

METAMORPHOSIS

Vol. 1, No. 4

"THE NEWSLETTER EXCLUSIVELY FOR F-M MEN"

August 1982

ETIOLOGY

TRANSSEXUALS: A SPECIAL REPORT
by David Perlman, Science Editor,
San Francisco Chronicle, Nov. 30/81.
(The following is the continuation
of last issue's highlights of this
information-packed newspaper arti-
cle submitted by Steve Dain).

"The private agony of the transsexual is rooted in causes no one can yet clearly define and sex therapists and researchers today are searching hard for an understanding of the problem's origins."

"The quest for clues takes researchers down varied paths. Some seek answers in the biochemistry of the brain as it develops even before birth; others believe traumatic family experiences in childhood are dominant while most see both sets of influences interacting."

Dr. Norman Fisk, a psychiatrist at the Palo Alto Gender Dysphoria Program, was originally convinced the roots of TSism lay in classic psychological phenomena: a child (a boy, for example) born into a family with a dominant, often over-protective mother and a passive, often absent father. But, having found no consistent psychological reason in his TS patients' life histories, he has now come around full circle and believes the causes of TSism are biological (but may be modified by upbringing and social role assignment). He feels that a variety of poorly understood genetic, physiological and biochemical factors fix sex and gender definition in the earliest weeks of the human embryo's development.

Dr. Claude Migeon, a pediatric endocrinologist at Johns Hopkins University, believes that disorders

(cont'd on p. 4)

Editorial

I took a 3-week bus trip to the eastern states from June 12-July 5. My first stop was Syracuse where I stayed with my brother and his wife. From there, I bussed to NYC where I met 2 F-M men and their wives. Then, on to Baltimore, where I visited a long-time F-M friend, and also met Dr. John Money, a medical psychologist and pediatricist at the Johns Hopkins Hospital. We discussed phalloplasty, and alternatively, penile prostheses for F-Ms. (The main points of our conference will be summarized next issue in my article "PENILE PROSTHESES"). From there, I travelled to Hartford but unable to locate my F-M contact there, and tired of travelling and rather homesick for my fiancée, my dog and my own bed, I--instead of proceeding to Providence to meet yet another F-M correspondent, as originally planned--returned home to Toronto and went back to work for 3 days. Then, I bussed to Ottawa for the Dominion Day weekend to visit my sister as well as my brother and his girlfriend.

I finally have my own office/study now as we've converted our basement bedroom into my private workspace. Previously, my "office" had consisted of: the kitchen table, the coffee table and the clothes closet! Imagine trying to put out a regular newsletter--as well as business and personal correspondence not to mention my autobiography--in such a non-conducive environment: TV blaring, telephone ringing, dogs barking, birds squawking, kids screaming, drivers honking their horns! How's a guy s'posed to concentrate amidst all that confusion and distraction? Oh, the sweet sanctity, the serene solitude of my "cellar studio"!

--Rupert Raj

IDENTITY: Gay Man

I am a 30-year-old FTM whose sexual orientation is that of a gay male. Despite the fact that, like other FTMs, I experienced persistent cross-gender identification from age 3 onward, I did not come to identify myself as a transsexual until the last 8 months. I never had any doubt that I should have been born male. At age 20, I read an article called "My Daughter Changed Sex"; even though I identified with Tracy and envied him his solution I failed to take the crucial step of realizing that I, like Tracy, was transsexual. Why? Because, sexually, I had always been exclusively interested in males. Transsexuals were interested in the opposite sex; therefore, I reasoned I could not be a transsexual. This simple error in reasoning cost me nearly 10 more years of confusion about my true sexual identity.

Throughout my twenties I tried to establish romantic relationships with men. But whenever I tried to go beyond friendship with a man the relationship foundered. My ability to understand male psychology and to share male interests nurtured my friendships but proved a barrier to romantic relationships. Strangely, sometimes other people came close to perceiving the real problem. One friend said of my by-then defunct relationship with his best friend, 'He told me he'd never met a woman who understood him completely the way you did; I think it made him uncomfortable.' Another friend said of a man I was interested in, 'It'd never work with you and Larry; you are too much alike.' At the time, of course, I did not yet realize that it was futile for me to pursue a relationship with a straight man: despite my outward semblance of being female (in order to attract the men I found attractive I tried to dress and use makeup well, despite a persistent feeling of being 'in drag') they sensed my inner maleness and, understandably, backed away.

