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EDITORIAL

With this issue of the *Journal of Gender Studies*, we introduce some aspects about gender phenomena that have been neglected, in the quest for broader understanding of the subject. We received an article about the nature of self-esteem for women in Euro-America. It focuses on some of the determinants in this complex process. In the piece "Engendering the Paraculture," I give some impressions that emerged from a recent trip to San Francisco.

Response to issue #1 of volume XIV, 1992, was excellent. Your comments and suggestions were informative and useful. We would like to hear from more of our readership, with both commentary and articles for publication in future issues. We are very interested in articles about masculinity and gender blending.

We would like to apologize for the lateness of this issue and are working hard for publishing on a more consistent schedule.

—Ari Kane, Editor and Publisher



“Not one of my seven hundred and fifty subjects felt their ‘true, inner self’ to be either male or female. The growing entity self, moving and gathering experiences through many lifetimes, is truly above sexual distinctions and must incorporate both experiences—yin and yang, male and female—to reach deeper understanding.

—Dr. Helen Wambach
Life Before Life

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, watercolors, and mixed media to produce paintings, murals, stage sets and, most recently, illustrations for a book of poetry. The cover illustration was inspired by a story about a woman tow truck operator.

LOW SELF-ESTEEM WOMEN: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

By E. T. Nickerson, Ph. D.

Abstract—In this paper, the concept of self-esteem and the prevailing phenomenon of low self-esteem women will be examined. Low self-esteem is almost synonymous with being a woman in this United States. Feminist tenets in reference to the development of female self-esteem and the professional helping of women are next reviewed. These areas of understanding are then placed in juxtaposition in an effort to evolve a more useful frame of reference in considering how women might be helped to a fuller, esteem-filled, and self-valuing existence.

Low self-esteem is noted so frequently in case studies and self-reports of women in the United States that it might be considered synonymous with being a woman. Furthermore, research on gender differences indicates that women generally manifest lower self-esteem than men.¹ Supposedly, women in the United States are among the most privileged of all females; yet, studies of women have repeatedly shown disturbing patterns of low self-esteem, a tendency to see oneself as less able and lacking control, and a tendency toward passivity and depressive feelings.¹⁻⁴ Thus, some compelling queries for all concerned with women's welfare in the United States include: How have some in this land of supposed equality and opportunity come to value themselves so poorly, and what can we as feminists committed to women's dignity and welfare do about it? And for feminist psychologists whose mandate includes providing helping services to women, what are some of the implications for our professional work with women? Are there some aspects of women's self-esteem dilemmas that our collective consciousness could be usefully raised to comprehend?

Hence, in this paper, we shall examine the concept of self-esteem and consider its relevance to the mental health of women in the United States. Then we shall review feminist tenets in regard to women, women's development, and the professional helping of women. We shall place these areas of understanding in juxtaposition, so as to evolve a more useful frame of reference for considering how women might be helped to a fuller, esteem-filled, and self-valuing existence.

Self-Esteem

This term is often used loosely and interchangeably with descriptors such as self-concept, self-love, self-respect, and self-worth. In one of the earlier and prominent studies on the subject, Coopersmith⁵ defined self-esteem as follows:

By self-esteem we refer to the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which the individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgment of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes the individual holds towards himself.

Sanford & Donovan⁴ distinguish self-concept and self-esteem as follows: "...self-concept or self-image is the set of beliefs and images we all have and hold to be true of ourselves.... By contrast, our level of self-esteem (or self-respect, self-love, or self-worth) is the measure of how much we like and approve of our self-concept."

Sandford and Donovan⁴ go on to make other useful distinctions regarding the concept of self-esteem, including the delineation of global and specific self-esteem—with global self-esteem being designated as a measure of how much we like and approve of ourselves generally, and specific self-esteem being the measure of how much we like and approve a certain feature or part of ourselves. For example, we may think of ourselves as being a good cook (self-concept), we may (or may not) value this characteristic (specific self-esteem), and we may (or may not) value ourselves in other ways (global self-esteem).

Nature and Significance of Self-Esteem

Regardless of specificity of the definition of self-esteem, nearly all scholars on the subject agree on the importance of self-esteem. References on mental hygiene and personality development consistently portray self-esteem as one of the major elements requisite to the highest levels of human functioning. As Sanford and Donovan⁴ declare: "We need self-esteem because nothing is as important to our psychological well-being. Our level of self-esteem affects virtually everything we think, say and do."

And as Bednar, Wells, and Peterson⁶ note:

The general importance of self-esteem to a full spectrum of effective human behaviors remains virtually uncontested.... Conversely, the

absence of a healthy sense of self-appreciation seems to be one of the basic warning signs of a dysfunctional personality and it is an assumed condition in virtually all models of disordered behavior.

Clinical psychological experience also suggests that self-esteem is "a central component of personality that affects and is affected by almost any psychological difficulty."⁶ Persons seeking psychological assistance usually complain of low self-esteem and lack of self-approval and self-confidence. Jerome Frank⁷ in a major address on the common elements of successful psychotherapy, considered "low self-esteem to be a nearly universal ingredient in the demoralization experienced by clients seeking psychotherapy. He asserted that the restoration of client morale (and therefore the improvement of self-esteem) is the sine qua non of successful treatment."

