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The Human Outreach and Achievement Institute is a not-for-profit educational corporation of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It serves as a resource for helping professionals, transsexuals, crossdressers, and androgynes.

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Human Outreach and Achievement Institute

Statement of Purpose

It is the purpose of HOAI to educate and conduct research in all aspects related to the phenomenon of gender. As a social construct, gender phenomena includes a unique and a variable set of attributes that communicates and identifies to all who a person is, what a person does and how a person acts. It is the basis by which societies and cultures become structured. To achieve these goals this Institute will:

- Provide programs which broaden understanding about diversity of gender perception and expression.
- Create and implement research projects and studies designed to further understanding about gender phenomena.
- Publish relevant and useful information, research results, new ideas and paradigms about gender phenomena.
- Serve as a resource for all persons wanting information about various topics related to gender phenomena.
- Develop creative graduate programs in gender studies.
- Make available information and other written materials on various topics related to gender phenomena.
- Clarify the relationship between gender and sex orientation and the lifestyles of people in society.
- Create specific programs which can allow for personal growth and explanation of a particular pathway, for any human being.
- Promote the idea that cultural gender diversity is a positive human expression both within a nation and internationally.

EDITORIAL

This is our second issue of the *Journal of Gender Studies* done in the new format. In it you will find a diversity of topics and forms that relate to gender issues. There are two pieces by major presenters to the first New Woman Conference. In addition, we reprint an excerpt from a soon-to-be-published novel about crossdressing and relationships and some poetry by a person on her positive gender role pathway. There are reviews of new books about gender issues and attitudes, and the cover features a new sketch addressing the concept of gender ambiguity. In all, we think it is an exciting publication.

Response to our previous issues was most encouraging. We got response to our call for papers and also some ad copy. We would like to see both of these areas grow by leaps and bounds for our next publishing.

This is the Age of Gender Exploration and Reassessment. The first two years of the decade has given us a wealth of new books, plays, art, and cinema focused on various aspects of gender. We believe the time has come to acknowledge this and serve as a modest harbinger and strong supporter of this Age.

The true value of any publication ultimately rests with subscriptions and an active readership. To continue our publication, we need your support. If you like what we are doing, you can demonstrate this by sending in your subscription for the next year. The subscription rate is \$16.00 for one year and \$30.00 for two years. The more of these we have, the more we will be able to offer you a journal of high standards of excellence in all aspects.

—Ari Kane, Editor and Publisher



“To learn all that there is to learn, we must experience everything that is meaningful on the earth plane. Some of this knowledge could only be attained by changing sex. On the spiritual plane there is no gender, so in actuality we are all unisex—equally male and female.”

—Dick Sutphen

You Were Born Again To Be Together

PUTTING GENDER ISSUES IN PERSPECTIVE:
THE WHOLE YOU

by J. Thomas, Ph.D.

The following is a condensation of a major presentation given at the first New Woman's Conference in 1991. This Conference was created and designed by HOAI for women who had experienced the rite of passage of sex reassignment surgery.

Definitions of masculinity and femininity are changing dramatically, and it certainly affects all of *our* lives. I lecture on this topic in a number of different arenas to people with different interests and different agendas, and I find that many of the transsexuals I work with and many physicians know less about the causes of maleness and femaleness than do the students that come to my classes, because we discuss it. I'm one of the few people that tell all of my students no one is 100% male and no one is 100% female. It just doesn't happen. Transsexuals are not something that happened by accident in nature, we're just part of what I call an exquisite variation of human sexuality. Some people may hear me saying that and say, "Well it's very self-serving. She's saying that because that makes her feel good." They're right. It makes me feel great. It makes me feel that I've got as much right to walk on this planet as anybody else does. And in a way it explains some of the privileges that I think some of us have experienced.

So let me talk about a couple of very basic things that have to do with ways in which all human beings express their sexuality—along three continua. You're going to get Jayne's theory of gender dysphoria, which I don't think you've heard before, because I don't know anybody that is as off the wall as I am. The first way in which we express our sexuality has to do with our anatomy. Many of us didn't like that expression of it when we were born, but it's still there. It has to do with whether you're male or female, but it's a continuum. Most individuals are out at one extreme or the other. Most individuals are clearly defined as male or clearly defined as female, and there is very little ambiguity. But ambiguity does exist. That's what intersex is; that's what hermaphroditism is. It's a combination of both in the same individual.

If you're going to try to define whether somebody's male or female you can define it on at least six different levels, and all of them can be a

definition. Chromosomes: We have variations in chromosomes. There are over 100 variations that have been noted in chromosomal configurations. That's a definition of male and female that the Olympic Committee and international athletic committees used until some time back. If you wanted to compete in international competition as a woman—as a female—you better have two X chromosomes or they're going to send you home. And that would be a good definition if it always worked, but it doesn't.

Three years ago in one of my classes, knowing that no one would put their hand up, I said, "Do any of you know what your sex chromosome pattern is? Do you know whether you're XX or XY?" One young coed put her hand up—the first time it's ever happened. She was an athlete, and at 16 she went to compete. It turned out that she's XY. She menstruates; she's been told that she can be impregnated. She's a full-functioning female. She's always considered herself female. This was her first experience with somebody saying, "No, you're not." It really was a rough thing for her. Somebody is denying who she knows she is. I think a lot of us can relate to that. She went to doctors, and it was explained to her that the Y chromosome does not determine your sex, does not determine maleness.

A doctor by the name of Page a few years back discovered a testicular differentiating factor on the Y chromosome. Half a percent, one two-hundredth of the DNA on that chromosome is what triggers maleness. I tell my students that the basic plan of nature is to create female. If nothing happens, you will develop as female. To be male, three things have to happen. And this testicular differentiating factor, this one little gene on the Y chromosome has to be there. At six weeks' gestation, the gonads, which consist of bipotential material, can become either ovaries or testes. We're born with the capability to be male or female, with nature really opting for female. But if that testicular differentiating factor is there at six weeks, the gonads differentiate into testes. If that testicular differentiating factor isn't there on the Y chromosome, another couple of weeks goes by and they differentiate into ovaries. It's that simple—you have the capability to be either. This coed obviously did not have that gene on her Y chromosome. She was programmed to be male, but she didn't have that gene there. She developed as a female from then on, with ovaries. So this chromosomal pattern does not constitute a clear-cut definition as to whether somebody's male or female, but it's one that society accepts.

The way the gonads develop is the second level. Males are the ones with testes; females are the ones with ovaries. That's another definition. Once you start having either testes or ovaries develop in this prenatal state, you're now starting to produce hormones—androgens, testosterone in

males, and estrogens, estradiol, and progesterin in females. But we all have all of those hormones in our bodies. Every male has enough estrogen in his body to grow breasts, and every female has enough testosterone to support a beard. These events don't happen because you have increased amounts of the appropriate hormones, and they cancel the effects of the others. But it changes throughout your lifetime, doesn't it? Have you noticed people when they get older, when they get to be 70 or 80, males and females start looking alike. Because the production of their primary hormone decreases, creating more of a balance; the effects on the secondary sex characteristics are there. I love to watch little old couples driving in California on freeways because she is always driving. She's kind of taken over. There's a role reversal that happens. She's driving; he's very dapper and he's sitting on the passenger's side and he's kind of leafing through a magazine. And I see these women looking out of the corner their eye at their husband—like, I'll let you live one more day, sucker. There's kind of a role reversal that occurs, and one psychologist friend of mine says that if you live long enough, you experience something of what it's like to be the other sex.

Another level is the internal reproductive structures. We're all conceived and start to develop with two duct systems—the müllerian duct system and the wolffian duct system. The müllerian duct system, if it develops, will develop into the internal reproductive system of the female—the uterus, the fallopian tubes, and the upper third of the vagina. The wolffian duct system, everybody's got one of those, too. If that develops, it develops into the internal structures of the male—the vas deferens, the Cowper's gland, and the seminal vesicles. But we all started out life with both of those. Something has to happen in nature to turn one off. And the second thing males have, at about the eighth, ninth, or tenth week of their fetal development cycle, when the testes have started to differentiate and testosterone is being produced, is another substance called the müllerian inhibiting substance. And that substance inhibits the development of this duct system that would turn out to be the internal workings of the female. Otherwise, if we didn't have something to turn that off, we'd all end up being hermaphrodites. Females developing don't have to have something to turn off the male system, because it's only supported when there are large amounts of testosterone. So the three things that you have to have to be male are large amounts of testosterone, a müllerian inhibiting substance, and this testicular differentiating factor. Otherwise, where that signal's not given at the right time in the very critical window, nature goes back to producing female. So there's an exquisite variation. That's your anatomy, and that's male or female. That's one way in which you express your sexuality.

The second way is this term gender that we all talk about so much and hear so much about. Now, gender terms are man or masculine, woman or feminine. And that's another continuum. Maybe that's easier to see because you can look around and see that some males are more masculine than others and some females more feminine than others. A lot of the confusion—and there's still confusion among scientists working in these areas—is that we use these terms interchangeably. We'll talk about a "guy"—gender term—and we'll say he's a hunk of a male—anatomical term. You're talking about his anatomy and you're talking about his belief system. Gender has to do with your belief system; it is how you see yourself. Gender dysphoria is a discrepancy between your belief system and your anatomy. You're not born with this belief system. You may be born with a predisposition toward it in terms of some subtle prenatal hormonal etchings on the brain. But you're not born with it, you acquire it. But all the theorists—whether it's a Freudian theorist, whether it's a behaviorist, somebody like Michelle or Van Durer, whether it's John Money, whether it's a cognitive structuralist like Colbert—say that gender identity develops very early in your life; by age five, six, or seven it's locked in. And it's probably the strongest belief system you have and you'll ever have all your life. You know very well whether you're a boy or girl, whether you're going to grow up to be a man or a woman.

If you don't believe this just pick a little boy about eight or nine and go up and say, "Oh, you're a darling little girl." You've got a major fight on your hands. He knows he's a boy. This early period is when you get all those messages about gender from society, your family, your religion, your culture. Messages about gender are given from the day of your birth. You didn't decide what your anatomy was. You weren't given a choice in that. Somebody spread your legs and if they saw what looked to be a penis there, they said that's a male. That's a little boy and that's going to be a man, and they wrapped you in a blue blanket. That blue blanket was the first gender message you got. If there was an absence of a penis, or they said, "That little structure looks more like a clitoris than a penis," then they wrapped you in a pink blanket and you went down a different road. When I teach my communication courses about men and women coming together, I talk about it as culture shock. Because it is; we're raised in different cultures.

If, for whatever reasons, there wasn't sufficient testosterone in the development of the male fetus at 12 to 14 weeks, going into the second trimester, when the brain is structuring itself, then the brain continued to develop and structure itself as a female brain. Male brains and female brains aren't the same. My guess is that all of you people here probably have brains that

developed more along female lines. There was insufficient testosterone, perhaps, in the second trimester. I don't see anybody here that I think was at the extreme male end of the continuum. But let's say somebody was moderately masculine in the way in which your body developed. Your belief system was probably at the feminine end of the continuum. Your gender—your belief about yourself—is at odds with your sex. Gender dysphoria is having to carry that pain and that burden around, and if a male body is what you see and you think of yourself as feminine, it's a pretty simple explanation.

Now there are two things you can do about it, right? You can put somebody in therapy and you can really work with them and try to change their belief about themselves. Bring it back to the masculine side so there's a congruence and a consistency. And we haven't been effective at that at all. I worked with a client recently whose parents had taken him to a psychiatrist when he started exhibiting crossdressing behavior when he was 12 or 13. The psychiatrist was into behavior mod, and he said, "Well, let him dress." And they let him dress and they gave him electric shocks. It was terribly painful. Some of the horror stories of what kids have gone through are just unbelievable. And I said, "Why did you do it?" And he said, "Because at least I got to wear the clothes." A lot of us have those feelings of doing that. So we haven't been successful in therapeutic approaches in bringing gender back into agreement with sex. So what's the other option? Cosmetic surgery to move anatomy over to the female side so a person can live their life with agreement in these two aspects of their sexuality.

The third component of sexual expression is sexual orientation. Your anatomy, your belief system about your gender that forms very early, and the kind of relationship you're in. And that's not even bimodal. That's not even poles apart. Because there are some people who are in same-sex relationships—gays, lesbians, homosexuals. Some people are in opposite-sex relationships—straight, heterosexual. And a lot of people are bisexual, and some are asexual. So there's variation here. There's variation in all three of these components. Now, it's kind of interesting because we really get confused about this. I've done this more than once in a medical school lecture, with young interns or something. I'll be doing a lecture and I'll say, "Let's say that we can measure sexual expression on all those different levels: how the brain is developed, your chromosomes, and all those structures that I mentioned, and let's say that we can find somebody out here that is really a hunk of male, that is 95% male in terms of anatomy. There are going to be only five people out of every hundred that are going to be more male than this guy. Let's give him some questionnaires and see how he feels about himself. And let's say this guy really feels good about himself. I mean, he

drives a big truck and drags a chain behind him and he collects guns and whips and leather jackets and everything. He's really Mr. Macho and he scores out here at about 90% masculine on the gender scale. Now based on that data, you tell me what kind of relationship he's in. A lot of physicians will say anybody that's that male and that masculine is in a heterosexual relationship. To which I sometimes say, well what about the guy on the Anaheim Rams that's got a cute boyfriend down the hall. You don't know from that; you can't tell. These are three different aspects of our sexuality.