These attempted relationships were unsatisfying from my side too. Despite my initial sexual attraction to a man, I found actual sexual activity a tense, existentially upsetting experience. Again, I did not yet realize why. When I was attracted to a man and fantasized having sex with him, I of course saw myself as a man too. It was my lover's excited attentions to my male body, especially my penis, which created my own arousal. In actual sex, my partner lavished attention on my breasts and female genitals, organs which I felt to be a horrible mistake.

I have always been a writer; from my teens onwards my stories and the novel I worked on sporadically featured as main characters boys in love, in either a sublimated or an overtly sexual way, with other boys. I was fascinated with male homosexuality, avidly (and secretly) reading any books I could latch onto that dealt even tangentially with the subject. I had no rational explanation for this fascination so I hid it from others and compartmentalized it in myself.

It was writing which eventually broke down the compartmentalization and led me to an understanding of myself. At 29, following a car accident, I began working intensively on my novel. After 6 months of allowing my subconscious to roam free on paper writing about a 29-year-old gay man, I took a 'research trip' to San Francisco where I immersed myself in the gay milieu. I don't remember the exact date of my enlightenment, but one day as I walked down Polk Street, wearing button-front jeans, a leather jacket, and even a jockstrap; I told myself 'You identify with gay men because you are one.' When I got home, I began seeing a psychologist affiliated with a gender program and read Mario Martino's Emergence. The rest is history: I had found me.

Sad to say, the ramifications of that discovery have not all been as positive vis-a-vis the rest of the world as they have been intrapsychically.

(cont'd on p. 8)

Dear Rupert

What Mr. Louis Sullivan of San Francisco said in his letter is highly debatable and I must counter something that he said (since he chose to speak for all f-m men by saying, "Because we are men, it means nothing more to accept vaginal insertion as it does for us to accept anal insertion.") My feelings about vaginal insertion are so strongly negative, that I resent him saying that. If he himself feels comfortable accepting vaginal insertion, then that is just wonderful for him but I feel it impossible for him to try to sell this idea to others who happen not to feel as he does. He said "Is it really necessary for us to deny our lovers, precious and special as they are, our whole bodies simply because we are physically handicapped?" I feel that for me being transsexual involves and includes the concept of being a man--without a penis--but a man nonetheless, and my lover should be very aware of my maleness, love that maleness in me and be interested in Khalil the man. He ow she should (and will have to) know how I feel about my transsexuality and in knowing that, they wouldn't want me in a feminine way--(I believe this is called being sexually harmonious!) Therefore nothing would be denied him or her.

Sure, it is fine to be "quiet, sensitive, warm and non-heterosexual and still be a man"; I am that myself! and still a man but that does not mean I readily accept "vaginal stimulation", etc. How can I utilize something which to me shouldn't even be a part of me! If sex for me was mechanical and emotion-free, perhaps I could! I live in a consistent aura of masculinity--feelings too sumptuous to even describe--feelings that only a man can understand. I'm not androgynous--my masculine feelings never leave me--never become less intense--and my sense of being a man is never minimized ("un univers d'homme").

--Khalil [REDACTED] VA

(cont'd on p. 5) 3

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RUPERT RAJ, B.A.
DIRECTOR

ETIOLOGY (cont'd from p.1)

in the action of the H-Y antigen (a protein substance which is synthesized in the embryo by genes on the male Y chromosome and which forms the testes--thus "maleness"--early in embryonic life) can be caused by errors in the genetic code or by improper administration of sex hormones during pregnancy. These disorders may result in the birth of true or pseudohermaphrodites (infants with ambiguously formed or even redundant genitals). As a result, some scientists suspect that still-obscure defects in the functioning of the H-Y antigen may also lead to TSism by altering the developing pathways of embryonic sex hormones early in pregnancy.

Dr. Julian Davidson, a physiologist at Stanford University, is analyzing male and female hormone levels in adult TSs in order to differentiate between the relative significance of psychodynamic factors and hormonal physiology in the emergence of gender. He would love to find some firm evidence from hormone assays but wouldn't be surprised if no one ever finds any at all as scientists really don't know much about the phase (in human beings) when hormone levels are critical to sexual development.