Women and Self-Esteem

As noted previously, a diminished valuing of self or low self-esteem seems to be particularly problematic for most women in the United States, and more problematic for women in our country than for men. Research on gender differences in self-reported sense of personal worth or low self-confidence, suggests that women generally manifest lower self-esteem than men.^{1,4} Women have also been found to value themselves and their roles less than those of men; even in areas that are generally considered to be essential to their gender identity and life satisfaction—namely, marriage and family.³

Researchers have proposed "that this is a predictable consequence of women's socialization, since girls learn early that they will be less important, less powerful and less effective than men; and adult women find that they have less control over their own lives and those of others and less access to resources."¹

Sanford and Donovan⁴ assert that the interrelationship of low self-esteem and female experience rests on four interrelated premises, namely:

1. Low self-esteem among women is largely the result of female oppression in male-dominated culture and society, and represents an insidious form of oppression in its own right;
2. Low self-esteem is at the bottom of many of the psychological problems that plague individual women today, and attempts to "cure" these problems without addressing what underlies them can often lead to other problems;
3. Low self-esteem and the psychological problems it gives rise to facilitate the continuation of women's external oppression in a male-dominated world; and

4. The development of self-esteem in individual women is necessary for the advancement of women as a group.

Other scholars^{8,9} have pointed to the interconnection between women's oppressed status and their sense of their status (self-esteem). Feire⁸ has pointed out that the major characteristics of oppressed behavior stem from the ability of a dominant group to identify their norms and values as the "right ones" and their power to enforce their views. In most cases of oppression, he notes, the dominant group looks and acts differently from the subordinate group (i.e., men versus women, black versus white, etc.). The subordinate group, as a consequence, internalizes a set of negative valuations including self-hatred and low self-esteem. Oppression hence, tends to lower the level of esteem that members of the oppressed group hold for themselves.

A Feminist Perspective

Feminist theorists and therapists¹⁰⁻¹⁴ have been at the forefront of raising our collective therapeutic consciousness as to the ways in which psychological theories, research, and psychotherapeutic practices have tended to compound women's difficulties in learning to value themselves and to achieve a sense of first-class citizenship in our inherently sexist society. Feminist therapy was originally developed as a means of assisting women to achieve political, economic, and social equality between men and women.¹³

Feminism may be defined as "organized activity on the behalf of women's rights and interests" and a feminist as "a person who advocates political, social and economic equality between men and women."¹⁵

Proponents of feminist ideology would assert that a person's difficulties in living are not due solely to faulty internal programming. Rather, people are viewed as being socialized into roles and behaviors that may be more or less dysfunctional and the source of pain and personal unhappiness. In contrast to traditional ideology and therapy, a feminist psychotherapeutic orientation seeks an equalized relationship with one standard of mental health. Problems of women are viewed as inextricably bound to the oppression of women in society.¹⁶

Feminist ideology is also humanistically oriented. It is recognized that dysfunctional socialization may happen for men as well as for women, and for members of minority groups, who often experience discrimination and severe, prejudicially derived obstacles in achieving their goals and valuing themselves.^{14,17} However, it is simultaneously recognized that it is women,

and especially minority women, who tend to be socialized into gender roles that bear connotations of a second-class citizenship.^{1,10,13,14,18,19}

While there is no monolithic feminism, but rather, feminisms,²⁰ female development as commonly conceptualized from a feminist perspective is seen as different from, but not inferior to, male development. Female development is also conceptualized as evolving from a base of caring and commitment, connectedness and relatedness.²¹⁻²³

Interrelationship Between a Feminist Therapeutic Orientation and Women's Self-Esteem

Women's lives, hence, are characterized by the ethic of caring and commitment, and a feminist therapist would not seek to undermine this basic orientation, while at the same time seeking to aid female clients to balance care for others with healthy, needed, and deserved self-care and self-valuing.

Some of the values and assumptions of feminist therapy as espoused by Rawlings and Carter¹³ are as follows:

1. The inferior status of women in our society is due to their having less political and economic power than men.
2. The primary source of women's pathology is social, not personal, and external, not internal.
3. The focus on environmental stress as a major source of pathology is not used as an avenue of escape from individual responsibility.
4. Women must be economically and psychologically autonomous.
5. Relationships of friendship, love, and marriage should be equal in personal power.
6. Feminist therapy is opposed to personal adjustment to social conditions: the goal is social change.

What has seemed to be particularly of concern for feminist-oriented psychologists and helping professionals has been the evidence that traditional helping practices, such as counseling and psychotherapy, have often operated to keep the status quo and to inhibit change in the social and vocational roles of women.²⁴⁻²⁷ The research of the Brovermans²⁸ was the first to point to the gender-stereotyped mental health expectations of helping professionals. And Chesler¹⁸ was one of the first to strongly argue that therapy functioned in many ways as an agent of social control through which women are rewarded for passivity and punished for social deviance by being labelled sick.

Therefore, feminist therapists try to assist their clients to feel better about themselves. Self-valuing of oneself and one's gender, just as valuing

of one's color, seems to be essential for healthy self-esteem. Helping women differentiate between external and internal sources of some of their dilemmas is crucial to this process. Women need to be helped to understand that some of their struggles are related to societal, rather than self, pathology.

While attention to and alleviation of some of the contextual complications of a woman's existence will not in and of itself automatically result in higher self-esteem, it will help women move in the direction of increased autonomy, self-respect, and self-valuing—all important bases for an esteemful existence. All current formulations regarding the development of higher self-esteem and the remediation of lower self-esteem essentially fit this contextual-societally derived formulation, including those that are primarily intrapsychic or behavioral in orientation, whether or not such a fit is acknowledged.^{4,6,7,29}

Tenets of a Feminist Perspective and Helping Women to Higher Self-Esteem

The tenets of a feminist orientation to helping women to higher (rather than lower self-esteem) hence include the following points.

