedded in power relations, where bodily autonomy coexists with social pressures to maintain stable definitions of humanity.

The results confirm that digital space is an essential infrastructure for posthuman becoming. It is not merely a platform for displaying posthuman identities, but a dynamic arena in which such identities are formed, contested, and regulated through ongoing interactions between the body, technology, and public discourse.

### *Public Reception and the Policing of Chromatic Humanity*

Throughout the remarks made about Sadie Liath, it seems that there are a number of patterns related to the ways digital audiences understand and react to her embodiment of blue skin. Most of the viewers are curious or doubtful and they may wonder whether her photos are edited or want to know the reason why she was transformed. These remarks bring out the tendency to doubt the authenticity of her appearance when she is faced with a visual representation that is not in accordance with the expectation.

Humor is also quite common, so when the user reacts to her posts, they may mention fictional characters, memes, or pop-culture graphics. These are the most frequent playful comparisons which are used by viewers to describe her looks. Due to these jokes, other users also react with mockery with some describing her change as excessive or that she is trying to seek attention.

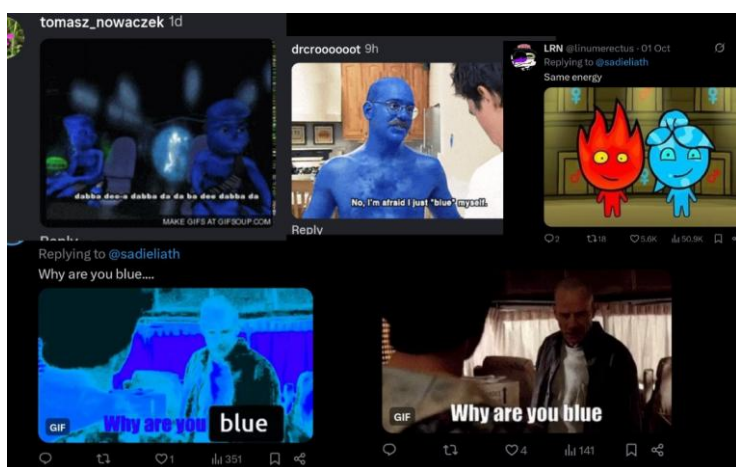


Figure 4. [Pop-culture and meme-based comments.]

Other responses are based on medical or psychological sources, where there are possibilities of poisoning or insanity. These remarks are usually made in a sarcastic manner yet they still have biomedical terminologies in describing her blue skin. Alongside medicalized reactions, there are also moral issues that arise especially in remarks to do with professionalism or workplace acceptability or even social acceptability in general of the chromatic embodiment.

A smaller fraction of comments contains more forms of explicit distancing, including misgendering or addressing Sadie with objectifying words. Her embodiment is treated as alien in these reactions that are beyond the generally accepted realms of appearance.

The general sentiment of the comments is one of curiosity, humor, skepticism, medical framing, moral concern, and distancing language, which condition the participation of the audience in the digital spaces of the chromatic embodiment of Sadie Liath.

## Discussion

The significance of this research lies within its contribution to modern-day gender studies and posthuman theory, specifically through its critical consideration of the embodiment of Sadie Liath, where dysphoric experience, corporeal freedom, and posthuman transformation converge beyond the boundaries of explanation by gender. To this day, dysphoric experience has been prevalently interpreted by scholarly literature to relate to one's gendered body and corresponding recognition (APA, 2013; Leibowitz, 2018). Though contemporary literature has recognized that there is complexity to embodiment itself that is transgender (Stryker, 2017; Richards et al., 2016), it is imperative to notice that, per this current study, dysphoric experience can persist and change even after transition, to the extent that it goes beyond the boundaries of explanation by gender.

Also preceding the current research, in the area of transgender studies, a certain developmental course is presumed, in which "dysphoria is reduced once congruence in gender identity and bodily sex characteristics is attained" (Ashley, 2021). However, in the following, it is made clear how the return of said "dysphoria is not merely at the level of gender normativity but rather at the level of human normativity." Indeed, "the fact that Sadie suffers when her body is not blue suggests that she is attuning to a different kind of embodied limitation, as the necessity for a body to resemble other human bodies in order to be recognized as a human at all." This refines an argument made by means of "Shildrick's work (2015, 2022) which emphasizes how bodily deviance is controlled not through its reduction to a (medically defined) categorically different kind of body, but through the principles of recognizability."

The inclusion of "chromatic dysphoria" as a term of community relevance draws attention to the important lack within contemporary diagnosis and theory. Couched within a lay definition rather than a medical one, chromatic dysphoria might be seen to exist along the same formal lines of gender dysphoria but with a different object. Body dysphoria within existing literature has been raised concerning disability, fatness, and trans embodiment (Garland-Thomson, 2017; Kafer, 2013), but never concerning color as a location of dysphoric experience. The current study makes an important contribution to the development of science by positing that dysphoria should be understood to be more than gendered or pathological.

In particular, dysphoria is a result of a relationship between bodies, norms, and the definition of humanity.