Dr. William Hamilton at the University of Glasgow, measured male sex hormones in a small group of female TSs and found elevated testosterone levels typical of the "accepted male range". Yet Migeon at Johns Hopkins measured estrogen levels in a group of male TSs and found them no different from "the range reported for normal males".

On the other hand, Drs. James Jones and Jean Samimi of the Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, have reported testosterone levels in the male TSs they studied so low as to approximate the levels found in normal females. Meanwhile, at Charles University in Czechoslovakia, a study of 50 TS females compared to 50

"normal" women found that testosterone levels in the female TSs were nearly double the range in the normal women.

Dr. Gustave Doerner, an endocrinologist at Humboldt University in East Berlin, summarizes this ambiguity from all the research and maintains that animal experiments and human hormone assays do show conclusively how the human brain is programmed from conception to secrete the hormones leading to differentiation of every embryo as a female and that opposing hormonal influences programmed by the genes on the Y chromosome during earliest fetal development create the conditions for "maleness". But these mere "biological predispositions" can be altered by "environmentally dependent" factors that can lead to TSism. "Nature" may play the initial forming role in anatomic sex and self-awareness of gender but "nurture"--the social and psychological influences that become dominant after birth--are at least equally important if not the ultimate determinants.

"With the psychic and biologic origins of TSism so poorly understood, and the results of psychiatric, hormonal and surgical therapy still in controversy, the physicians and counsellors who deal with TS patients rely for the most part today on the human philosophy expressed more than 25 years ago by Dr. Harry Benjamin, an endocrinologist who braved the outrage of medical orthodoxy when he brought the term "transsexualism" into the open as a pioneer in therapy and advocated surgery as at least a partial solution."

Benjamin wrote: "And so I ask myself, in mercy or in common sense, if we cannot alter the conviction to fit the body, should we not, in certain circumstances, alter the body to fit the conviction?"

(Original subtitle: "HORMONES VS. HISTORY--Scientists Seek Causes").

DEAR RUPERT (cont'd from p.3)

I am sorry that you did not wish to review my book (A HANDBOOK FOR TRANSSEXUALS). The fact that you do not agree with it bothers me not at all. Sometimes such a review is very helpful; it almost invariably proves that the book's author has a new and probably unconventional insight into the problem which has ruffled a few feathers. My purpose in writing it, of course, is not to please you or anyone else, but instead to suggest that there is indeed another way; and I have a whole drawful of letters of thanks, some of them eight pages in length, which bears this contention out.

While I appreciate your frankness, I must confess that it does concern me that there is an intimation in your letter ("Notwithstanding his, I will still continue to advertise your book for the remaining issues of my newsletter in the interests of free enterprise, freedom of the press and equal opportunity") that you will not accept a renewal of my advertisement at the end of my presently subscribed term. I never considered for a moment that my agreeing with you might be a prerequisite for my ad to be accepted. Obviously, we do not agree, but since my way undeniably succeeded for me, and for others who have read my book, there is no way that anybody can deny its legitimacy, like it or not.

If you don't wish to continue my advertisement after it expires, even though I may wish to renew it, that, of course, is your privilege, but it would certainly leave me with a vastly diminished opinion of your sincerity with regard to freedom of the press, or, for that matter, freedom of choice to solve our problem in the way that seems best for each of us. The right to disagree, and to choose is, after all, what freedom is all about. Possibly you intended some other interpretation of the above quote. I hope so. But if not, I am sure that upon mature thought, you will reconsider your position in this regard, if you retain any editorial

hope at all of keeping your readers' respect.

--Paula [REDACTED]

Many thanks for sending us a copy of your newsletter. It is a vast improvement over your last issue. It is informative and well designed.

Enclosed is a brochure about Fantasia Fair 1982. The Fair can be an important part of the transition process for the F-M TS and should be suggested to some interested members of your readership. I would appreciate your mention of this program in your next newsletter.

--Ariadne Kane, Director, The Human Outreach And Achievement Institute

(FANTASIA FAIR: a unique opportunity for crossdressers, transsexuals and androgynes to live, learn, and explore diverse aspects of alternative gender lifestyles in an open, tolerant environment; includes: seminars, workshops, parties, socials, etc.--held on Cape Cod, from Oct. 15-24, 1982. Contact: FANTASIA FAIR LTD., Kenmore Station, Box 368, Boston, Massachusetts 02215).