1. A feminist orientation to women's development would insist that women learn to value themselves, their femaleness, and their experiences. Women need to be helped to like those parts of themselves that are intimately related to their being a woman, rather than measuring who and how they are against a male- (and/or other-) derived set of standards for achieving and being.

2. Simultaneously, a feminist perspective would instruct women to separate out societal sources and socialization from personal difficulties in coming to understand and cope with their problems. Women's difficulties have formerly been ascribed solely to inherent inferiority and pathology, rather than to an inequality of power, material resources, and other contextual environmental constraints.

3. A feminist orientation holds that a woman's growth is important and needs to be encouraged and supported. Such a philosophical stance encourages women to be creative, open, and versatile learners and participants in their own growth and development.

Summary and Overview

The gender-related phenomena of lower female than male self-esteem has been examined in the context of feminist psychological theorizing and ther-

apeutic practices. In general, it has been postulated that high self-esteem is essential to more optimal personal functioning, and that its elevation is a hallmark of successful therapeutic intervention. Female socialization toward a kind of second-class, inferior, oppressive, and societally devalued status is considered to be a prominent component in female lesser self-evaluation. Feminist theorists, researchers, and therapists have been at the forefront in raising our collective consciousness as to the ways in which psychological concepts, research, and practice have conspired to compound women's difficulties in learning to value themselves. Proponents of feminist ideology have asserted that a woman's difficulties in living are not due solely to faulty internal programming. Rather, women are viewed as being socialized into roles and behaviors that are often dysfunctional and devalued in our society. The personal is considered to be partially political in nature. Hence, feminist therapists would insist that we aid women to separate the external from the internal in examining their difficulties. Some would go further and advocate that we become community-oriented and politically involved if we are to improve the individual and group status and self-esteem of women. Certainly, a feminist perspective could helpfully inform the psychoeducational development of women and the endeavors of those committed to women's well-being.

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Presented at the International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women, New York City, NY, June 6, 1990. Eileen T. Nickerson is Professor of Education at Boston University. She has long been concerned with education and women's issues.



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ENGENDERING THE PARACULTURE

By A. Kane, Executive Director of HOAI

While in San Francisco recently, I was invited to give a presentation at a place called the Clubstitute. This is a place in which gender blenders, gender benders, and gender conventionalists can meet over a glass of wine and share their diverse presentations of gender. I was struck by the pleasantness and sincere interest in getting to know someone else with a different way of expressing their gender role. The "Blenders" were distinguishable only by the tone and pitch of the voice and the type of nonverbal body language. The "Benders" could be recognized some unique aspect of their presentation, like a pink/green two-tone hair color, or a mismatched body stocking. The "conventionalists" were obvious by their strict adherence to conventional apparel.

At first, I was perplexed at what kinds of remarks I could make before such a diverse audience (even me, who takes pride in androgyny of gender presentation). As I became more "at home" with such a different audience, some ideas began to shape themselves. I would like to share some of these with you.

We live in such a rapidly changing world of values and lifestyles that it seems difficult to sort through a myriad of these in search of the "real true set." I likened the situation to one of being a super rapid train across many different terrains, catching glimpses of one or more of these, and leaving one with the impression of a mirage of images, with no chance to make or pass a judgment on what did pass before my eyes. Such an experience is useful when one wants to explore the vastness new places and ideas. However, it becomes a challenge, if one is looking for a unifying theme for gender expression.

If you are looking for the "right" form and presenting mode for your gender perception, you need to consider the motivation attendant with your search, and it must have a time and environmental relevance for the cultural diversity assumed. To go to the grand opera in a black leather outfit complete with silver ornamentation and suitable for going for a run in your Harley-Davidson, might not be the appropriate presentation of your gender role with regard to time and perhaps the place. But, to attend the Ms. Gay America Pageant, it might be very apropos to dress in a sequined off-the-shoulder gown with matching hair style and four-inch heels. I think it is important for all males and females, regardless of their chronological age, in

this culture or any culture for that matter, to search for answers to three basic questions: In what ways do clothing and fashion express gender attributes? What is the significance of challenging or changing gender conventions or symbols? Is there a message of sexual inequality implied by the gender choices of clothing or symbols in Euro-American culture? Here are some thoughts in response to these.

To the first question, clothing can reinforce some physical differences between males and females. For instance, padded shoulders have been used by the fashion industry in clothing styles for both women and men. Dress also reflects social differences between males and females, such as women's more restricted public lives, the need for men to project authority, and the emphasis on physical attractiveness as the measure of a woman's value. As women entered occupations previously dominated by men, they have adopted more or less masculine clothing styles. Yet, despite these changes, women's and men's appearance is almost never identical, except for occasional festive events like Halloween or Mardi Gras. In Euro-America, there seems to be a continuing pressure to let clothing style and form determine gender role and presentation.