I did a Geraldo show with Kate Bornstein a couple of years ago. And she absolutely blew Geraldo's mind because she said, "I'm a lesbian." And Geraldo said, "Why did you bother to change?" Geraldo didn't understand what we're talking about. He didn't understand what most of my introductory psych students understand: sexual orientation doesn't follow from anatomy. Penises don't always hunt for vaginas. You know, it's not that simple. And she handled it wonderfully well. She said, "You know, Geraldo, that used to bother me so much, too, because when I grew up I knew, even though I saw this little boy in front of the mirror with a penis, I knew I was a girl. I knew I was female inside. And more than anything I wanted to change my sex. I wanted to get rid of that penis. I wanted that more than absolutely anything in the world. But I knew that if I did that I still would want to be in a relationship with another woman. And I felt, well, maybe I'm not a transsexual. Maybe I'm really a man." And she said she wrestled with that, and I've had several clients that have wrestled with the same thing that Kate did. And she said, "Thank God, I woke up one day and I said, 'No! I'm just a lesbian!'" The point is that sexual orientation doesn't necessarily follow. We're talking about three different things: anatomy, belief system, and orientation. I don't think that sexual orientation is a choice either. This is dictated by your physiognomy. Probably the basis of the way in which the environment is going to have a significant effect on us happens before we're born, during gestation.

I think it's important to understand that this confusion is just variation. We're not crazy—society's crazy. Society has a lot of difficulty with variation. Society wants you to either be John Wayne or Donna Reed, and I don't think that John Wayne and Donna Reed were happy being John Wayne and Donna Reed. Most people are shades of gray. They're someplace in between. And an awful lot of what I see when people accept these messages is that when they get to be adults, they know inside themselves that it's not right, it's not their own truth. We're born knowing who we are, and society does a number on us. Because of that, we spend most of our lives trying to get back to that truth that we had when we were born. Society is the one that

has the problem. Society is the one that is so uncomfortable with ambiguity. I was around in the sixties when hippies were around. And I know how disturbed people were when they followed a good-looking blond creature down the street with long blond hair and the guys would say, "Oh, man, I want her more than anything," and the person turned around and there was a beard. And that's very upsetting. The first discrimination anybody makes unconsciously, not even consciously, is whether somebody's male or female. And when that's up in the air, when that's not clear, people get upset.

A word I want to talk about is androgyny. It's an interesting word—it's really two words: male and female. It's used now not to talk about anatomy, but to talk about the belief system. It's used to talk about our personalities, the way we feel about ourselves. We are moving toward a more androgynous society. That may not be a lot of help for people that are living now. But it's going to take a lot of pressure off the young kids that are growing up now. I think we're born androgynous. Carl Jung talked about us being born bisexual, and he meant in these terms. He meant that we had the ability to develop completely a male personality and a female personality. We had the capability to do both. It didn't happen because of those damn blue and pink blankets. You got a message very early on that if you're a little boy, that sissy behavior—feminine behavior—was not cool and so you stifled it. And girls get a message, too. They're allowed to do more, but they get a message, too. When you grow up, when you become a complete person, you have to get back and reclaim and reown all those parts of your personality. You have to get in touch with that other part of yourself. Jung talked about the animus and the anima. The animus was that other part of a female's personality—her male part. And the anima is the female part of the male, of his personality. And he talked about an integrated person as being somebody that would be bisexual. We would call it androgynous now. A person who really came back and owned all of that for themselves.

I think every human being is trying to do that. I'm a humanist and I think every human being is trying to come in touch with that part of themselves. Most people are able to do it in very traditional ways. Most people are able to do it through their jobs—the female construction worker, the male nurse, the male schoolteacher. You can cross gender lines in your jobs; that's one way you can do it. Some people do it in their avocations, their hobbies. In Los Angeles a few years ago Rosie Greer, a massive lineman on the Los Angeles Rams, would get off the field and go sit someplace and do needlepoint. And nobody called Rosie a sissy. I mean, you'd die, he'd crush you. He could express another part of himself in being able to do that. There's a very interesting book called *Invisible Partners* written by John

Sanford, an Episcopal priest and a Jungian analyst. He says that one of the ways you get in touch with this other part of yourself is in a relationship. The person that you fall in love with reflects back to you the projection of the other part of your personality. So most guys fall in love with a gal who is the projection of the anima part of themselves. Most gals fall in love with a guy who's a projection of the animus part of them. And Sanford would say that that's one of the reasons you can fall in love instantaneously. You walk in a room and see somebody and say, I'm in love; there I am. You connect with that. So what I'm saying is that I think this is addressed in society by many people in indirect ways. Through their jobs, through their hobbies, through their relationships, and that works—they complete that other part of themselves.

My theory is that maybe because of our prenatal wiring, we're doing the same thing. We just can't do it the way some other people do. We have to do it more directly. And that seems strange to a lot of people, but that's all we've done. Many people don't understand why transvestites crossdress. They'll tell you, "I gotta escape; I gotta relax; I gotta get away from the stress." Because of their social conditioning, it's so difficult for transvestites to be able to access that other part of their personality, that they put on a costume that says, "Now I can be that way." We had to do something different to be able to reach a part of ourselves that we are as a total human being. It's my thesis that everybody is androgynous. Now, some people can do that and can stay in the same body. Others, because maybe our brains were organized differently, have to be able to become and live that lifestyle, so that society will treat us in a way that is more congruent with the way in which we process information. It's a controversial position.

First Participant: I read that book, and it's an attractive thought. But for the transsexual phenomenon I often wonder if it lacks the relevance it has for the transvestite and the crossdresser, because I think for our situation, that we really need to get in touch with the animus. Everybody's saying what we're doing is getting in touch with our anima—they've got a little confusion in there.

JT: Maybe the way in which you get in touch with your animus is to become your anima. I've made the comment on more than one occasion that I'm a hell of a lot more comfortable with the masculine part of myself now, in female form, than I ever was when I was in male form. I couldn't be androgynous as a male. I *can* now. Because being male doesn't threaten me now. Somebody calls me sir on the phone and I say [in a deep voice], "Yeah, now about that reservation." That doesn't bother me; I know who I am. I didn't know who I was before. You've got to get this congruence.

You've got to be able to be in terms of your anatomy who you feel yourself to be. And we're not good about changing gender identity. After that gets locked in, it's like imprinting. There's a critical period of time, and after that, it's set in concrete for the rest of your life. And it ain't gonna change. Ten percent of the people who identify themselves as transsexuals are going to have surgery—that means that 90% of them are living in hell or are having to find other solutions, and there are a lot of other solutions. You can lose yourself in your work. You can lose yourself in a relationship. There aren't simple answers. The one thing I become more and more sure of every day is how much more confused I am. These are very profound questions and most of us are going to spend most of our lives just trying to find some of the answers. And I don't think we'll ever completely find the answers but it's a hell of a journey. It's a wonderful journey, and some of the things that we learn are profound. I'm a process- rather than a content-oriented person. Our content is content that society can't deal with. But our process is the same process every human being goes through. And my whole way of approaching it is to look for ways in which we're like other people rather than different. I'm not a separatist—I'm somebody that wants to see the similarities. It's that same issue that minorities face—the degree to which you can assimilate and retain your identity. That seems to be the model that works. And we're all in a struggle of that, and I'm not saying one person's way's better than another. I don't think it is. I think it's largely an individual kind of decision we all have to make. And we've all made it. We're all here; what we have in common is we've gone through that rite of passage. We all made a decision at one point in our life that we *were* going to have surgery; that we *were* going to live as females. And we're doing that. But that's not the endpoint on a journey. Maybe it's a fork in the road or it opens another door, and now you've got all these other problems.

As a transsexual, you had to go through an adolescence. And that's when you played with dolls and that's when you tried the purple lipstick and that's when you did the nails, and a lot of little girls do that when they're in their teens. Transsexuals tend to do that later in life. And it's part of getting to a point where you can be androgynous, because you know who you are. Adolescence is where you define yourself. Many transsexuals who are going through adolescence in their fifties identify themselves by their behavior patterns. Because it's atypical. Most 50-year-old women aren't into some of the things that transsexuals are because transsexuals are really 13 developmentally. That again is something that sets us apart is the fact that we have to go through adolescence without the feedback that genetic females get. My women friends at that time were saying, "Come on, Jayne, you can't be

doing that." If we had all been 13 together we'd all have been doing it together. So there would have been that support, so we're going through it without the support of our gender. We don't have that. So that's another way in which we have to deal with those kinds of problems.

Second Participant: One thing that's occurred to me is that there's a difference between gender identity and gender roles. And our gender identity is not connected to anything. When I realized I was a woman I also realized that it had nothing to do with any behavior pattern. And as a woman I could choose to ride a motorcycle or I could choose to do needlepoint. I had all options. I know that a lot of people say that if you're a transsexual that means that, as a little child, you liked to play with dolls. I don't think that's true. The point I'm making is simply that I don't think there are any behavior patterns that signify the transsexual—it's a consciousness thing that's not connected to any particular behavior.

JT: Sometimes I'll be giving a discussion and students will say, "Oh, you changed your sex so that you can sleep with men." I always stop and say, "Oh, okay. I didn't know that. So all of you genetic females—all there is to your being female is sleeping with men. That's all there is—you're not female other than that." And they all go, "Oh for God sakes, no! There's a lot more to it!" It's your identity. It's how you see yourself. So that is the other issue. And I think we lose sight of that again when we get into these labels and these stereotypes. We have to talk about stereotypes, but any stereotype—any label—you take on limits you. I don't care what it is. Anytime you see yourself as anything, you're limiting. It means there are things that you can't do because of how you define yourself. We can't carry on this conversation if we don't talk in terms of stereotypes. I'm often criticized by feminists because I'll talk about gender stereotypes, gender roles, gender role behavior. We could make a list here. We know what those things are. We know what males are. Males are aggressive; males are logical; males are unemotional. We can go through the list. That's how they're typified. Females are sensitive; they're nurturant; they're emotional. We can go through those things. That's how society sees those stereotypes. There are males that are sensitive and there are females that are logical. When you were identifying yourself as a woman—a female—that didn't specify your behavior. It gave you more options. Girls get to express more human kinds of behavior than boys. Girls can be tomboys; boys can't be sissies. Not in this society. And because of that—I'll make another controversial statement—women know more what it's like to be a man than men know what it's like to be a woman. I found in my experience that, generally, women are much more accepting of variations in sexuality. You're gonna blow a man's mind more

than you will a woman's mind. Because women understand it more. Guys are threatened to beat hell. Most guys that don't understand what being female is all about, they don't understand that experience, and it terrifies them to think that they're going to wake up tomorrow and they're going to be a female. They did a study four or five years ago, which is reported in Judith Viorst's *Necessary Losses*. They asked kids—kindergarten through eighth grade—what their lives would be like if they woke up the next day and they were the other sex. And the little boys were saying, "Oh, it'd be a nightmare; it'd be yucky. I'd have to be clean, I'd have to smell nice." They went through all these very stereotypical things. And the little girls bought it, too. They said their life would be better. "I'd be smarter if I'd been born a boy." One little girl said, "My father would have loved me more." Those are the messages that are in society. That's why androgyny, I think, is the only thing that's going to save us—allowing a fuller expression of who we are.

That doesn't mean that there aren't going to be transsexuals. I don't believe that for a minute. I agree with John Money. I think that that's determined prenatally, really—the predisposition. And then it's going to get triggered in the environment. I think that the only way in which we're going to come together and live in a peaceful way is going to be when we better understand the other gender. A couple of other things that I just want to mention. I've talked about the differences between male and female and I can talk about a lot of differences between men and women. And a lot of them will be in terms of role behaviors. A lot of them will be in terms of some very superficial, outer layers of the onion. I believe that there are tremendous core differences between men and women. And don't ask me whether I think that they're a product of heredity or a product of environment. Because I'll give you my answer—it's both. But fundamentally and spiritually, there are differences between men and women. And I don't think a lot of people understand that. It's interesting because I work with people who have identified themselves as being gender dysphoric, and sometimes I will see a female becoming a male sitting there, expressing a lot of spiritual female behavior even though she wants to be a male. And I'll see the flip side of that, too. I'll see a male-to-female expressing a lot of masculine energy. So you can look at this on many levels. And I'm not saying that's wrong. I'm saying that's not the modal type of behavior for most women, for most females. Men and women differ. Women are into relationships. Women want to feel connected. Now that's reinforced in our society. Men work to become autonomous, work to be independent. And that's reinforced in our society.

There are some wonderful books that are out now that talk about these topics. The work of Deborah Tannen. She's got her second book out now on

language differences between men and women. Read it—you'll find a lot about the communication process. One of my favorite writers from Colorado is Ann Shea, who wrote *Women's Reality*. Read those books and you'll find out some profound differences between men and women. One of the things that I remember from Ann's book is the basic difference: If you ask a man on his deathbed if his life has been a success, he'll count it a success in terms of his accomplishments. Money he's accumulated. Positions that he's won. The mark that he's left on society. If you ask a woman on her deathbed whether her life has been a success, she'll count it a success based on the lives she's touched and the lives that have touched her. A focus on relationships, a focus on feeling connected as opposed to a focus on independence. If those differences occur, those are profound differences in the way in which men and women extract information from the universe, process it, and act on it. So what I'm really saying is that these differences are not clear-cut. You can't find a factor or two factors or three factors. What we're talking about is something that is multifaceted and something that is very complicated. And we're all on that journey. We're right in the middle of that, going down our own individual road and experiencing things from all directions. And it's going to impact on our family life, our accomplishments, our religion. Every aspect of our life. And we can deny it and say no that's not the case, or I don't accept it, and that's okay.