A HANDBOOK FOR TRANSSEXUALS,
by Paula [REDACTED] 70 pp., published
privately. This book is the blueprint!
Eight years in the making. Tells what
to do, how, why, where, and even
whom! An absolute must for all who
contemplate a sex-reassignment.
\$5.95 ppd., [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Plainfield, N. J. 07060.

WANTED!!!

Poems, limericks, free verse on
themes related to: transsexualism,
transvestism, and androgyny for
inclusion in forthcoming book: An
Anthology Of TS, TV, And Andro-
gynous Verse. Send submissions to:
Rupert Raj, Metamorphosis, P.O.
Box 5963, Station A, Toronto,
Ontario, Canada M5W 1P4.

DEAR RUPERT (cont'd from p.5)

Thanks for the complimentary copy of your newsletter. Enclosed is \$10 for the other 5. I enjoyed your article on being short as I'm only 5'2" myself.

I'm back in college to get my B.Sc. in psychology with the idea of doing the same as you. I don't know what decided you to counsel but in my quest to begin therapy for myself I've had nothing but trouble just trying to find out where to go or who to see. Except for my association with Emmon, the whole thing has been a negative experience. Therefore, I'm highly motivated to see that others seeking help and support won't have to go through what I'm still going through.

I would very much like to correspond on a personal level but I'm full of questions since I'm on the threshold of beginning my own transformation. I wonder how much of our correspondence may spill over into your business area, like an M.D. being asked for his medical opinion at a party. I'll have to leave the decision up to you.

There's a personal thing I'd like to know. I noticed you obtained your degree after your change. In your opinion, could you have coped with hormone therapy and school at the same time?

--Miki [redacted] Oregon

(My first year university commenced simultaneously with the initiation of my transition. I began dressing and living as a man; 3 months later I began testosterone injections--Ed.)

Yes, I'd enjoy corresponding. Yes, I still live as a man. I'd never go back, not after seeing how much better my life has been. I'm sorry I didn't discover this when I was younger. (I'm 39). My health is poor now due to a work accident. If this wasn't so, I'd be thinking of getting the mastectomy. As to the

phalloplasty, I agree with the article in METAMORPHOSIS, the state-of-the-art is not good enough yet to make it worth doing penile surgery.

An F-M friend had the chest surgery quite successfully. Another had it not too successfully: bad scarring, skin flaps, etc. How risky is the mastectomy? Are any statistics available? Do you see any progress in F-M chest plastic surgery?

Do many of the F-Ms, after surgery, go back to living as women? Are there any follow-up studies on this?

--Emmon [redacted] California

(I only know of 2 such cases: a Swede and an American. The latter, Diane Feinberg, wrote her memoirs in a little booklet "Journal Of A Transsexual"--which will be featured in the next issue.--Ed.)

Personal Ads

[redacted]--Pre-op F-M would enjoy corresponding with other F-Ms, and especially to contact someone in my area. R.M. [redacted]
West Lafayette, Indiana 47906.

JOHNSON--Pre-op M-F in prison wishes someone to correspond and visit with. Kathy Johnson #5526, Box 280, Bath, Ontario, Canada KOH 1G0.

[redacted]--Pre-op F-M, 24, black writer, desires correspondence with other TSS. Khalil [redacted]
Amelia, Virginia 23002.

[redacted]--Post-op F-M, 21, would like to correspond with with other F-Ms. Robert [redacted]
Hickory, North Carolina 28601.

[redacted]--Young, pre-op F-M wishes to hear from any F-M and will acknowledge all letters. Miki [redacted]
La Grande, Oregon 97850.

[redacted]--F-M, 39, desires pen-pals the same. Emmon [redacted]
Orinda, California 94563.