Certain symbols of clothing and fashion have resisted change. Consider the time it took for women to adopt trousers for everyday dress. Even with adoption by many women, new forms of "feminine" trousers appeared, as if to mitigate the extent to which a potent masculine symbol has been usurped. Skirts are another rigid symbol. Their use for children (males as well as females) in the 19th century was acceptable only insofar as infants and young children did not need to be identified publicly by their gender. Distinctions between clothing modes for males and females have been maintained by keeping a few such items tightly bound to respective gender roles and by transforming borrowed symbols. The overwhelming direction in borrowing items of clothing deemed to be gender symbols (like ties, shoes, underpants, etc.) is from men's to women's dress. This notion of borrowing clothing symbols by one gender for use and incorporation into fashion ethos by the other gender has been done many times in different epochs in European and American history.

To the second question, part of the answer to this is related to individual motivation behind a fashion or clothing change. Consider the dark three-piece pinstripe suit for women as their badge for dressing for success in corporate America. Did it make an impact as a borrowed symbol for individual success? For some wearers, it was a successful symbol, but for others it was irrelevant or a modest put down for both women and men wanting to ascend the corporate ladder using clothing mode as a means to express executive or

managerial potential. Currently, it is not a major factor in identifying such potential women executives. When potent symbols of one gender are adopted by the other, public reaction is to consider it a threat to the conventional clothing options and modes for both genders. Hence, these changes are modified to preserve the status quo.

Not all fashion changes have significant meaning. Clothing styles are influenced by more factors than simply as badges of gender presentation. To read changes in clothing modes as just a vehicle for purposes of gender expression would be an exaggeration of the fashion industry and of other motivations for such changes. Furthermore, the connection between gender role and appearance is not usually simple and direct. Some dress reformers were correct in seeing the connection between women's changing roles and their clothing. However, they may have erred by believing that changing costume would automatically usher in changes in gender conventions.

To the third question, women's clothing prior to this century was usually more restricting than men's, and there are still women's styles that hamper natural movement or distort the body. Men's clothing is still rather confining. Women's legs have been liberated since the 1920s but men continue to suffer through the summer heat in long trousers, suit coats, tight collars, and neckties. In general, women enjoy a wider range of choices than men, including personal styles drawing almost entirely from men's apparel. Truly androgynous dress, if it existed, could eliminate the disadvantages of feminine and masculine dress, while combining their advantages. Yet such styles amalgamating masculine and feminine attributes that are worn by men and women have never been widely accepted. Women have incorporated many a masculine element in their dress, but for men to adopt a potent feminine symbol (like a skirt) into their wardrobes would raise painful questions about their masculinity. Part of the answer to this dilemma, I feel, lies in the notion that masculine symbols are valued more highly.

Social distinctions between men and women do exist; however, these do not necessarily mean that they are of unequal status. I hope for the day that both genders will be valued equally for all their differences. Clothing should not be the ultimate arbiter of this gender issue but rather serve as a real direction to removing important barriers of gender inequity. We live in an age of gender reassessment. Those males who have explored crossdressing as a form for accessing their potential for wholeness have consciously made this choice to do so. What they need is a reasonably tolerant environment to develop the details of a pathway for exploration. To try such activity, in a "closet" would yield little understanding of their gender presentation and the values associated with this unfoldment. Euro-American culture,

such as it is, for the last decade of the 20th century, is in some ways a fertile plain for a full flowering of the "anima" in the male and the "animus" in the female. The worlds of art, theater, music, and film have all been harbingers in giving females and males important catalysts for such pathways. The "paraculture" includes crossdressers and crossgender people of both sexes who are now empowered to search and discover their personal gender mix of attributes and to find positive and nurturant environments to express them. (En)Gendering our "culture" for the 21st century is a distinct reality.

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

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TO BE A MAN IS NOT TO BE

My father said to me, "Be a man!"
*be strong, be a leader, be brave,
work hard, earn your way, save money,
provide for others, be responsible;
don't show anger.*

My mother said to be, "Be a man!"
*be smarter, be good, be polite,
obey, compete, practice, be quiet,
be alone, be careful;
don't show sadness.*

My teachers said to me, "Be a man!"
*be punctual, be quiet, be like others,
study, pay attention, do your
homework,
compete, lose, win, succeed, fail;
don't show ignorance.*

My clergy said to me, "Be a man!"
*be reverent, be humble, be proud,
judge, sit still, be superior,
turn the other cheek, stand up for
Jesus;
don't show hatred.*

My peers said to me, "Be a man!"
*be one-of-the-guys, be cool, be tough,
make out and score, drink, smoke,
play ball, hang out, goof off;
don't show weakness.*

My sergeant said to me, "Be a man!"
*be a soldier, be strong, be brave,
be arrogant, stand straight, take
orders,
be a killer, be willing to die;
don't show fear.*

Father, mother, teacher, peer,
Clergy, sergeant, all that are dear,
I learned to be what you wanted of me
In order to gain acceptability.
To be a man became my goal; I strug-
gled and strove to create my role.

I lived to please; I lived to serve;
A covert victim of your every word.
Life, for me, became a trap
Ensnaring, confusing—a vicious map
For how to act outside of me
While filling with rage internally.

Then one night in the midst of pain
A voice whose name I could not name
Said to me,

"Be you!"

"You are a man and much, much more.
Though the ground may unharrowed be,
In you are freedom and responsibility,
Will, worth, devil, saint,
Arrogance, humility, stout heart and
faint.

You are the gardener, the choice is
yours
Of what to grow from your abundant
stores.
In you there is life to live creatively,
If you accept and nurture your
immensity."

Father, mother, teacher, peer,
Clergy, sergeant, all that are dear,
I am a man and much, much more.
Though I did not know this before
To be just a man is lessening me;
To be a man is not to be.