Let me toss out another question because those societal influences impact so much on the medical condition that we all have. Are we conformists or are we nonconformists? Nonconformists? I thought that too, and then I found myself saying one day, yeah I'm a nonconformist: I grew up in a small town in Indiana and I was uncomfortable doing little boy things and so I kept thinking, "Oh God, I'm on the wrong side of the schoolhouse. I'm playing baseball and somebody's hitting me in the nose with a bat and breaking my nose and I want to be over there jumping rope. What's wrong with me? Why can't I be like that?" And I looked and I saw how they were different from me and I saw that they wore dresses and I said, I can learn to wear dresses. And I saw that they wore makeup and I said, well I can learn to do that. Maybe I can even get my hair colored again. It's expensive but I can do it. And then I looked and said, "My God, they've got vaginas and I've got a penis." But I changed that too. Now I'm not sure that's nonconformity. That may be the ultimate of compliance, of conformity. I've done everything I can to live like that, damn it! And I question the society that causes you to do that. I really do. And I'm not putting down our experience. Because I think that's kind of irrelevant. But I think that there's something wrong with a society that says, I'm sorry, you've got a penis, you can't wear

dresses. One time I was showing a film that showed this guy with his wife putting their undies in the drawer. And one of my students, a coed, says, "Not fair. Men can't wear undies like that and sometimes I really just feel good having something like that next to my body." And then she looked at me and she said, "Do they really think that if they wear something like this their penis is going to shrivel up and fall off?" I mean, if you look at it logically it makes absolutely no sense. But it's such a cultural, emotionally loaded thing. And it's all so tied up with the male dominator society that we live in that I don't know anymore with myself. Part of me thinks I'm really a nonconformist and another part of me thinks, no, I don't know anybody that's conformed like I have.

Third Participant: As I become more involved in living in the women's community, I'm adjusting to the norms of that community. But in fact the funny part is as soon as I can find myself a job—I don't want to do it till I find a job—I've already made the decision that I'm getting a rather dykey haircut. So what I'm finding, in fact, is, I'm finding it rather comfortable being a rather butch lesbian.

JT: I'm very comfortable. I'm very androgynous. I tell classes of students about my background. I did this recently out in the San Fernando Valley at one of their large colleges, and there was an Iranian woman there that said, "I *knew* there was something different about you. I knew it!" She sensed my energy. She said, "Women don't walk around the way you do. Women aren't as assertive, as bold as you. Women your age"—and a sociologist friend of mine my age tells me that too—"wouldn't generally stand here like this and make a presentation." Women don't like to be looked at. They don't like to be treated as objects and so they tend to live that way. But I come across differently, so people pick it up on many different levels. They pick up your energy. I recently wrote an article for a magazine on the West Coast that was on differences between male and female energy. I think it's at that level too. How many times have you been with somebody where you just sensed their energy was different? I remember an artist friend years ago I told about myself and she said, "I knew there was something different about you. You're not like most of the women I know." I don't think she was "reading" me, whatever that means. I don't know what that term means anymore, but I think that she was just sensing that I'm not like most women. And that's good. I guess that's bad in some respects.

Fourth Participant: Do you see a blending down the road in the future where we'll actually get to the point where a child is brought up nonsexual and then when they reach a certain age they can choose which sex they wish to be?

JT: Well, John Money said that one time, tongue in cheek. He said, "As complicated as things are and as little as we know, I think it'd be a lot better if when infants were born, we gave them a provisional identification as to their gender. Let them grow up and let them decide for themselves when they're teenagers." I don't think that's going to happen. I think what's going to happen is that there's just going to be a lessening of the restrictiveness of gender role stereotypes, so people will be able to express a wider variety of behaviors within each gender role. Me, I'm all for the differences between male and female. I mean, my God! I don't want us all to become something in the middle. We are expressing ourselves in a way that we have to be to reach a totality of our humanity. That's all. Big deal. It's very dramatic and that's the drama of it and how different it is. How dramatically we change is what society looks at and they don't see the simplicity, the parsimony of what we're doing. So I think it's very deceptive and that's part of what is difficult for us to overcome. And that's why I think that the talk shows really do some good. They do a desensitization to that. When I went back to a high school reunion a few years ago in Indiana I didn't shock anybody. They had all seen me on television so it wasn't a big deal. You know, it would've been a few years before that. I mean, my God, look at the things that Christine Jorgensen had to go through, and the abuse. So all of that has happened to raise the awareness. And that's the beginning of education. You've got to at least recognize that something exists before you can begin to understand it. And then it's going through that intellectual acceptance and then finally the emotional, the affective acceptance. I don't think we're there. An awful lot of people can deal with me on an intellectual level and understand that, but on a gut level they can't. My own son is 23 and he shared with me the other day—and he and I get along—that he just cannot comprehend anyone, any human being being in so much pain that they would alter their anatomy. And that's a wall between my son and myself. That's something that keeps us from getting that close together. And I've had very close genetic women friends of mine say, "There's something very willful about you, Jayne, that you would take something like that into your own hands. And I can't really understand that." So there are always going to be things that we create that are going to set up walls. Maybe what we've got to do is accept other people for who they are, if we want to be accepted for who we are.

Fifth Participant: I was talking to a friend of mine about the things that people can handle. I made some reference about having gone through the transition and my friend burst out, "And that's something I'll never understand if I live to be a thousand." And what came with that remark totally

spontaneously, it felt very true to me, was to say to her, "The thing you should know is there's nothing to understand. There's no great mystery there—it's just what it is. It's a simple fact." And I think that for me that's the truth. I don't try to attach lots of things to it. It's just a basic fact. I knew I was a woman. I know it was a basic knowledge deep in my body. And I just did what I had to do to live it. And I think that's when I started looking for justifications and explanations in the closet. You know, that's when I let myself out, when I kept some purity in feelings, is when I became free.

Sixth Participant: When I was telling my parents, one of the main things I felt I had to get across to them was the pain I went through ever since I was 3 years old. If I could just relate that to them. I just wanted them to know that. And if they didn't accept me, fine. I already flew out of the nest so it didn't really matter to me. It was important, but at the same time, it took me like 38 years to accept it.

JT: Right. And to expect somebody else to do it in five years, is perhaps unreasonable. Yeah, I've said that, too. I've said if you don't accept me, well then that's fine. I didn't really mean it. I want people to accept me. The bottom line is I really want that to happen. I really kind of believe that most of the people that you convince, and most of the people who accept you, they'll accept you based on what you show them rather than what you say. If you show them that this is right for you and that your life is working they can accept it. I mean, my own mother will say, "I don't understand what you're about at all, but I certainly can see this is how you have to live your life, and this works for you."

Seventh Participant: Do you ever feel the pressure to always show them that you are happy? I remember, like I had certain people—my family and some friends. They said, "Well if you're happy it must be okay." So I had to be happy.

JT: You couldn't go in sad anytime—talk about pressure. That could be pressure; it really could be. I guess I've experienced that. One of the questions that I guess I ask in greeting each day—on my very worst day I'm up early and I'm glad for the adventure. And that's something I never experienced before. Before it was, "Oh God, I'm doing this again." I live in Los Angeles, and I used to be so frustrated going to work. It meant a 15-mile drive on the freeway and it was bumper to bumper and it was log jam time and it was gridlock and I'd be sitting there and my blood pressure would be doing a number. And I'd be looking at my meetings that were scheduled and thinking, how damn soon can I get out and get home and get out of these clothes. I stayed in that job as a woman. And the first day I went in as Jayne and it was cleared, I was whistling and I was on the freeway and I didn't

care and I didn't have to be out in 10 minutes. I would have stayed there for 18 hours and, "Well, we've got another meeting. Well, let's *do* it!" You know? Because there was a contentment that I felt that I had never felt before. And also there was such a tremendous—does anyone ever talk about this?—a tremendous freeing up of energy. I didn't have to spend time thinking about which damn sex I was. For the first time in my life. And I thought everybody did that, too. I didn't do that anymore. I was just Jayne, and I don't think about it. I enjoy it. I have a close friend who runs a boutique in Santa Monica. I'll go in there sometimes and Margaret will say, "Well, you don't have to buy it, but I really wish you'd try on this. I think this would look great on you." And I'll try it on and I'll be doing my number in front of the mirror and one time I was doing it and she just looked at me and she raised an eyebrow, and she said, "Oh, it's so much fun to be a girl, isn't it?" And we both knew it was. You know, it really was? I tell my clients that sometimes. When they're very hesitant. I have clients, still a few around, that *know* who they are and say, "By God, I want to have the surgery right now and I don't want to have to go through the cross-living experience. Because I know what it's going to be like. I know what I'm going to be able to do." And I keep saying, "No, go through it." Because we grew up with fantasies all of our lives. We were denied that. We knew what we were going to do. And part of counseling, and part of the living experience is to get rid of the fantasy part and find out what really being a woman is all about. And so I'm telling her, "No, do it, to find out what it's about." There, I was wrong on so many things. What I thought I was going to expect as I grew up and when I finally got there. I was wrong, but you know that the things I couldn't anticipate are even better. So, in other words, I never could have known that I wouldn't be thinking about whether I'm a man or a woman the rest of my life because I'd always done that. And that went away and I went, "Oh wow!" So there were a lot of these kind of things. It's kind of like just getting in the groove with Mother Nature, with the universe, and saying, "Hey, you know, I finally know why I'm here." So I think that's where we're all at.

Eighth Participant: I found that a lot when I was going through the conflict stage. The person I used to be would let this new person exist as long as we played by *his* ground rules—and then once I became assertive enough that I developed my own ground rules, I turned out not to be the same person I thought I was going to be. There are many ways in which I am different. And that's neat.

JT: That's true, it is. That's the adventure part of it, isn't it? Because you *don't* know. The things I've found out through this have been so won-

derful. And they have been things that were unexpected. And that's what really makes life adventure. Because, boy! if things like that keep happening, I want to be 127.

Jayne Thomas is an instructor of Human Sexuality in the California State College system and a therapist in the Los Angeles area of California.

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I'VE LOOKED AT LIFE FROM BOTH SIDES NOW

Reminiscences from the first New Woman's Conference,
Essex, MA, September 20–22, 1991

By N. S. Ledins, Ph.D.

Judy Collins, balladeer extraordinaire, recorded the above-titled ballad. Although we would suspect she did not have "us" in mind (i.e., the new woman), the appropriateness of its meaning became one of the opening themes of the conference celebrating the "new woman" (i.e., the gender/sex reassigned woman).

At the New Woman Conference (NWC), sponsored by the Outreach Institute of S. Portland, Maine, 21 postoperative male-to-female women met to explore the unique dignity and pride in the awesome odysseys each moved through from genderal dysphoria to congruence.

Without maps, charts, or benchmarks, or any historical expertise for reference, the new women gathered with the one certainty they all had in common: their rite of passage from the world of male to female, man to woman. Medically titled sex reassignment surgery (SRS), this milestone point of reference heralded a new life, lifestyle, and perspective. The rite of passage, then, becomes the one beacon light to address the Conference theme: the beauty and dignity, the pride and certainty expressed by each person who had successfully crossed over, by a definitive ritual passage point, into the sacred and awesome world of woman.

From one breathtaking moment to another, the Conference proved to be a long-needed affirmation of the need to "sign" the rite of passage, the need to share intimately, in a setting of awesome beauty, the ritual and its responsibilities. Building a communal sense of pride and acceptance as women of destiny and change became an overriding underpinning for all assembled.

The Conference moved from the predictable (i.e., planned presentations and workshops) to the explosive and healing unplanned bondings that left each participant humbled and awestruck at the breathtaking serendipities that made the needed event a sacred time, to be celebrated again and again in years to come.

By far, two memories—among so many—stand out in bold relief for this participant. Into our midst came a captivating and beauteous shaman/berdache, herself a new woman. Time and again, she focused all of us on the harmony and integrity of nature, including the searing beauty of our own

new harmonies in painfully walking the many miles to the great moment of passage. Through spontaneous healings, blessings, and challenges from her ancient tribal rituals, she brought an unbelievable energy and focus to each woman as part of Grandmother and Grandfather Sun, Moon, and Earth. Each time she spoke through her ancient works and rituals, the special postoperative life needs of the new woman fairly leaped for the joy of communal bonding. Each participant walked away from the Conference forever signed and blessed by the rich imagery tributes of our own new woman shaman.

And, as with most firsts, the outcomes were not clear at the outset. But, with the awe-inspiring backdrop of beauty and harmony that is called the Essex Conference Center, a magical "brigadoon" emerged, demanding that each participant focus on its common bond and its dynamic heritage. The simple acts of eating became opportunities to share the unspoken bond of passage; the bonding rituals made the need for future convergences a realized necessity. Thus, the second breathtaking memory brought the entire meaning and purpose of the Conference into focus. As the Conference wended its way toward a closed evaluation and agreement on the future—without a planning or design—the entire group agreed that it had a need to perform, as a final act of pride and acceptance of its role, an affirmation of that very rite of passage. Assembling in a two-tiered, hand-held circle, the newly "passaged" women (SRS within the last year), facing the outside circle composed of their "older" sisters who had gone through the rite of passage earlier, were welcomed into this sorority of passage. Each of the elders, in spontaneous words of welcome, invited each of the newest "new women" into the life role of women of destiny.