BEING A TRANSEXUAL MAN

Being a transsexual man, there are feelings and encounters experienced that are rarely (if ever) experienced by other men. Speaking from my own personal viewpoint, there is more to being a man than being involved with a woman (as a matter of fact, that very often isn't the case in pairing anyhow!) No, for me, being a man is being recognized, acknowledged, respected as the man that I am. I am a gregarious person and I love friends. I believe in working hard, playing hard, loving intensely and sincerely and learning all that I can, and upon learning I wish I could impart some of my knowledge--especially about f-m men, to people who aren't transsexual. I would like to let them know that just because there is a physical difference in f-m men and other men, our feelings are generally the same, our motivations, aspirations, dreams--we too have pride, we wish to instill confidence and build our dreams into credential realities. We too hope to share our successes and failures, feelings and beliefs with someone who cares and understands our slow (but sure) escalation in today's society as men, with a lot to offer the world.

There was once a woman for whom I would have done anything to possess and keep her love for me. Through her, my life's solitude was transformed into happy moments. With her by my side, I was happier than I'd ever been. Having known that I was male since the age of 8, I was always a loner because I felt that since I was so different, I could not blend in with other boys my age. My sorrow made me love being alone and it killed in me the desire for games and play. I grew up, having no outlets, even as a teenager, my writing was my only pleasantry. At the age of 19, my life blossomed through the love of this woman but today, I have nothing left of that dreamy relationship except memories. No reason is justifiable. No expla-

nation is acceptable to me, but it seems that the "trauma" of my transsexuality was more than she could bear.

Transsexuality puzzles the minds of those who are not undergoing it. And for people, like me, who know what it is to be a man, but a transsexual man, we cannot describe it in words. It is something the eye cannot see. It is a feeling of manliness that emanates from the soul and the spirit and lights the body in an aura of perpetual masculinity. In the course of our lives we must love who we are, be what we feel--for in our hearts resides a flame that soars higher and higher--inspiring us to stand tall and to be the men that we really are.

--Khalil [REDACTED] poet & fiction
writer

LEGAL REFERENCES

CERTAIN LEGAL ASPECTS OF MODERN MEDICINE (SEX REASSIGNMENT AND STERILIZATION), Robert P. Kouri, unpublished manuscript, Institute Of Comparative Law, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, McGill University, January 1975.

CHANGING YOUR NAME IN CANADA: How To Do It Legally, Constance Mungall, International Self-Counsel Press, Ltd., 306 West 25th Street, North Vancouver, British Columbia V7N 2G1 (\$3.50--or more).

LEGAL ASPECTS OF TRANSEXUALISM (1982 Edition, Revised & Expanded, Loose Leaf Format), Joanna M. Clark & Associates, Information Services Division, 31815 Camino Capistrano, Suite L, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675. (\$25--U.S.\$).

LEGAL ASPECTS OF TRANSEXUALISM AND INFORMATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES, Janus Information Facility, 1952 Union Street, San Francisco, CA 94123. (price unknown).

LEGAL SEX: CANADIAN LAW AND: homosexuality/rape/bestiality/artifici-

GGA
BOX 509, STATION "A"
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**"God grant me the serenity to accept
the things I cannot change,
and the power to change
the things I can,
but most of all the wisdom to know
the difference between the two".**

LEGAL REFERENCES (cont'd from p.7)

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CA 90018. (leaflet: 25¢).

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Editor: Rupert Raj, B.A.
Artist: Katherine A. Johnson.

IDENTITY: GAY MAN (cont'd from p.2)

I have met with met with denial on
the part of my mother and threaten-
ed rejection by my male lover who,
despite our emotional rapport, can-
not accept my quest for physical
maleness. I have been rejected by
one gender program because of my
sexual preference and met with re-
sistance on the part of my thera-
pist, who believes that I would be
'better off staying a straight fe-
male'--ignoring the fact that sim-
ply liking men does not make me a
straight female. Luckily however I
have found great support from other
FTMs, straight and gay, and have
found another therapist who does
not confuse gender identity with
sexual preference, and does not un-
derestimate either the difficulty
of the road ahead of me or the
strength of my drive to express my-
self as a gay man.

I can't say where my road will lead
from here. I know only that the un-
derstanding of my true sexual iden-
tity has changed me irrevocably; I
can't go back. And I wouldn't want
to. Now I can take off the mask
that hid the real me from myself as
well as from others and, at last,
can come to know myself.

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Urinary Assist Device

A Urinary Assist Device is an arti-
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to-male to stand and urinate--like
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needed to master the use of the UAD.
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trations accompanying the text you
will learn how to make your own UAD
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but less effective ones are avail-
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62283, Sunnyvale, CA 94088.