—Jack Marvin

Mr. Marvin is the current director of Associates for Human Resources in Concord, MA. His poem was first published in 1984 in a small in-house newsletter.

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IF MEN HAD BREASTS

By D. White

In an ideal world men would have breasts. Since they're the ones who like them so much, I think they deserve them. Of course if men had breasts and women didn't, they might not like it if women leered at their shirtfronts and tried to peer at their underwear. But they'd get used to it. Women have had to get used to it. And men being the way they are, they'd probably enjoy it.

But there are some things about having breasts that men wouldn't enjoy. I wonder how the average man would like having to decide first thing in the morning whether to lash himself into an underwire bra? Maybe he'd give himself a break and wear something softer, something not as fashionable but that wouldn't make him feel at the end of the day like he had a length of barbed wire wrapped around his chest.

He certainly wouldn't like harnessing himself into an industrial-strength sports bra to try to discourage his breasts from flopping all over the place when he exercises. But, maybe if men had breasts somebody would design a better brassiere, one that would make even the fullest figured man feel comfortable while running marathons or loping up and down the basketball court.

Because I suspect that if men had breasts, bigger would be better. It makes perfect sense they would feel that way, considering how they feel about other things. Big breasts would become a sign of masculinity. Men would eye one another surreptitiously in locker rooms trying to assess how theirs stack up, as it were, against others.

Men with small breasts would be made to feel inadequate, less man for not filling out their shirtfronts. They'd have to brace themselves for jokes and cutting remarks from women-and from some men-about being flat-chested, about failing to measure up to those nude photos in *Playgirl*. Their whole sense of self-esteem would be undermined. Maybe they'd have to go off to the men's room and have a good cry.

Or they might consider implants. If men had breasts how many of them would submit to major surgery in order to make them bigger? If breasts were a sign of masculinity, maybe a lot of them would do it, although somehow I doubt it. I'm sure, though, that if lots of men did want breast implants somebody would come up with something a lot safer than silicone gel implants.

I wonder how a man would like having a conversation with a woman whose gaze never meets his eyes, who stares at his breasts the entire time they're talking? He wouldn't like it, probably. Women don't like it when men do it to them, maybe like that breast in the Philip Roth novel? And what do they think they'd say? How about, "Knock it off, jerk"?

If men had breasts they'd have to learn to be wary in crowded places, in buses and elevators for example, or they might find strange women pressing up against them a little more forcefully than seems necessary. Or they might find out what it's like to be on the receiving end of the old dead-hand trick, you know, the hand that somehow happens to find its way to your breast and just lies there, not moving, so you wonder Am I really the victim of a cheap feel, or am I imagining things? But I suppose, being men, they'd probably like it.

The average man probably wouldn't like nursing, though, at least not the part where the baby chews on his nipples, or the part where the baby gets hungry in a crowded restaurant so he has to decide whether to retreat to the men's room or nurse her right there and brave the icy stares of his fellow diners.

Surely men wouldn't like having to undergo mammograms, standing there half-naked while a technician grabs their breasts as though they're unfeeling lumps of dough and squashes them between two cold slabs of X-ray equipment. But they'd have to submit because if men had breasts one out of nine of them would develop breast cancer, just the way women do now. Or maybe not, actually, because if men had breasts medical science would find a way to prevent breast cancer.

Reprinted from the Boston Globe, January 23, 1992.



“With respect to sex differences, the only sexual dimorphism ...programmed prenatally is that which relates to breeding itself—men cannot have pregnancies and women cannot impregnate.

—Dr. John Money
Society Magazine

HALFWAY HOUSES FOR TRANSSEXUAL PEOPLE

By D. Denny

Of late, there has been a considerable discussion of the creation of halfway houses to aid in the the transition of transsexual men and women into their new gender roles. Melanie Brett has written an article entitled “Dorm-in-a-Storm,” in which she outlines one way in which such a “transition residence” could work. Christine Beatty in San Francisco has also made a proposal for a halfway house. Transsexual halfway houses are more than an idea.

Halfway houses, as they are traditionally conceived and operated, offer a stopping or resting place midway between the institution and the general community. For those who have been imprisoned or who have been unable to look after their own interests because of physical or mental incompetence, they provide a less restrictive setting than the institution, while at the same time offering supportive services.

Halfway houses exist in most of our cities, providing interim shelter for those who are leaving prisons, mental hospitals, and residential facilities for persons with mental retardation—anyone who is deemed unlikely to make it, even with support, out in the “world.” They give temporary—and temporary is the operative word—respite before the inevitable move into the cold world. Residence is usually brief, certainly not more than six months to a year or so. Halfway houses are a staging area, as it were, for the individual to gather his or her wits and resources before plunging into the mainstream.

When halfway houses allow their temporary residents to become permanent or semipermanent, they are no longer halfway houses, but mini-institutions. They no longer function as a stopping place, but rather as a warehouse for those who cannot make it in society.

Depending upon the program, the halfway house resident is offered supportive services such as financial help, rehabilitative and vocational counseling, individual and group psychotherapy, and medical assistance. A case worker sees to the provision of these services, and serves to regulate the reentry of the individual into society.

Some residents are unable to deal with the halfway house, and are sent back to the institution. Others do all right in the semistructured setting of the halfway house but cannot make it in the real world and are eventually

placed in group homes or other small institutions. But to be true to the concept of the halfway house, all must eventually move on.