In turn, as tears of joy streamed down each face, the newly passaged women expressed their thanks and love for the concern of their passaged elders. Then, each circle dissolved into one large circle to form the final, large ring of bonding and community, pride and dignity.

At that moment, the new woman movement ensured itself a place as a needed force in the world. Process had brought a group with a common rite of passage to the point where the voice and needs of the male-to-female new woman (and, in time, the female-to-male new man) had to be heard in a new, concerted, and peaceful way. There was to be no turning back. The loosely knit group of new women knew clearly that, as the Conference came to a peaceful but determined close, there was a need to provide this awesome right of bonding and life purpose to their sisters.

As each participant waved goodbye and left behind the idyllic setting of the Essex House, there was no doubt that each had accepted the challenge of the Conference: to ride the wind of their hard-earned freedom of

womanhood. There is absolutely no doubt in this participant-reporter's mind that the NWC will be heard from in even more concerted voices in the years to come.

The author has long been involved with the issues, programs and services of this paraculture. Having experienced her own rite of passage over 14 years ago, she is currently the Director of the International Board of Electrologist Certification of the American Electrology Association, as well as the President of a Home Study School Program.

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**Vested Interests:
Crossdressing and Cultural Anxiety,**

by M. Garber, Ph.D.

"Crossdressing is a crucial part of our culture and is an expression of 'thirdness' or 'otherness'." This is a quote from *Vested Interests*, a new and provocative study about the many facets of the crossdressing phenomenon and the symbolic importance of its varied forms of expression. Dr. Garber, the author, provides many insights about crossdressing activity on the Shakespearean as well as the contemporary stage; gives new meaning to the movies that focused on crossdressing as a major theme; and also offers the reader some positive insight into the behaviors of males and females who used crossdressing behaviors in the attainment of social, political, and personal goals throughout Western history. *Vested Interests* covers the long and colorful history of crossdressing from Queen Elizabeth I dressing up as a knight in order to rally her men into battle, to a former Governor of New York (Lord Cornbury) who dressed as a woman in public because he wished to best represent the Queen of England in the colonies. Rich in anecdote and literary criticism, this title offers the reader a rich "banquet table" of crossdressing/crossgender behaviors and the power and influence of clothes.

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THE BEACH

A rocky shore with sand and sea,
Is a very special place to be.
With friends, along, to sit and talk,
Or by yourself, just taking a walk.

The sun glistens, dancing its light,
While waves thunder, showing their might.
Tiny shells, dotting the sands,
Thin blades of grass, like fingers on hands.

The seagulls soar, gliding with glee,
Diving for fish, they scoop at the sea.
Low tide, high tide, and in-between,
Waters of blue, speckled with green.

I love to walk the beach at night,
Full moon rising, stars that are bright.
The wind ruffling my hair and dress,
Sometimes I must look a dreadful mess.

The beach is magic, a wonderous place,
Always in motion, changing its face.
A wonder of nature, of power that's real,
A place to escape, a place just to feel.

—Alycia Anne Davis

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LOOKING FOR MY SHOES

Excerpts from a novel by J. Fecteau and K. Fecteau

Looking for My Shoes is a novel about a couple committed to a deep mutual love and respect for each other in the face of coming to grips with his crossdressing. The form of the novel is sharing of ideas, experiences, and feelings of David and Billie through correspondence to each other and diary entries. Excerpted here are (1) David's letter disclosing his crossdressing tendencies to Billie in a letter, (2) Billie's reaction to David's letter in her diary, and (3) David's diary entry describing his and Billie's exploration of his crossdressing together on a holiday.

The couple are in their late thirties and have known each other since undergraduate days at a Ivy League College. David never got married. Billie was married, has a young teenage daughter (Amanda), and is currently divorced.

Reaction to these excerpts from the readership is requested. The novel is being considered for publication in its entirety in 1992. —Ed.

1. David's Disclosure and Crossdressing Genesis: Letter to Billie

We tried to force our beautiful, free flowing child selves into those narrow constricting cubicles labeled female and male. I tried, but I wasn't good at "being a boy." Now I am glad, knowing that a man is nothing but a figment of a penis' imagination, and any man should want to be something more than that.

—Dr. Julius Lester
Being a Boy

July 26 and 27, 1981

Dear Billie,

I am sorry I forgot to ring you when I arrived home. But I must admit that your voice on my answering machine filled me with more joy and relief than regret. It's still hard to believe you had any cause left to be

concerned for my safety. Still, I'm hoping that right at the moment you digested the previous line you were thinking how stupid I can be sometimes. But please forgive my doubts and insecurities. This whole night is one enormous blur. I cannot tell where the dream ends and reality begins. All the space between Tarrytown and here allowed enough room for exhaustion, fear, and panic to elbow their way into the love and understanding you tried to wrap me in this weekend. Your sincerity still has a radiance that all my skepticism cannot blow out. But it tries, Billie. God, does it try! No amount of imbibing can insulate me from thoughts of how low I must have sunk in your estimation. While something inside begs me to leave well enough alone, I must offer you the opportunity to turn your back on all of this with a clear conscience... I will settle for friendship if that is still an option. I'd share my life with you and Amanda on any terms. We could proceed without ever acting on or alluding to my revelation again. Or if you just need time to sort out your thoughts and feelings and the vacation looms as a barrier, I will wait to hear from you... as long as it takes. But after scrutinizing your expressions, body English, touch, the consummation and climax of our love-making, if your acceptance and understanding are the miracles they appear to be, read on. Perhaps the answers to your many questions will be easier to commit to paper than the impossible task of responding face to face. It's a long story....

I know of no one my sex who has put aside all of the ingrained chauvinism of his upbringing. What else can explain the ease with which women buy "men's" shirts or wear pants, once exclusive male domains, yet I cringe at the prospect of the reverse, though I yearn for it secretly? When you asked if I identified with any of the psychological classifications that describe my situation, I could not tell whether you were seeking something familiar to latch onto in such alien surroundings, or trying to prevent me from sinking into another trap. Assuming the worst only suggests my own flaws. Putting myself in your place, a label rolled into my consciousness, just short of the entry gate where a thought is transformed into words. I shudder at writing this. Were you thinking...transvestite? All its perverse and deviant connotations have never failed to produce that same, sick, unsavory feeling in me. In the books that I frantically perused as an adolescent, the classic explanation for the transvestite was that gender development had gone haywire, and he or she could only achieve erotic sensation and orgasm when dressed in the clothing of the other gender. I should have known better. But I resigned myself to that tag if only to find a niche, however unfulfilling then, however unsuitable now. Every kid wants to belong somewhere. Sometimes no price is too high to pay for company, any company. But

sometimes identification scars you and turns you inside yourself, or away, like the day I got into my car to ride to the church you were to be married in, only to find myself hours later lost upstate, still crying like a baby... an emotional recluse... a cerebral transvestite.

As a youngster, I had relished family outings, backpacking and camping, lost in childhood fantasies. Just as much, I loved the passivity and peace of reading in the shade of a willow tree on a summer afternoon, far from the macho competition of sandlot sports. But nothing compared with my eager anticipation for a visit from my cousin Evelyn. Her vivaciousness provided my first living example of what the word "freedom" really meant. Her exuberance was infectious, and I did things with her I could never have done with my other friends. We'd hold hands and race down hillsides, falling and tumbling, and laughing. She'd giggle with delight when I'd blush in admitting I thought flowers were pretty, or liked their fragrance. Sometimes we'd lie down together in freshly cut grass, and blow dandelions or give names to the shapes of clouds. Nothing seemed to please Evelyn more than when I'd join in activities she said "other boys were afraid to try." I was proud when Evelyn equated my interest to courage, though I soon found out few others shared her opinion. While knowing smiles and exclamations of, "She's just a tomboy," greeted Evelyn's rambunctiousness in playing cowboy, stickball, or football with me; only derision met my enjoyment in picking flowers or playing house with her. As I grew older, Evelyn's visits diminished in number and, by age ten, ceased. I thought this a coincidence until Mom finally admitted that Dad had told Uncle Henry and Aunt Ruth that Evelyn was a negative influence on me, precipitating an enormous fight and family schism. But Evelyn's last visit left an indelible impression. We went skinny-dipping in a sheltered creek not far from my home. There, to our amazement, we discovered there was one difference between us, after all. I spent years exploring that mystery, *mistakenly* following the so-called experts who once believed there was an endless array of disparities between the sexes. Recently, with Benjamin's blind assistance, I have found my way back to my original conclusion in all its innocent glory and *accuracy*.

But my fascination with Evelyn's memory only grew in complexity. It began to spin out of control at a party in the basement of my best friend Van Stephen's house. He had sent me upstairs to bring down more ice, and as I mounted the steps, I looked up and saw a young lady ascending before me. There was a clear view up her pleated skirt. The sight of her lacy slip and panties, her garter belt and stockings, and that soft, swishing sound her legs made as she walked, brought on an incredible erection and hot blood rushed

to my cheeks. I was confused and appalled by my condition, as well as the new and agonizing curiosity. What must it feel like to stand in her shoes? Making out for the first time compounded my dilemma. Makeup made a girl's eyes glisten like great, starry orbs. Her scent, the taste of her lipstick, the touch of her bra strap still burned in my brain later that night as I tried to sleep. I couldn't keep my hands from exploring the outlet of pleasure for my thoughts. It was weeks before the humiliation of that evening was finally assuaged. There was some relief in knowing I had not wet the bed! But I was riddled with guilt at my sinfulness, though not enough to dissuade me from taking matters in hand, again....

Every event seemed to fuel my as-yet-unfocused longings. I remember the day my cat, Evangeline, died. For hours, Mom sat with me out by the barn, talking to me, consoling me, telling me every living thing had to go to sleep at one time or another, but we would all awaken and be together again. I fought so hard to maintain my composure. But as storm clouds gathered, she told me that rain was God's medium for cleansing the planet, just as tears were the gift God gave us to wash away pain, and no one was more of a man for denying nature's way. Next day at school when I broke down again at recounting the reason for my absence, my friends' laughter reminded me that everyone did not think like my mother. "Stop acting like a sissy, and be a man," I heard my teacher, Miss Thompson, say. But I knew that the real "act" would be if I did stop crying. All women were not alike, after all. Some were prisoners, too. But at least they had outlets for expressing inner softness. Were all those frilly clothes, freedom to cry when you were sad, freedom to fail because you're "just a little girl" compensation for not having a penis? Or were men being punished for having one; forced to be tough and not show emotion? What was wrong with me? Was I the only one enmeshed in this confusion and isolation, feeling so cheated and jealous? Something had to break. And yes, Billie, though I could not admit it to you before, something did.

The bike route I took to and from school wound its way through a small business district. Each day I would meet some friends at the top of my street, and proceed to the "prison." Those rides all blend together in uneventful memory, except one. The promise of an early spring shimmered in the trees and across the grass. The morning sun coated each rooftop in a crystalline aura. But what made this day special was "the something" that caught my eye while passing Phyllis' Restaurant. There by the curb near the dumpster lay a discarded pair of nylon stockings. I had often seen lingerie hanging on clotheslines, but my respect for privacy precluded everything

but a dumbfounded stare. But here before me was a golden opportunity to do more than look: to touch, to hold, to actually possess, and inevitably to pass by. My mind had raced through options while my spine quivered with excitement. I couldn't possibly stop without the other kids seeing me, and by the time we reached our destination, I was crestfallen. How would I get away from my friends after school to retrieve the stockings? Where could I hide them at home and what if they were discovered? And worst of all, they might be gone by this afternoon. As the day dragged by, my determination to secure my prize superseded all rational judgment. After school, I told my friends I had to stop off at the library. No problem... I carefully calculated the time it would take the others to pass the place where I prayed my treasure remained. Then, came my frantic ride. I slowed to a stop by the dumpster adjacent to the curb. I was soaked in sweat, my heart thumping as I peered around the corner of the receptacle... and there they were! Now came the problem of picking them up undetected by restaurant patrons or passers by. I inched closer, dismounted, and bent down as if to check my bicycle tires. Within moments, the coast was clear, my prize secured in my windbreaker pocket. With my brother at baseball practice and father at work, I still had the problem of concealing my near bursting elation from my mother. The luck of fate that had for so long stifled my curiosity and as-yet-unarticulated longings held like never before. Mom greeted me in the driveway and told me she was running late, with grocery shopping to do and cleaning to pick up. I would have no time to betray myself. Everything was on the stove, she said, and would I start dinner for her in about an hour or so? Finally, finally, finally alone, up in my bedroom, door locked, perched by the window, I peeked through the most infinitesimal crack in the curtains that would allow a view of her car disappearing up the road. I removed my windbreaker, and breathed a sigh of relief amidst a rising sensation of exhilaration and, yes, guilt. I took the stockings out of their roost ever so slowly. My hands were shaking as I carefully removed the dried leaves and assorted debris stuck to them. When I was done, I laid the nylons out on the bed in front of me, admiring my run-ridden treasure, while I removed all of my clothing. Clumsily I pulled them on with a fear and excitement I had never known before. Without a garter belt, they did sag, but the feeling and familiar sound that rubbing my legs and feet together produced made me feel amazingly luxurious, soft and secure.