In posthuman studies, Sadie's body corresponds with posthuman feminism in challenging human exceptionality and biologically determined hierarchical structures (Braidotti, 2016; Ferrando, 2019). Differing greatly from traditional notions of posthumanism, where improvement by technology and cyborgification are common, Sadie's example illustrates that posthumanism can be achieved by affective and aesthetic transformations of the body. This underpins the idea by Hlavajova and Braidotti that "post-human embodiment does not rely on technology, but rather on the refusal of normative boundaries constituting a proper humanity" (2018).

Notably, the progression of Sadie's work from body painting to tattoo art blurs the lines that tend to be drawn between experimentation and commitment in body modification literature (Pitts-Taylor, 2016). This is because the gradual nature of her work aptly represents the posthuman process of becoming as a process that is cumulative and does not take place in a moment. This runs contrary to the common narratives that tend to view body modification as either play or pathology.

The societal reaction that is documented within the wake of Sadie's transformation reflects patterns that have emerged within current scholarship on post-trans SMP and bodily regulation (Pearce et al., 2020; Brady et al., 2021). Although gender-affirmative care is progressively normatized through recognition, the acknowledgement of Sadie's chromatic affirmation lies beyond medically and ethically acceptable norms. This highlights that bodily autonomy is conditionally applicable. Thus, it is supported while bodies are comprehensible within gender norms but becomes insurgent within species-level norms once bodies become aberrant within species-level expectations of humanity. This study expands the existing debates within bodily autonomy by showing that its finitude is not medically defined but is, in fact, based within an ontology of terror over the instability of "the human." This paper proposes an integrated approach to dysphoria that moves across gender by combining transgender studies and posthuman theory. It proposes that posthumanist embodiment should not be seen as aberration and spectacle but should be acknowledged as a possible reaction to physical distress in situations where identity categories are irrelevant. It is hoped

that this paper will make a valuable contribution in broadening the concept of gender studies to an even more significant extent to encompass the changing concept of self at the fringes of humanity. Ultimately, this research challenges the academic community to think about the need to reimagine the ethical and theoretic parameters of affirmation. If the efficacy of gender affirmation treatment remains in the reduction of pain and the tenets of self-determination, then the relegation of post-human or chromatic bodies illustrates the contradictions of the current parameters of ethics. This research project brings about new avenues of inquiry in relation to dysphoria and the prospect of embodied futures.



## **Conclusion**

This analysis of Sadie Liath's pursuit of blue embodiment through the integrated theoretical lenses of transgender studies and critical posthumanism ultimately affirms that bodily autonomy remains a contested and selectively applied principle, even in an era of expanding morphological freedom. At the core of this case lies a critical contradiction: while Sadie frames chromatic affirmation as an extension of gender-affirming care, a medically and ethically recognized form of self-determination, her pursuit is met with public astonishment, implicit policing, and a lack of institutional recognition.

A close examination of Sadie's testimony and the digital discourse surrounding her transformation reveals that societal resistance functions not through overt hostility, but through affective responses such as confusion and curiosity that reinforce the boundaries of the "human." These reactions expose deeper cultural anxieties about bodies that challenge species-typical appearance, even when such modifications are pursued voluntarily and without harm. In doing so, society polices not only gender but also the very ontology of the human form.

Furthermore, the concept of "chromatic dysphoria" introduced in this study highlights a significant gap in current ethical and medical frameworks. While gender dysphoria is increasingly validated within healthcare systems, chromatic dysphoria remains untheorized and unrecognized, not because it lacks experiential reality, but because it transgresses the physical and biological norms that define humanity. This illustrates how bodily autonomy is granted only when embodiment remains intelligible within dominant social categories.

In conclusion, Sadie Liath's case demonstrates that posthuman becoming, whether through gender transition, chromatic transformation, or digital embodiment, exists within a field of power that regulates which bodies are recognized as legitimate. True bodily autonomy does not mean choosing which norms to follow but rather challenging the very systems that police morphological possibility. This study calls for more inclusive ethical frameworks that extend the logic of self-determination beyond gender, and a future where all forms of embodied identity are afforded dignity and recognition.

## **Implication**

The results of this study provide several implications for understanding posthuman embodiment in contemporary digital culture. The case of Sadie Liath shows that digital platforms play a crucial role in shaping how non-normative bodies are formed, recognized, and negotiated. This indicates that identity expressions that move beyond conventional human appearance rely on online environments not only for visibility but also for maintaining coherence and continuity. For researchers, this study highlights the importance of analyzing digital spaces as active sites where embodied identities are produced and interpreted. This also suggests that public reactions remain as a significant factor in determining how unconventional embodiments are understood. The mixture of curiosity, humor, medicalized descriptions, and moral commentary demonstrates that audiences continue to use familiar social norms when evaluating unfamiliar bodies. This has practical implications for advocates and educators that work on issues of embodiment, digital literacy, and online ethics. Understanding on how these reactions emerge may support the efforts to encourage more responsible engagement with individuals who present identities that fall outside socially accepted categories.

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**Authors' contributions:** AL, BBNS, ZDP analyzed the data. DASP and KNM designed the study. All authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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