The traditional conception of the halfway house does not include the movement of individuals who are functioning in society into a more restrictive setting. This is more the function of a shelter, as for persons who are battered by their spouses or for persons who are homeless. Shelters provide very brief respite for the individual who is in danger (of abuse, or starvation and exposure). They offer physical protection in a time of danger. Stays are usually measured in days.

Transsexual halfway houses do not fit either the halfway house or shelter model. As they have been proposed, they will offer the individual who is already functioning in society a retreat in which to pursue physical and social changes associated with changing gender. Except for emergency cases, entry will be voluntary.

In the case of the individual who has become unable to function because of bizarre appearance or behavior related to their transition, the halfway house will serve as a shelter, temporarily removing him or her from the conditions precipitating the crisis and perhaps alleviating the need for institutionalization. This would be an appropriate placement, and so would placement of persons leaving prisons, mental hospitals, substance abuse programs, and other institutions. But in the instances in which the individual will voluntarily "check in," a functioning person will be removed from society and placed in a more restrictive setting. There is a grave danger in this, for it runs contrary not only to the established model of halfway houses, but more importantly, to the purpose of transsexual transition, which is for the individual to function in society in the gender of choice. It circumvents the "real-life test" requirements of the Standards of Care of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association. It removes the individual from the natural feedback that society provides, substituting an artificial environment in which it will be impossible to learn how to be a woman or a man, for it removes real live male and female models and replaces them with transsexual peers—and not only transsexual peers, but transsexual peers who are unable or unwilling to function in society. It removes the individual from the mainstream and places him or her in a closed society of persons who deviate from the norms of society. It increases, rather than decreases stigma.

In my field of mental retardation, the more astute among us realized years ago that the best-run institution is no substitute for the realistic social environment and that grouping people with retardation is a sure-fire way to teach bizarre behaviors that will make it even more difficult for the individ-

ual when he or she is finally placed in society. I believe that this holds true as well for transsexual people. Placing four or more transsexual people together will not teach them to be men and women; it will teach them to be transsexual.

Such a halfway house will breed dependency, for there will be a natural tendency to cling to its nurturing environment rather than face the harsh realities of a world that has been shown to consistently reject transsexual people. This will be a disaster, for in so doing, the residents will have become institutionalized—that is, they will have gone from being people who were able to live and work and play out in the world to people who are not able to live and work and play out in the world. They will have traded their independence for dependency and isolation.

If the halfway house is true to its name and stay is temporary, then one of two things must happen: the individual, ready or not, will be returned to society, perhaps in worse shape than before, or else will be required to be maintained in an artificial environment with the same sort of social and financial supports as the halfway house offers—a group home for transsexual people, as it were.

Halfway houses for transsexual people are a recipe for failure. By removing transsexual people from society, we will decrease appropriate learning opportunities, teaching "transsexualism" rather than manhood or womanhood. We will increase dependency, delay real-life test, and allow transsexual people to move further into transition than they might have if they had had feedback from society. We will feed and foster the unrealistic dreams and fantasies of those who are running away from manhood and womanhood by providing them with just the sort of nonchallenging environment they are seeking. The halfway house will serve not as a place of respite, but as a hideout for the polymorphously perverse and the habitually unfit, who would be better served in other settings.

The transition of transsexual men and women is a time-consuming and painful process that is best accomplished in the community. When circumstances are such that the individual can no longer function in society and respite is needed, the individual's transsexualism should not be used as a scapegoat. Respite should be because of the immediate problem, whether that be substance abuse, physical abuse by a spouse or lover, or mental or emotional difficulties. In that setting, the real obstacle can be identified and dealt with. In the catch-all of a transsexual halfway house, the actual difficulty will be likely to be overlooked or glossed over and blame placed on the individual's transsexualism as the root of the problem.

Transsexual halfway houses will not serve their proposed function, in

my opinion, because they will remove people from society at a time when it is critical that they be in society. They are not the answer. The answer is for transsexual people to function in society, whether they are doing well, or whether they are in trouble. When they re doing well, there is no need for extensive support. When they are not, there are supportive services already in place: substance abuse programs, mental health centers, shelters for battered women (and men), support groups, help lines, and referral services, as well as private physicians and psychologists. Those who are interested in helping transsexual people should focus their monies and energies on teaching transsexual people to cope in the community, rather than removing them from it, and on teaching community programs to cope with transsexual clients. As citizens, transsexual men and women are entitled to these services and must learn to avail themselves of them.

There is another problem with transsexual halfway houses. Halfway houses of any kind are unwelcome in the most residential neighborhoods; at best, a sort of wary tolerance may develop. There is no reason to think that transsexual halfway houses will be more acceptable and every reason, considering the generalized societal rejection of transsexual people, to suppose that community reaction would be swift and harsh. By gathering transsexual people in a central location, they will be more vulnerable to ridicule and even attack, for the aggressors will know where they are; it will be a matter of public record. It will probably be necessary to implement expensive security measures. If the location of the house becomes a public issue, news media will be almost certain to provide coverage and be unlikely to respect the confidentiality of the residents in doing so. Under such conditions, the halfway house will hardly be the safe haven it was meant to be.