Though paranoia made me dispose of my prize, that afternoon left a shattering impact on my consciousness, and gradually evolved into one of the predominant fantasies that survived adolescence. How wonderful it

would be to share such an experience with a girl who could understand; a faceless goddess telling me there was nothing wrong with expressing my feminine aspects. She would reassure me it was all right to wear women's clothes from time to time, as a private outlet for androgynous self-expression, or as a haven from the aggressive world of male competitiveness.... I have no trouble in pinpointing the exact moment that goddess became recognizable, this past Christmas Eve.

All along, I've sensed in you a subliminal understanding, however unsubstantiated. That is why I was confounded by the trouble you had finding "me" in Dr. Friday's book. Your "innocent" flirtations with the very cutting edge of what I concealed were uncanny and terrifying. Do you recall our senior year in college, our intimate picnic at Sunnyside? We were lying together on a blanket and you were stroking my forehead. Suddenly you pushed back my hair from my face and commented that with such beautiful blonde locks and blue eyes, I would have made an attractive girl. How about the day I finally acquiesced to your belief in reincarnation? You proclaimed with confidence that I would be your wife and bear your child in our next life together. Are any of the many other incidents coming back to you now? The nadir came the weekend of Amanda's class trip to Bear Mountain, and I was caught without a poncho in all the mud and rain during our hike down by Indian Point. I returned to your home drenched and shivering. You convinced me to stay over that night, pushed me into the shower, and took my only clothes to the washer. I can't begin to describe the sheer horror upon getting out when you handed me your frilly, red velvet robe to wear in the interim. I'll never forget your playful laughter or words, seeing my anxiety, "What's so terrible about wearing my robe? Would the great liberal prefer to catch pneumonia?"

Could all of this have really been coincidence? My subconscious and conscious thought not. Disclosure seemed imminent, whether I wanted it or not, and more and more seemed essential if our relationship would have any chance of growing. But now what, Billie? Now that this is all out in the open, for better or worse, now what? Can your belief be so stalwart that such an outlet or refuge will become a natural part of our lives? Have I gained your pity, but lost your respect? Am I even a male in your eyes anymore? Will this total honesty be an elixir or a poison for us? I am afraid, Billie, I really am. Tell me where your path has taken you that made my disclosure seem so easy to embrace....Whatever you decide, I will not press you further, even if you walk away again. I cannot help but love you.

Love, David

2. Billie's Reaction to David's Letter in Her Journal Entry

The anima (the feminine) is an archetypal form, expressing the fact that a man has female genes, and that is something that does not disappear in him.

—Carl Jung
Jung Speaking

August 4, 1981

After two days of vacationing, I am happy to say that the grueling, sometimes overwhelming aspects of the last few weeks are finally easing into memory. David's letter, which he wrote in a last-ditch effort to "free" me, actually seemed like the most crushing burden of all; his frightful insecurity fell on my shoulders like a heavy snowfall on a weary mountain awaiting spring. I reread it several times, realizing for the first time the depth of his unanswered needs. How naked he must feel in front of me now! It's a sad picture, really. Although he remains the same loving and beloved person to me, his own masculine self-image has been shattered, plummeting him to the depths of humiliation. But it's his perception, and not mine, of how the world (alias, I) perceives him that could crush our entire relationship! The burden on my shoulders is really to protect a self-destructive man from himself. Upon receiving the letter, I called David immediately with as much support and reassurance as I carry within. Judging from his composure Sunday morning when I arrived fully packed and armed for travel, his acceptance of my belief in him is beginning to grow again.

The driving time and restful routine of the last two days have given David and me the opportunity to wander back through the life situations that have brought us to where we are, and it has been good for us. We ride and talk, and perhaps because in a car the road becomes the resting place for the eyes, it is easier to talk about David's "feminine side" (for lack of a better term) than when we're sitting face to face. The conversation, at times, becomes not only intense and open but exhausting. I struggle mentally to relive David's youth through his eyes, visualizing his cousin Evelyn, his gentle mother, and the bullishness of his father. I wish he had met many of the people I knew, who were apparently not frightened off from investigating such play activities as David experienced with Evelyn. Through those early years of my life, I encountered many boys, usually a neighbor or friend's brother, who enjoyed a few hours of "girls'" activities, then went on to those considered to be for "boys." Like Robert, who lived next door, or my

cousin Jeff. Jeff and I often played house and exchanged roles, yet none of the kids on our road bothered about it at all. (Jeff grew up and went to Annapolis, is quite successful, and I hardly think suffered from the early experience). Somehow, David's youth didn't offer such guilt-free experiences, and I think that is why his feelings now are so traumatized. It is probably not nearly as simple as I'm making it all sound, but I'm seeking an understanding, a justification of David's inner feelings. The more I reason with myself, the more I am able to do that.

After all, look at my own childhood. I was able to experience early role reversals with hardly a second thought. With Mom's chronic heart problems, Dad played a prevalent role in the daily routines of our house. Because it was an established routine, it never occurred to me that it was unusual for a man to scrub the floors, iron clothes, bake, or vacuum the carpet. He made the best lasagna I ever tasted. As I grew older, he and I shared the chores that Mom found too exhausting. I liked to help him, and he always said I was a terrific helper; I could "take orders" well, was strong for my age, and apparently good with my hands, as he was. His shop was so close to home that, even at age eight, I could easily bicycle down to it. Many days I'd race home from school, change clothes, jump on my bike, and be at Dad's side in a matter of minutes. I'd watch, and even help in the bays, hand him tools, hold lights, and ask a million questions about nuts, bolts, and different wrenches. I remember feeling so proud and important when he'd tell people, very convincingly, too, how I helped rebuild a carburetor or straighten a frame. Most of my girls friends would busy themselves after school with fixing their nails or talking on the phone, but I was more content with my blue jeans, dirty hands, and long braided hair, working with Dad. Even yard work was fun with my father. My mother was constantly sticking her head out the door to chastise Dad when she felt I had taken on a little more than I could handle. But Dad was satisfied to let me try what I wanted, so I often pushed the lawn mower, raked grass, and waxed cars. It was a "high" for me; boys were supposed to be better at lots of things, but I was as good as they were! Maybe we all strive for a balance of our sides, a full circle, and David is not alone in his quest.

As we drove, David described some early encounters in his search to understand himself that were frightful. At one point, he had decided to see what information he could uncover from psychologists, desperately hoping to find some who would categorize his fascination with the femme persona as "normal"; someone who would offer a logical, society-approved explanation with which he could gain self-acceptance. One book he brought along with him was typical of all the others. Dr. Stoller, a 1960s psychiatrist, pro-

vided words to terrify—"severe disturbance," "bizarre," "fetish." With narrow, strictly defined categories, David managed to settle on Stoller's second defined type of transvestite as where he could find some answers, for he defined this type of crossdresser as "one who is always masculine, even when indulging in his fetish, which is to look like a woman." Stoller described a weak father figure and/or a male-hating mother behind the transvestite's "abnormalcy"; this, of course, did not fit David's background. He emerged from his investigation confused and miserable over his findings, yet with a title with which to label himself. It was unsuitable, fitting him like a left shoe on a right foot, yet it provided a link with others; a group to which he could "belong." None of the sources David researched offered any "normal" reason for transvestite behavior. The only conclusion was to consider himself some sort of freak of nature.

I also resented Stoller's classification (again, strictly defined) of women who help such men as David experience their female side. He sees such women as "men-haters, or women determined to humiliate males." How simple-minded we women are to all feel the same way! The whole explanation angers me, for I know this is as ill-fitting a description of me as Stoller's description of David. I think that what we both suffer from is not some personality quirk, but simply a deep-seated belief and self-allowance of freedom; the freedom to feel and experience whatever comes naturally to us, without being placed in little boxes of abnormalcy, bizarreness, and freakishness.

As I reread my entry now, I feel secure in my ability to understand and accept David, to love David, and to help him as much as I possibly can. Until now, this has been an intellectual debate, but tonight... tonight will be our first experiment. We have agreed, from the beginning, to move forward in stages. David will not divulge his expectations for what each step will entail, insisting I proceed in whatever way I feel is best. However, David frequently comments on my makeup, making a point to notice a new shade of lipstick or eye shadow, and listens discerningly when he asks about the hows and whys of different products. The makeup seems a logical way to start; David's soft features and brilliant blue eyes should handle the transformation into femininity relatively easily. While in Albany yesterday, I did discreetly pick up a few small gifts for him, hopefully to represent my support, approval, and understanding. First of all, though his beard is not heavy, a thicker, darker, makeup foundation seemed crucial. While in the drugstore, I happened to notice some artificial fingernails and polish, which just might fascinate David, since he has such soft, gentle hands. The third item that caught my eye was an inexpensive pair or clip-on earrings. I had

been wondering how I could help his long, blonde hair fit the persona, and the moment I saw those long, dangling pink earrings, I grabbed them off the rack. Finally, I bought a small brocade makeup bag as David's treasure chest, large enough for several additional items as I accumulate them. My purchases complete, I was feeling amazingly smug over my successful shopping spree, and profoundly relieved to find that I felt no agony, no disgust, no misery over what lies ahead of us tonight. Conversely, I feel happy, despite a nervousness about how to proceed. I am anxious to see if David is pleased with his gifts, and willing to accept the face that will stare back at him from the mirror.

3. David and Billie Explore the Crossdressing Experience on Vacation

If the shoe doesn't fit, must we change the foot?

—Gloria Steinem
Ms. Magazine

August 7, 1981

As we prepare to spend our last day in Concord, Mass., I feel the sensation of time washing over me in great waves. Curiosities abound. The novelty of Billie's uninterrupted company has lost none of its gloss, but has actually been enhanced. I've come to more fully appreciate the depth and scope of her love, insight, intelligence, and what we share as precious. Days seem like hours, but their imprint is millennium. The significance of my first 30 years of life is no more profound than what I have experienced in the past few weeks. I have learned that trust and honest self-expression can be easily received but are traumatically given up.

Details mass in cerebral log-jam, rushing together and pleading release on paper. I sit here as day breaks, listening to Billie's even breathing, enjoying her innocent and tranquil beauty in sleep. Sun streams through the open window; a warm breeze rustles the white lace curtains. I am in awe of the aura of peace nestled around us, as if I am the one who is dreaming. But I know I have awakened, at least from the uncertainty of a week ago.

Billie's arrival last Sunday was long awaited and hard earned. At the inception of our dream of a vacation together, we were on equal footing and seemingly secure of the impressions we had made on one another. All that, however, was lost to my guilt-ridden confession. Billie had held back no secrets and deserved nothing less. But Sunday, memories of my revelation

gave way to fears of impetuosity and nagging insecurity, and our warm and lengthy embrace was only a respite. However exhilarating I had felt to be freed of my macho facade, I longed for the protection it once afforded. I could barely contain the embarrassment of my own transparency. In the early stages of our drive, I found myself desperately searching for the right things to say. Fear and frustration brought forth futility but soon succumbed to a grudging reality. I could not reclaim what I had given up. Surely that was for the best. Nothing seemed worse than the tortured recollections of the empty charade I thought I had to maintain to keep Billie from slipping through my fingers a second time. During our first night in Albany, it became apparent that Billie was also determined to avoid that eventuality.

Dressing for dinner was not a process but rather a mutual quest to present the perfect image, to impress. My best suit of clothes, the casual chic of my fly-away hair that somehow responded to the comb, still left me unsettled over some detail I might have overlooked. I was brimming with the adolescent uneasiness that accompanies your first date with that beautiful someone. But as I fidgeted in my chair, trying to appreciate the view of the city from our hotel window, I became aware of the lengthy passage of time since Billie had finished her shower, only to uncharacteristically reclaim the bathroom to dress. When she finally emerged, her smiling eyes pleaded for a word of approval for the lovely vision that stood before me. I was flattered and more than a little relieved that my opinion still mattered that much. Approval was the least of what I felt, or said, and Billie was soon enthusing over our accommodations and the evening ahead. Dinner was another respite, as we hit a recently unfamiliar groove. Billie's adeptness at bolstering my confidence without directly broaching the tender subject was merely a prelude to the romantic intimacy we later shared in our room.

Next day, roaming my old haunts north of the city was more of the same: a mutual act of reaching out and no extended hand was left unheld. Billie insisted on thoroughly perusing the sights of my childhood, and I was touched by her enthusiasm. She stood transfixed as we parked the van opposite my family home. She said she could imagine me playing under the willows, an unmistakable sadness in her voice. She rebounded when I told her that any sad memories had been transformed into pleasant ones, as a process that led me to her. I had spoken the truth. None of those visions absorbed the sunlight with the resonance of memory. However much they had changed or remained, the eyes that beheld them were not the same. Riding away had never been easier.

Our reservations in Concord were guaranteed, and my first look at the town square at midnight more than justified Billie's extravagant praise. Our

room was antique elegance to four exhausted eyes, and sleep segued to breakfast at Longfellow's Wayside Inn. The talk was of poetry; Billie left me the field, indulging my enthusiasm. Later it was her turn, and she became a beaming bellwether of historical and transcendental fact and folklore. Her zest was infectious, so much so that I paid a heavy midafternoon price for an ignored blister, lost in the unabashed joy of rediscovering many of my love's own treasured memories of youth. We returned to our room, though I was soon alone, bathing my foot while watching Billie from the window, as she crossed the square in search of Band-aids and ointment. An hour later, I felt a sense of dread when she returned wearing a coy little smile, carrying more than the one bag from the drugstore.

An early dinner only emphasized the significance of the other parcels and what Billie had in mind for the evening. My forced nonchalance led to fragmented questions about transcendentalism, as I stumbled into Alcott's belief in reincarnation and inevitably to the male and female nature of every soul. Billie's voracious reading habits had been satiated in Concord's many bookshops, and she produced a paperback from her purse that she had been reading while I dressed my foot, back at the hotel. "I found something that may add to your understanding of what you have needlessly suffered." "Needlessly," she repeated. The passage was about old souls who had led many lifetimes as both sexes and their frustrating attempts to break free of unnatural gender roles. My mind was still reeling from the variables uncovered in our ensuing conversation as Billie locked and tested the dead bolt to our room.

All of Billie's warmth and tenderness could not dissipate the conflicting emotions that converged upon me in that moment. Until then, the full impact of what was about to happen had been kept at arms' length, like holding the ticket to a long shot that later crossed the finish line a winner with furlongs to spare. No embrace could compensate for the weakness in my knees when I heard the shower stop, and Billie soon emerged, took me by the hand, and led me in for mine. Afterward, she helped me into her robe and pointed to the chair by the vanity. I had planned to be witty. Right then I would have settled for composure. I felt like what I must have appeared: a wet, pink-blotched blob of putty. Billie's words of reassurance flowed incessantly, but left no lasting impression. Only the face of my love and her nurturing expression yielded any hope of sustenance. She laid out the contents of her make-up case on the counter with the meticulousness of a surgical assistant making a last-minute procedural run-through. Then she smiled and said softly, "All right... If you're uncomfortable at any time, we can stop." There was no need for embarrassment, she reiterated, taking hold of

both of my hands, and leaning down to kiss my forehead. "Are you okay?" she asked, as she stepped back and studied my face intently. "I think so," was the closest thing to a truthful response I could muster. Uttered with the conviction of a man headed for the gallows (who *still* wanted to go), we both shared a much needed laugh.

Billie patted me on the head, picked up her perfume, and asked rhetorically, "Why don't we make you smell pretty, first?" As she pulled off the cap, the click of plastic sounded like the latch on a door, and the aerosol exploded in fragments like splintering wood. I could see the particles hanging in the air, as if some giant gate had been burst open, never to be closed again. I was entering that familiar yet tauntingly distant world that I never believed could be a man's to feel or smell or taste. My senses resounded as if half their power had lain dormant since birth, fully awake for the first time, betraying my expectations. Misnomered masculinity followed me into this previously forbidden realm, so fragrant and sweet. I could feel the dampness of my chest and torso as Billie retied the robe's loosening belt. The enveloping aroma was one I had known before, but it was somehow different. The scent mingled and became one with my own body chemistry, unique and foreign, for while it was emanating from my own pores, it was distinctly "feminine." However pleasant the sensation, it was fleeting. Billie reached for a small tube at the edge of the sink, and I silently thanked God for the blessing of the bourbon in my glass and the fact that my chair wasn't facing the mirror. Maybe it was the wishfulness of fervent prayer or the rush of an alcohol high, but a luxuriousness began to wash over me, warm and tingling, as Billie put me through her own familiar paces, exposing her mysterious art in dabs of color and cool, soothing liquids. My face became a fragile landscape. When it was nearly completed, Billie stared into the soft pink that she daubed on my cheeks with a long, full brush....With a sigh, she stepped back to observe her work as her face broke into a glow. Her obvious satisfaction proved I had been successful in concealing the frail, insecure ego hidden behind the face she had labored over with such care and diligence. Billie took the drink from my rigor-mortised hand, produced a joint from her case, laid it on the vanity, then put the finishing touches to my lips and hair. I managed a sheepish grin at Billie's pleased expression when she exclaimed that I was going to be quite surprised at how pretty I could look. Compensating as best she could for my obvious abashment at her remark, we somehow arrived at the conclusion that my first survey of her handiwork should be done alone. The only thing I can clearly recall is the quiet touch of her hand and soft embrace as she closed the bathroom door behind her.

Remembrance blurs in retreating footsteps and the click of the television being turned on. The joint flashed and glowed, the heat of the embers on my face, as the smoke filled my lungs. The bright red imprint of my lips on it startled me. Then suddenly, as I considered that impression and what it meant, the feeling of luxury began to return as I rose from my chair to face the mirror, eyes closed. Slowly opening them, my reflection proved mildly disorienting. To be sure, those features were my own, but a woman's, as well! There was such a depth and color to my eyes, a vivid grace to the cheekbones and chin in shades of pink, a harmonious softness whose only contrast was the glow of two ruby lips. A feeling of pleasure surrounded me, and I cannot recall how long I stood there admiring my face, framed in flattering forward sweeps of my blonde hair. My fantasia was finally interrupted by a timid knock at the door and a familiar voice, filled with concern, barely audible as she uttered, "Are you all right?"

The rest of the evening was consumed in animated conversation. Billie strategically situated me in a chair by the bed where I could see myself in the bureau mirror. I watched and wondered as the words emanated from the side of my face I had never seen before. Billie's curiosity at my thoughts and feelings, her easy laughter and relaxed poise became infectious as I recounted my exhilaration with the outlets of womanhood. There was a stress-free completeness to my being—never felt before—newborn, impossible to express with any more clarity. It was Christmas morning again, a celebration of the child's soul that satisfied rainbow curiosity. A pair of dangling, pink earrings, fingernails and toenails that glistened in the room's pale amber light, this portrait of unity that I had become broached the mystery of so many gifts that a man cannot usually open. Whatever lingering uncertainties there were, were clearly my own, and the words of Billie's enhanced perception and stalwart respect were later required in the passion of love-making.

Within 48 hours, the whole process was repeated. Billie expanded our experiment to include one of her own nightgowns, and two more presents: beautiful lace underwear and a pair of sheer nylon pantyhose. The sensuousness of their fit compelled me to lift my gown more than once, to study myself in the mirror. Billie playfully admonished my behavior as befitting neither a lady nor a gentleman....

In the intervening days, my self-assurance grew in direct proportion to my ability to accept Billie's love and respect as genuine. Androgyny remained the optimum subject. She maintained that the outlet I had longed for as a refuge from stress and expression of my lunar side was not hard to understand, nor was it a rarity. She recounted an article she had read on the

crossgender Aspects' Club, whose prodigious membership held regular meetings in Provincetown, coincidentally our last vacation stop.

As Billie stirs in the bed beside me, my thoughts linger in excited anticipation of our plans for the Cape, as well as experiencing my "feminine side" in full flower. But these considerations pale in comparison to what has been said and implied regarding our future. I feel a balance arising within me to meet this new era, struggling to find the right words for that one special question....

Judy Fecteau is a programmer for an insurance company in Baltimore. Kenny Fecteau teaches social studies and English in a private school in Gaithersburg. Together they collaborate in writing. This excerpt is part of a major novel. They have published in several literary journals.

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THE FAIR

The Fair is coming, it's drawing near,
It comes in October, my favorite time of year.
I'm nervous and happy, can't stand the wait,
It will be my first time, to step through the gate.

Who will be there? What will it be?
What will happen? What will I see?
Will I finally meet someone like me?
Born a he, but really a she.

What will I wear? What shall I bring?
I'm so happy, I want to shout out and sing.
I've never been she in public before,
I've hid her deep, behind many doors.

What will it be like, out on a street?
With high heels that click-clack from my own feet.
Will I look alright? Will I look okay?
When I have to talk, will I know what to say?

I thank the people who put on this Fair.
It took courage and a lot of care.
You've made it possible for me to be she,
For the first in 40 years, I'll finally be me.

—Alycia Anne Davis

Note: This is based on the Fantasia Fair held in Provincetown, MA. It was written in August, 1991, prior to the Fair being held in October. The fair will be the first time that I go out in front of others as Alycia.

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“No man can fight another like the man who fights himself. Who could be a stronger enemy?”

—Bob Dylan
No Direction Home

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

By Cynthia Howard

This article appeared in Volume XIII, Number 1 of the Journal of Gender Studies. Due to word processing error, it was mixed with part of another article. To provide our readership with a complete article, we are reprinting it in this issue. The contents of this paper do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the Journal of Gender Studies or the Human Outreach and Achievement Institute.

The House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved the most far-reaching civil rights bill in two decades—legislation prohibiting discrimination against millions of disabled Americans. This is the most significant legislation since the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which barred discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. In fact, many provisions of the new measure are modeled after the civil rights laws that are credited with advancing the social and economic progress of blacks, women, and other minorities. (Why women, who are 53% of the population, are considered a minority is intriguing, though.)

The bill defines a disability as a physical or mental condition that “substantially limits” an individual in a “major life activity” such as working, walking, talking, or breathing. It includes those individuals afflicted with AIDS. The new law makes it a crime to discriminate against disabled persons, or to refuse to hire or promote them because they are blind or physically limited.

The bill specifically excluded transsexuals and transvestites, among others. Transsexuality and transvestism are not considered disabilities just by themselves, and these individuals are excluded from protection under this legislation. This may appear to be another stab against the transgendered minority by some of us, but in the long run this may well work to our benefit. Although in some cases we are “substantially limited” in the “major life activity” of working due to an employer’s discrimination, it is *not* because of a mental or physical disability, but because of discrimination by a bigot in violation of our civil rights. Capitol Hill’s disagreement with psychiatry regarding disability of the transgendered minority should make us very happy indeed.

Why would transsexuality and transvestism be considered a “disability” anyway? Do you consider yourself mentally or physically disabled? The reasoning for this so-called disability is described very well by Senator Cranston in his address opposing an amendment on the Senate floor on August 2, 1988.

The bill expressly stated that “Congress does not intend for transvestites to receive the benefits and protections that are provided for handicapped individuals.” The author of the bill may or may not have been bigoted, but he unknowingly was working on behalf of our cause. Conversely, Mr. Cranston’s statements to protect our rights were as follows: “Mr. President, I rise in strong opposition to the pending amendment that would exclude from coverage under the Fair Housing Act a particular mental disorder, in this case transvestism....”

Thank you, Mr. Cranston, for your support (?). Mental disorder? There is a problem right there. How many transsexuals or transvestites really feel that they have a mental disorder? Indeed, how many have been convinced by the psychiatric profession that they are mentally ill? The fact is we have a “personal preference,” *not* a mental disorder. Let’s read another part of the speech: “Mr. President, in this case the Senator from North Carolina (Jesse Helms) has singled out for exclusion a disability that is considered by the American Psychiatric Association to be a mental disorder.”

Well, well, the American Psychiatric Association enters the picture again. The transgendered person is again being helped (?) by psychiatry. Senator Cranston and many other senators are under the impression that the transgendered are in need of discrimination laws to protect them because they are disabled by their “mental illness.” Give me a break.

How long are we, as a community, going to take this type of biased, bigoted, and discriminatory bad-mouthing? When will we, as a community and as individuals, regain our dignity by affirming who we really are, and the fact that we are as normal as anyone else? When will we eradicate our names from the psychiatric black list and educate society that we are only as different as anyone else in society? When will we get people to see that *everyone* is slightly different by virtue of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual preference, or gender preference? When will we act in our own behalf instead of allowing psychiatry to dictate to society who or what we are?

I have written a number of articles regarding psychiatry and its listing of transgenderism (transsexuality, transvestism, crossdressing, etc.) as a mental illness. One of the first things we need to do is to eradicate the idea that we are mentally ill from people’s minds. What we are *not* is mentally

ill. We do what we do because of personal preference, not because of a mental illness. What we do hurts no one.

I would like to quote Dr. Szasz, a noted and respected professor of psychiatry, who has laid bare the myth of "mental illness." In his book *The Myth of Mental Illness*, he states:

The person who has impersonated the sick role and whose impersonation has succeeded corresponds to the actor who has been so convincing in his theatrical performances that his role is mistaken for his real identity. I submit that this is the status of most persons whom today we call "mentally ill." By and large, persons called "mentally ill" impersonate the roles of helplessness, hopelessness, weakness, and often bodily illness—when in fact, their actual roles pertain to frustrations, unhappiness, and perplexities due to interpersonal, social, and ethical conflicts (pp. 254–255).

I have tried to point out the dangers that threaten the impersonators (i.e., the mentally ill) as well as those who have accepted the impersonation (i.e., psychiatrists, the general public, the government, etc.). The main danger, of course, is that the culturally shared *folie* or myth, is thus brought into being and perpetuated.

But just as surely as men seem to need a Marilyn Monroe, or women a Clark Gable, *physicians need sick people!* I submit, therefore, that anyone who acts sick—impersonating, as it were, this role—and does so vis-à-vis persons who are therapeutically inclined, runs a risk of being accepted in his impersonation role. In being so accepted, he endangers himself in certain, often unexpected, ways. Although ostensibly he is requesting and receiving help, what is called "help" might be forthcoming only if he accepts the sick role and all that it may imply for his therapist.

We are not disabled! Allowing a government body to assign us this designation would cause the "mental illness" designation to stick. We would be into the mess twice as deep and would eventually start believing it ourselves. Let's not take the easy way out on this issue, for, like the welfare recipient who has a hard time getting off of welfare, we may have a hard time getting out of the problems we have created for ourselves.

Having legislation that supports this theory would make it unquestionably more difficult to remove the onus placed on the transgendered by the "mentally ill" diagnosis of psychiatry. I see too much suffering and pain in our community as it is. I have also seen healing and mental well-being when an individual is taken out of a malevolent environment and, in a neutral atmosphere, allowed to feel free and whole as a human being. I have

seen healing take place rapidly when an individual realizes that he or she is not actually mentally ill but rather unique.