Rather than dream of transsexual halfway houses, we should focus on helping those transsexual men and women who are already in society to stay there by providing them with counseling, vocational placement, case management, and other services. We can help them best by serving as advocates and educators rather than as landlords. We can help to locate and use existing resources, or even better, we can train transsexual men and women to locate and use the resources themselves. We can educate caregivers about the Standards of Care and about the needs of their transsexual clients. We can provide legal counsel and support for transsexual people who stand up for their rights to function in our society. We can do all of this, and more, on a fraction of the money it would take to operate a transsexual halfway house. The needs of transsexual men and women will ultimately be better served if they stay in the community, for only then will they ever achieve the happiness to which all transsexual people aspire. Those who would run

a halfway house should be aware of this and know that despite their good intentions, they will be doing their clients a great disservice.

Dallas Denny is a Board member of the Human Outreach and Achievement Institute and Editor of Chrysalis Quarterly, a publication for cross-gendered and transsexual people. She is a health care professional in a major city in the southeastern United States.



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Ari Kane, M.Ed., Gender Specialist

SPACE AND TIME

Our lives are bound to space in time;
The finite exacts a toll on those who violate the tolling of the
chime.
Somewhere in our quest we grasp at deliverance and god grants us
a taste.
So let us savor this moment in time.

—Sonja Smith

Call for Papers!

The *Journal of Gender Studies* welcomes submissions from its readers. These may be articles, reviews of books or movies, your opinions, responses to articles that have appeared in *JGS*, comments, questions, rebuttals, or letters to the editor. Please send your submissions typewritten, double-spaced, to the Outreach Institute, 405 Western Ave., Suite 345, South Portland, ME 04106.

“If he could only experience the feelings of both the lover and the girl to be loved. If he could only be sure of her sexual feelings and if she could only be sure of his, then a perfect sexual encounter could take place. But how could he be sure that the partner could be utterly sensitive to his tenderest needs and that he could be equally sensitive to hers, unless he were able to be both male and female? The androgyne now emerges from the forgotten depths of consciousness...

Dr. June Singer
Androgyne

1993 PROGRAMS OF HOAI

• **GARP—Gender Attitude Reassessment Program.** This is a workshop that focuses on all aspects of gender perception, role, and presentation. It is open to all males and females who are interested in exploring the wide variety of perceptions and presentations, both conventional and unconventional. The first of the new and innovative programs is scheduled for March 5–7, 1993. For full details, please write to the Institute.

• **Educational Videos.** We are in the process of producing some educational videos that focus on relevant issues of gender. This would include areas of “new” masculinity and “new” femininity, cross-gender experience and pathways, and gender and health issues, counseling, and therapy. As soon as we have finalized post production, we will announce their availability and costs.

• **Fantasia Fair.** The longest continuous and most prestigious program for adult males who wish to explore aspects of their hidden femme personae will be modifying some of its program offerings. In addition to our mix of practical, educational, and social experiences, we will be introducing some workshops that deal with sex, relationships, love, and intimacy. Some of these will reflect the changes in our society more structure that has been ongoing for the past five years. We hope to introduce a track for females who want to explore their hidden masculine personae. For more details about our 1993 program offerings, please write to the Institute.

• **Presentations and Workshops.** We will continue to present at various national and regional meetings on selected aspects of gender phenomena. Our incomplete list includes Area Continental Region of Association for Humanistic Psychology, the Kinsey Institute, New Hampshire College, University of New England, College of Osteopathic Medicine, National Lesbian and Gay Health Foundation, and American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors, and Therapists.



HOPEFUL COUPLES PROGRAM: ITS GIFT TO US

By Jack/Christy and Bonnie Lee

Jack/Christy's Perspective and Experience

My fiancée and I recently returned from a couples workshop held in a beautiful bed-and-breakfast in northern Vermont. We want to share our perceptions of this weekend with others, so couples seeking answers may become aware of an excellent program available to serve their needs.

I think it would be in order that I offer some background information. I am a professional man in my mid-40s from a medium-sized community in South Dakota. I have suffered through two failed marriages and I have three wonderful children. I have lived the lifetime of pain we all live in trying to come to an understanding and acceptance of who we are and what we do. My fiancée is a professional woman from the conservative Northeast.

She, too, has had a hard time in life evolving to the person she has become. We met, we got to know each other, we fell in love, and we want to spend the rest of our lives together—as best friends and lovers and all things in between.

This is where the HOPEFUL Couples Program enters in. There is no crossdressing organization in South Dakota. There are no wives' support groups, and my fiancée lives 2000 miles away in the Northeast at the present time. We were searching for an opportunity to be exposed to a healthy situation in a safe environment with caring, sensitive guidance so that we could honestly address our hopes and fears. We both had concerns, and we needed to find our own answers for us as a couple.

How do you do this? Do you go to a therapist or marriage counselor with only peripheral or distorted or no knowledge of gender issues? Do you talk to your best and most trusted friend? Do you go to crossdressing groups like Tri-Ess or a gender clinic in some major city? All these answers are possibilities and have merit. Often, however, one runs the risk of a negative experience via contact with an unhealthy individual giving a perspective based on their reality rather than ours. This has happened to me in my previous marriages, and it was an experience that helped close the door on our communication regarding the issue of crossdressing.

The HOPEFUL Couples Program was our choice because we were looking for answers and healthy guidance by a professional who has worked with gender issues throughout his career. A professional who is very cognizant of the fears people can have.

When I received the brochure I phoned Air Kane, the presenter, and we discussed the program's format. I was under the impression this would be a weekend where I could safely crossdress in the company of others like myself and their partners. My fiancée and I had not had the opportunity to be together much with me as Christy, and I thought this would be a safe place to explore these feelings for both of us. I thought we would all interact as a group and discuss how we felt about all this as it was happening.