I realize that there are, in our community, those few malingerers who would rather be considered mentally deranged and therefore be helped, coddled, protected, and allowed to do what they want rather than stand on their own two feet. I don't believe, however, that there are more in our community than in society in general. These people are a minority within our minority. In contrast, most transgenderists are able, capable, and productive human beings who, except for societal (psychiatric) discrimination and denigration, are in no way ill or in need of the disability label.

Allowing the government to consider us disabled because of a "mental illness" certainly is *not* a way to convince society that we are normal. All that a disability designation would do for us is to sanction more discrimination against our minority, because then not only will psychiatry have us in their manuals as mentally ill, but the government would be affirming that diagnosis. Our agreement with being disabled is also our agreement with the designation of "mental illness." How many of us are ready to go out into society and say, "Hi, there! My name is Sue and I'm mentally ill," or for that matter, "Hi, I'm Sue. I'm disabled because of my 'mental illness', and please don't discriminate against me because there are laws that protect me."

Like the supporters of the gay rights movement and the feminist movement, we need affirmative action. We need to have removed from the *DSM-III* and other psychiatric journals and books the terms transsexual, transvestite, crossdresser, etc. as mental illnesses. Then, through our own gender movement, we need to make sure we are not discriminated against by either forcing the enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 or by getting other laws passed. Discrimination against our minority is the actual issue here. The issue is *not* whether we should be considered disabled because of our "mental illness."

Transsexuals and transvestites are in fact *not* disabled in any way (except by the psychiatric misdiagnosis of mental illness), nor are we mentally ill. However, several court decisions between 1971 and 1985 narrowed the definition of the term "sex" in the 1964 Civil Rights Act, denying transsexuals rights and protection. The transgendered minority therefore is effectively excluded from protection under both of these landmark civil rights acts. The 1990 Act excludes us because we are not disabled. The 1964 Act excludes us because judges and lawyers are in a position to discriminate and make that discrimination a legal precedent. "Legal precedent" is something very easy for other lawyers to argue and other judges to agree with.

(Think about this if you plan to go to court on an issue. If you lose your case, you have added your case to the law books. Once there, other lawyers and judges can refer to your case and see what precedent that judge set. At that point, since less thinking is required by the judge, it makes it easier to go with the decision of the other case. This is especially true if the other judge was from a higher court. If you are not prepared to win your case, or if you cannot "afford" to win your case, it may be better to drop it.)

The reasons for this type of judicial discrimination can be many. The judge could be bigoted and the lawyer could be biased against the transgendered person. This is possible, and I am sure it is true of some judges and attorneys. However, I believe that most persons in the judicial system are working under the same misguided assumptions that Senator Cranston was working from when he made a plea for the transgendered so they would receive disability—the same misinformation that society is working from when they consider the transgendered person "abnormal." They are all getting their information from the psychiatric books, manuals, and journals that list the transgendered as sexual deviates.

The problem we must handle before we can even start to consider discrimination against our minority is the problem of psychiatric misdiagnosis and the labeling of transgenderism as a mental illness.

Some will think that an impossible task, but consider the facts. Not long ago, it was thought that going faster than 20 miles an hour on a train would kill the person going that fast. But, because someone dared to try, we have trains that go 200 m.p.h. Not long ago, women couldn't vote because they were mentally incapable of thinking in those terms, "according to their critics." Because of the women's rights movement, we have women in political office throughout this country. Not long ago, blacks could be discriminated against because of their color. Because of the civil rights movement, blacks are equals. Not long ago, homosexuality was a "mental illness," but with the help of the "gay rights movement," psychiatry began to "understand" that their choice of sex partners was not a mental illness but a matter of personal preference. Today, our aim, through a gender movement, must be to get psychiatry to "understand" that we do what we do because of personal preference and not due to a mental illness.

Our first task must be to have removed from all libraries old, outdated, and inaccurate books dealing with transgenderism. We will achieve vacuum. Our second task must be education of the psychiatrist and the general public with correct information and books. We will fill that vacuum. Our first real achievement will come when transsexuality, transvestism, cross-dressing, etc. are removed from psychiatric manuals as mental illnesses.

Our second achievement will come when we have educated society and the mental health professional, ending discrimination against the transgendered. We will know acceptance has been accomplished when society realizes that we are people "just like they are even though we have our own personal preference." We will also know when Senators like Mr. Cranston are not fighting for our right to disability but our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Cynthia Howard is the founder and coordinator of the Gender Alternatives League (GAL). GAL is an all-inclusive transgender "activist" group for males and females, founded for the purpose of supporting the gender community in the area of educational and political activism, and has the goal of promoting freedom of gender expression.

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Ari Kane, M.Ed., Gender Specialist

HER WITHIN

Man, Woman, He, She,
All rolled up inside of me.
Born a boy, a girl inside,
No one must know, the girl must hide.

She stays inside, she watches to see,
While he is outside, he is free.
"Play with boys, act like a man."
But she is frightened, doesn't know if she can.

Staying hidden, alone is best,
Lonely is safer than failing the test.
"What would happen, if I am found out,
That I'm a girl within and a boy without?"

The boy in her role becomes a man,
A man of success, a man who can.
But she is inside, hurt with pain,
From her life never lived, her life never came.

—Alycia (David) Davis

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe

by R. M. Dekker and L. C. van de Pol. Published by St. Martin's Press, New York, 1989, 128 pages. Reviewed by W. A. Henkin.

It's probably a consequence of a patriarchal mentality, but as the "gender community" as a whole becomes increasingly visible in the Western world, the subgroup most conspicuously left out of the picture has been female-to-male crossdressers. Despite national and local network television shows with walking, talking, breathing examples, many psychologists, as well as lay people, still deny that female-to-male crossdressers exist.

Part of the purpose of this thoroughly documented yet readable discussion of the female-to-male crossdressing is to help correct that popular misconception. The book specifically concerns 119 Dutch women who lived between 1550 and 1839. It does a credible job of placing their lives in a broad historical context, and if its geographical context seems narrow, the authors assert that it is because research and documentation are difficult in this nearly virginal field.

Even though their focus concerned the Netherlands, along the way the authors discovered enough evidence of female crossdressing throughout Europe to claim that the cases they uncovered were not anomalous and to encourage scholars in other countries to examine their own national records and thereby to expand the subject's social history. But since many archives have been lost, are unavailable, or simply never existed, "we do not know how many crossdressers left no trail behind them in written source-material... especially [among] those women who transformed themselves so successfully that they never were unmasked. For these reasons we presume that our 119 cases are only the tip of the iceberg."

After a very short introduction, the authors provide an overview chapter in which they explore some of the reasons the women they studied cross-dressed. They discuss their general biographical outlines and a few peculiarities and similarities among those women, and they describe the nature of their transformations, the professions they followed as men, and the risks they faced if and when they were exposed.

Most of the rest of the book is concerned with describing the motives and traditions that inspired the 119 women to crossdress, investigating the varieties of their sexualities, and showing how their contemporaries viewed

them: Some of the women were whipped publicly, exiled, or otherwise punished, but many others were received surprisingly well, especially if they had performed military service as men.

Despite its ponderous academic title and rather professorial price, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe* fills an important gap and is a welcome addition to the gender bookshelf. Though much of what the authors discovered will not surprise female-to-male transvestites today, some of the women's livelier tales may provide emotional and intellectual support, along with evidence that female-to-male transvestites are not alone but are, rather, "part of a deeply rooted tradition."

William Henkin is a therapist, author, and frequent contributor to this Journal. He is currently in practice in the San Francisco Bay area of California.



Vested Interests: Crossdressing and Cultural Anxiety

by M. Garber. Published by Routledge, Chapman, & Hall, New York, 1992, 443 pages. Reviewed by A. Kane

This is a book about the nature and significance of the "reality" of crossdressing by both males and females and of the historic and persistent fascination with it. Its chapters include crossdressing and the theater (from ancient to modern periods), the ways in which clothing creates and destroys gender role differences and presentations, the role of crossdressing in popular culture, high and low fashion, and some major instances of personalities who engaged in crossdressing for social, political, psychosocial, and economic reasons. Such an array of topics under one title is certain to boggle the imagination of both the readers and students of theater, sociology, psychology, and sexology.

With the overall theme of literary and cultural criticism, Dr. Garber has undertaken a major journey through one of the most complex of human pre-

occupations with gender form, perception, and presentation. And she leaves few stones on the subject unturned.

For instance, she cites a 1989 *New York Times* article that discussed a typical American's assumption about clothing and gender. "Baby clothes, which since at least the 1940s have been routinely divided along gender and color lines, pink for girls, blue for boys, were, said the *Times*, once just the other way about. In the early years of the 20th century, before World War I, boys wore pink ('a stronger, more decided color', according to the promotional literature of the time), while girls wore blue (understood to be 'delicate' and 'dainty'). Only after World War II, the *Times* reported, did the present alignment of the two genders with pink and blue come into being."

We now have a dated frame of reference for the development of the "blue blanket syndrome." The importance of this fact underlines the "time dependence and relative transience of simple changes in child rearing behavior within a culture" and that it was not fixed by "religious and immutable universal truths."

Another example of her broad exploration into the phenomena of crossdressing is her analysis of the film "Tootsie." After presenting the film critics' views about the film, Garber not only does a critique of the critics but also offers some seldom-written reactions to the important category of film fantasy. She believes the film is one about a closet crossdresser cum actor in search of a role. In "Tootsie," transvestism is an enabling fantasy, not merely a joke or a parody. She further asserts that many critics of the film erase or "look through" the crossdresser and instead focus on Dustin/Michael/Dorothy/Emily as the image of a woman or the image of an actor so that there doesn't appear to be any deception. In "Tootsie," Hoffman is not just an actor but is also presenting a full-blown crossdresser, one who dresses for success.

Garber is masterful at this type of narrative and criticism. Her enthusiasm about the various portrayals of the phenomena of crossdressing in the theatrical, art, and film media is contagious. There are times when she mixes subtopics (comparing two films, for example), and this can lead to some confusion about which item is being critiqued and for what final end.

Dr. Garber argues persuasively that the crossdresser (transvestite) escapes the either/or of sexual determinism and this becomes the third or middle ground of gender polarizations. The crossdresser breaks the deadlock of general binaryism. Furthermore, the crossdresser both is created by culture and also creates culture.

This book is filled with piquant and pragmatic detail of how "transvestism" created culture. The author gives several accounts of well-known

crossdressers in history and on the stage, ever mindful that these people may be crossdressers but are not necessarily gay or lesbian. She also includes several account of females and their crossdressing activity.

In her account of the remarkable saga of Chevalier d'Eon, an 18th century French diplomat who lived for many years as a woman, Garber points out that it was the people who knew and worked with d'Eon who were confounded by his diversity in gender presentation both as a chevalier in the king's military and also as a grande dame of the courts of Louis XV and Louis XVI. The d'Eon story provides a good case for the crossdresser as a marker for the "category crisis"—but which gender/sex is it?

This notion of a gender "undecidability" is found in categories of race, age, class, and religion. The author gives us several major examples of this aspect of the phenomenon. In *Vested Interests*, Marjorie Garber calls the crossdresser "the changling, more the agent of change rather than victim."

For our readership, *Vested Interests* provides several new windows in understanding the phenomenon of crossdressing and associated gender issues. The approach to understanding crossdressing through analysis of theatrical, popular art, and film media as literary criticism offers the reader new insights into the nature of gender conflict and the quest for the right presentation of gender role for an individual. Good reading, dynamic writing, positive attitude, and human compassion for a behavior and phenomenon that demands another look is the real value of *Vested Interests*.



Sexual Personae

by C. Paglia. Published by Yale University Press, 1990, 718 pages. Reviewed by A. Kane.

“Society is an artificial construction or defense against Nature’s Power—the former is a system of inherited forms reducing our humiliating passivity to Nature. We may alter societal systems but no change in this system will change nature.” So began the introduction to this most unusual book in which Dr. Paglia identifies some of the major patterns that have endured in Western culture from Ancient Egypt and Greece to the present.

One of these patterns is found in paganism, which, despite Judeo-Christianity, continues to flourish in art, eroticism, astrology, and pop cul-

ture. Other patterns, according to Paglia, are the ideas associated with androgyny, sadism, and the “aggressive Western eye.” All of these have created our current art and cinema. Dr. Paglia follows these and other themes from Egyptian Nefertiti to the Venus de Willendorf, from the rituals associated with the cults of Apollo to those of Dionysius, from the art of Botticelli to that of Michaelangelo and from the literature of Shakespeare to that of Dickens.

She states that human life began in flight and fear of the “Awesome Power of Nature.” Religion and other social forms arose to assuage and placate the terror of the elements (fire, water, air, earth)—without these forms, humankind could not survive and culture would revert to fear and despair.

She uses the dialectic of Rousseau’s concept that “man is born free and everywhere he is in chains” against Sade’s notion that “aggression came from Nature and as such would give free reign to violence and lust.” When societal control weakens, then people’s innate cruelty (nature) emerges. Nature’s Universal Law of creation from destruction operates in the mind as well as in matter. Identity in every social form is equated with conflict.

Sexuality and eroticism are an intricate crossing between Nature and Society (culture). Its manifestations are to be found in various art forms that appeared at significant junctions in the history of Western civilization. It is the detailing of this art (both visual and literary) that occupies the 680 pages of this book and how these reflect a dialectic of Western humanity to moderate and provide social controls for Nature(al) Aggression.

In her chapter on Apollo and Dionysius, there is much rhetoric about the importance of these Greek deities and their respective cults. For Paglia, “Greek greatness is Apollonian.” The art and sculpture of this period is reflected by several different representations of Apollo, from the bearded god to the beautiful young man. This shift in conventional images of Apollo gives rise to the notion of the Hellenistic androgyny and also to the development of the so-called twin sister of Apollo, namely Artemis. For the Greeks of this period, they are mirror images, male and female versions of one complex personality. (Paglia infers that these artistic and mythological forms are a part of the “latent transsexualism” during the Hellenistic Age.) Further along in her narrative, she discusses the revival of the Hellenistic Ideal in culture during the Renaissance in Italy. Here, Apollo is considered the major creation of classical mythology (as opposed to the goddess Athena, because of her connection to being female).

Paglia is effective in leading the reader to the notion that the Davids of Donatello and Michaelangelo are derivative of the sculptural legacy of classical Greece.

In contrast, Dionysius is the antagonist and rival of Apollo. The resultant androgyny of this god begins with his creation. He was a "plucked fetus" from Semele (his mother) and nurtured in the thigh of Zeus (his father). In spite of the mythological birth with his father, he remained loyal to the ways of his mother (Semele)—wearing feminine garments and being in the constant presence of bands of women. According to Paglia, this notion is a pagan form of crossdressing (transvestism). Representations of him on antique vases show him in a women's tunic, veils, and hair net. Ritual crossdressing was fairly common to the believers of the rites of Dionysius. Throughout the far reaches of ancient Greek civilization there is a segment in it that is Dionysian. The crossdressing activity associated with this god symbolizes the radical identification with mothers. The author broadens this association to include water, milk, sap, honey, and wine. Dionysius rules the liquid principle in things (inference to the fluidity of the practitioners of Dionysian rites and their lifestyles). The so-called violent principle of the cult is reflected in the tearing, mangling, or spasmodic episodes within a human life pattern. According to Paglia, this principle of Dionysian violence served as an ecstasy of sexual excitation. In fact, several examples of this idea can be found in Judeo-Christian biblical writings.

Paglia's hypothesis is that the cults of Apollo and Dionysius have been major determinants in the governing of sexual personae in Western life and art. She goes on to say, "Dionysius is identification, while Apollo is objectification." She makes the analogy between our split brains and the separation of our brain concepts from our body concepts (Nature and Social Forms).

Art, then, is a basic Hegelian system in which the dialectics of social forms and system to control nature and aggression are reflected in the artistry (both visual and literal) over the history of Western civilization. Dr. Paglia devotes many pages to support this thesis.

With regard to gender perceptions and sexuality, I believe that here is an original set of ideas and themes relating the world of art, literature and theater, visual art and sculpture, with the dialectics of societal forms and the nature of aggression in Western civilization. Paglia gives provocative examples of these ideas in her narrative. She focuses on amorality, voyeurism, and pornography in great art (usually ignored or superficially treated by most critics). She believes that sex and nature are brutal demonic forces, and she stresses the biologic basis of sex (not gender) difference. Much of Western life (from ancient to current times), art, and thought is ruled by personality and is traced through several recurrent types of sexual personae. Her writing style is alive and intellectually stimulating.

The contents of this book will inspire many students of gender theory and sexology to delve deeper into the nature and issues of these fields throughout the final decade of the 20th century.



Gender in Transition—A New Frontier

edited by J. Offerman Zuckerberg. Published by Plenum Press, New York, 1989, 310 pages. Reviewed by A.Kane.

With the birth of Louise Brown by in vitro fertilization in England in 1978, a new era began. Biotechnology in this century had significantly modified the female role of exclusivity in the pregnancy process. With new techniques like in vitro fertilization, amniocentesis, and artificial insemination, contemporary society has created new sexual freedoms and a plethora of gender alternatives.

Gender in Transition examines the interaction of biotechnology with changing gender role dynamics. The editor has solicited some of the most important thinkers and leaders in this new field for this commentary on various aspects of the sexual/gender revolution. Dr. Zuckerberg has divided the issues into three broad but overlapping areas of concern. These are "The Androgynous Zone," "New Reproductive Technologies," and "Futuristic Patterns, Concerns, and Issues for the 21st Century."

In the section entitled "The Androgynous Zone," there are several essays that focus on the broad area of changing gender roles for males and females in the West. Dr. Jeanne Domash discusses the lure of femininity by males and how it has fomented an "envy war" between the sexes. Males have a universal wish for reunion and fusion with the feminine component of their personalities. This creates anxiety and fear about their limits and boundaries for a "gender identity" wholeness. Further, she posits that resolution of this dilemma can be a positive force in a mature love relationship. It creates opportunities for personal growth on the part of each partner, and each can offer the other elements of a healing process, leading to wholeness. She believes that a better understanding of the unconscious factors that have caused gender role ambivalence can reduce the rift between the conventional gender role modalities.

In another essay, by Dr. Richard Zuckerberg, there is a good discussion about the male struggle with psychological integration of the masculine and feminine components of "gender role" wholeness. There is a wonderful discussion on the realizable goal of androgyny of the psyche and its importance in the development of gender wholeness. He states, "There is much for men to gain in the process of the discovering, reclaiming and using aspects of the self given up, sacrificed and virtually forfeited in the course of development...We can learn that intimacy will not lead to reengagement, sexual impotence or castration."

In the second section of the book, which explains new reproductive technologies and their social implications, there is an awesome feeling of sexual power and freedom beyond the so-called conventional modes of making babies. In one essay, entitled "Gender Selection and Society," the authors, Jodie Ullman and Linda Fidell, discuss the fact of preference for first-born boys in families as universal in the dimensions of both time and culture. Until now, gender selection has been basically a matter of natural selection. However, with the options offered by biotechnology, sexual choices and preferences are becoming a matter of societal and culture need and bias. The question posed by these authors is, "Will societies deliberately use the new technologies to preselect by design male babies over female ones for political and diabolic reasons?" Their response to prevent such misuse of the technology is the "necessity for social-reproductive sex education that gives hope to intelligent and wise use of policy regarding procreative aspects of human sexual activity."

In the third part of this valuable resource, there are several essays that focus on futuristic patterns and concerns in the 21st century. Here, this reviewer would like to share the essence of one of the authors, Dr. Alice Eicholz. Entitled "Changing Concepts of Masculinity and Femininity," this essay presents an interdisciplinary perspective using biology, psychology, and sociology viewed in historical context. She quotes the work of Alice Rossi in providing a biosocial perspective of gender roles and issues, and how little humans knew of our own anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry before the 20th century. The research of Lillian Rubin describes the psychosocial development of girls and boys and what patterns exist because of the way humans respond to the phenomenon of childhood development. Dr. Eicholz includes the work of Mark Gerzon, which evaluated "public and private archetypes of masculinity." Her thesis is that a clearer understanding of the forces that shape gender identity/role will enable humanity to deepen its understanding of why and how this elusive and ever-changing concept will shape our future on the planet. The challenge to humanity is to create a

culture that makes gender role options and alternatives possible and foster the integration of our conventional gender forms of today.

Gender in Transition is valuable in that it lays a foundations for understanding changes in our reproductive and social modalities and the implications these will have for us globally as we move closer to the 21st century.

Ari Kane is Director of the Human Outreach and Achievement Institute and Editor of the Journal of Gender Studies.



Body Guards

edited by J. Epstein and K. Straub. Published by Routledge, Chapman & Hall, New York, 1991, 382 pages. Reviewed by N. S. Ledins, Ph.D.

A book of this nature is very difficult to review. It is akin to saying that *War and Peace* is about some Russians or that the *Koran* is about some Mideastern prayers! This exciting volume, edited by Epstein and Straub, must, in my estimation, rank among the best in the field of gender/sex research and insights to date.

From the opening gambit concerning the thesis of the book ("distinctions between male and female bodies are mapped by cultural politics, [and] as a consequence, sex and gender systems are always unstable sociocultural constructions. Their very instability explains the cultural importance of these systems. The essays... negotiate across the often blurred lines between normative conceptions of sex and so-called transgressive gender identities and practices,") to the final plea of essayist Stone that "perhaps it's time to begin laying the groundwork for the next transformation," this volume stands as a benchmark document of both incisive questions and positions as well as clear, decisive challenges.

Within the pages of this monumental work appear some of the most extraordinary and well-reasoned lines of thought concerning the "plasticity" of categorizations to the realization that "sexuality and gender identity do not necessarily have clear points of cohesion." In short, as the editors point out,

gender/sexual ambiguity is the basis of a fascination that one essayist poignantly calls the "much of muchness."

From an exploration of historical perspectives (women dressing as men, traditional transvestism, eonism, *DSM-III* categorizations, berdache, radical feminism, cultural determinism, gender dysphoria, etc.), the editors rightly point out that the "categories of sex and gender have become so vexed... that the... radical notions of 'true' femaleness and maleness are challenged by increasing awareness of the elastic nature of sexuality and variety of sexual practices."

The value and significance of the book in the annals of gender/sexuality research is that the editors have assembled a cadre of writers articulate enough to point out both the flaws and deficiencies of the past and the historical lines of blurring and confusion (well meaning though such authors as Raymond, Benjamin, Money, Kando, Green, Stoller, and others may have been). The authors challenge us to update our knowledge and perspectives and also to lay aside old shibboleths and move on to better constructs. There is, to use a sports image, a need to even the playing field. The need, according to the editors and authors is great because (in the West, at least) we are "less, rather than more, tolerant of gender ambiguity now." For this reviewer, the book accomplishes that goal in spades.

To review each contributor would be almost like rewriting the book. Therefore, we shall scan but two essays, both of which are superb. Essayist Judith Shapiro deserves high praise for an excellent presentation, in Chapter 10, on the persistence of gender and the mutability of sex. Although the main focus is transsexualism, she approaches the issue with great care, critical insight, and a distinct challenge for future consideration. She is not shy about taking on such people as Janice Raymond (long a thorn in the side of transsexuals), Harry Benjamin, Robert Stoller, and John Money, gently chiding them for having built some very stereotypic "corrals" for transsexuals. But, she points out, "while transsexualism reveals that a society's gender system is a trick done with mirrors, those mirrors are the walls of our species' very real and only home."

She weaves an excellent narrative of the cloudy or muddy history of transsexualism, especially smiling at the pioneers in the field who held the fate of transsexuals in their hands (or, better, forceps and surgical knives). And she chides the transsexuals who, in many cases, in their odyssey search and postsurgical life have become "more royalist than the king." Point well taken. Much of this, she asserts, is encouraged and reinforced by the medical establishment upon which transsexuals are dependent for therapy.

After an exciting toe-to-toe with Janice Raymond's writings, Ms. Shapiro points out that the basis on which we are assigned a gender in the first place is not what creates the reality of gender in ongoing social life. "In other words, they (transsexuals) make us realize that we are all trying to pass." Or, put another way, "transsexuals' fixation on having the right genitals is clearly less pathological than if they were to insist that they are women with penises or men with vaginas." Sex surgery, she reminds us, belongs to the domain of heroic medicine, destined to be left behind as science marches on. Somewhere this quest for "downward mobility" has become a very threatening notion to much of society. Gender, as she so well says, is destiny, and anatomy is achieved.

As expressed by essayist Stone, quoted earlier, there is an awesome need to lay new groundwork in the discourse on gender, body, and sexuality. In the words of George Chauncey, "this epiphenomenon is a lightning rod to look at the entire spectrum of the body and ideologies of sexuality and gender." This reviewer commends the editors for providing a forum for such incisive writing and decisive challenges.

The book is outstandingly easy to read, comprehend, and very hard to put down. The need to rearticulate foundational language in this area of sex/gender/body is critical. The editors have performed a noble service in bringing this volume to the printing press and the public. This hallmark production, we predict, will rank as one of the premier contributions in a most ambiguous subject: gender/sex/body/appearances/values/meaning. This book should be on the shelf of every sexologist, practitioner, and therapist and, of course, on the shelf of every person who walks the chaotic road of gender ambiguity and search for meaning.

The author has long been involved with the issues, programs, and services of this paraculture. Having experienced her own rite of passage over 14 years ago, she is currently the Director of the International Board of Electrologist Certification of the American Electrology Association, as well as the President of a Home Study School Program.



GENDER AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT NETWORK (GAIN)

GAIN provides referral services and educational resources for health-care givers whose clients seek counseling on issues related to gender conflict and gender dysphoria. Members include helping professionals from the fields of education, medicine, guidance and counseling, sex therapy, ministry, law and law enforcement, and other human services. GAIN is the professional arm for The Human Outreach and Achievement Institute (HOAI). The institute sponsors educational, personal growth, and social activities for the community of crossdressers, transsexuals, and androgynes.

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Cover artist—A resident of Ashby, Massachusetts, Mariana Furtney Fyfe has exhibited her works regularly at the Fitchburg Art Museum. She holds a degree in Commercial Art and teaches classes in drawing and painting. An extremely versatile artist, she uses oil paint, water-colors, and mixed media to produce paintings, murals, stage sets and, most recently, illustrations for a book of poetry. The cover illustration is a sketch of an artist friend, which she drew in October 1991.