WRONG!

This was a weekend with no crossdressing except for an in-house dinner on Saturday night. When I learned of this, I was disappointed initially. Ari told me that he has found this can be a barrier to establishing a safe, nonthreatening environment for the fearful or uncertain partner who is trying to understand all this. These women often shut down, and the bridge the couple had hoped to erect turns into a wall.

Ari was right. He recognized the need to proceed slowly and be gentle. Let the trust build, and follow the direction it takes, rather than try to lead us to a preconceived destination.

The beautiful thing about this program, as I perceived it, was it does become what you want it to become. It takes on the personality of the participants and flows in the directions that it needs to go for them. This takes skill and letting go, yet without losing control, on the part of the director.

By his own admission, Ari used to "lead" these seminars from the "top of the mountain." He talked down to the attenders and "told them" the answers. He found that approach did not work.

He, like all of us, is learning as he teaches and he has learned well—as we have learned well from him through the weekend. We don't want to give you the nuts and bolts of the program because we believe its real value comes from the honest and spontaneous answers and discussions that ensue.

The group consisted of four couples, and I think keeping it small is necessary for the work that needs to be done. We spent Friday evening, all day Saturday, and half of Sunday as a group. We started out slowly and got to know each other. This was aided by some program exercises. By each of us being in our "usual gender role" it really helped establish rapport early on.

We all learned about each other and formed a foundation of awareness that deepened into understanding as the weekend progressed. We examined

the meanings of gender and gender roles. We shared our perceptions and traced their development in our own lives through the years.

We discussed sexual stereotypes in our society and how insights are different, depending on where we were raised and how, our ethnic backgrounds, our culture at this period in history, etc. We were tested and rated for masculine and feminine traits, and the results were surprising to most of us.

It was very enlightening and instructional. We learned the value of healthy unconditional love—for ourselves and for another person. We discussed boundaries. We were presented with different scenarios that required us to give our response to these events. Everything was shared with the group and excellent dialogue was created. Out of this exchange came questions and answers and awareness and understanding—growth.

As we shared more of ourselves with one another, we found there was much pain in that room. By talking about it, we were able to address this suffering, release parts of it, and expose it. By exposing it we were aware of its existence, and those who chose to could go back home and seek help in dealing with issues unrelated to crossdressing that surfaced.

That is one of the gifts of this program I had not expected. We are all products of our heredity and our environment. When we feel safe enough to really get to the core issues we all have, it is so gratifying to have a trusting and supportive group and a facilitator who can help us talk and look more deeply at these issues.

Let me remind you, this is a weekend about crossdressing and how it relates to the couple and their relationship. However, this is so much more. So many things lurk under the surface, and the astute participant becomes aware and can go and seek the answers in other areas he or she may feel work is needed.

What I really wanted to get from the HOPEFUL weekend I received. People like me, just entering into a relationship, and people who have been in a marriage for a long time, all want the same things. I feel all human beings want and need to connect with themselves first and then to another person. We all want love, security, and respect, and to be who we are. If we can't be who we are, whom can we be? And how can I build a relationship with another person before I build a relationship with myself?

With HOPEFUL I was able to get what I wanted because I knew what I wanted. For others that attended, I felt they got what they needed also. You could see it and feel it happening and it was beautiful!

I wanted to build a bridge of intimacy with my fiancée that had not been possible in my previous two marriages. To be intimate, I knew I had to be honest. Being honest is a very big risk, because if your mate really dis-

covers who you are, she may not love you anymore and punish you or leave you. That has happened to me. Fear of abandonment—we all have had it.

By being in a safe place with learned guidance and with a supportive group, we were both able to openly and honestly communicate our hopes and fears. This has led to more understanding and a deeper friendship and love. I need love and I want love and I want to give my love unconditionally.

I have suffered; we all have and so have the women in our lives. I have nothing but the highest respect and admiration for these women who love enough and care enough for their spouses to try to learn more about their husbands and the behavior they have a need to experience at times.

This had to be very threatening for these women. But I can tell you that taking this HOPEFUL step is an investment you cannot lose with. You will learn about your mate. You will learn about yourself. The opportunity is presented to take your relationship to a much deeper level. The growth that can emerge from this can be a life-long process.

We can learn to understand each other more fully and celebrate our differences and embrace our similarities, and in so doing we learn acceptance of ourselves and each other. By open communication we learn we don't have to hide from ourselves any longer or from our partners. A bond of intimacy can be achieved that few people have. What a gift that is!

The best gift of HOPEFUL is that in finding ourselves, we found each other, and we look forward to the sharing and laughing, the crying, the loving, the caring, and the growing that will continue to be our journey throughout our life together.

Together, we are HOPEFUL.

Bonnie Lee's Perspective and Experience

One month ago I attended a Hopeful weekend in Vermont with my husband-to-be. It continues to be an important weekend for me because it is helping me to break through to newer levels of understanding and awareness about crossdressing.

One year ago in March, I was introduced to a whole new paraculture, one I literally knew nothing about. While visiting Boston and eating at a famous restaurant, I met several crossdressers attending a CD/CG convention. Later in the evening, I attended a private party and then went dancing with a couple of these ladies, one of whom I became extremely fond of. Little did I know I would fall deeply in love, become engaged, marry, and plan to live the rest of my life with a crossdresser.

As one can imagine, this precipitated a major internal review for me. I had many fears, too many. What the hell did this mean for me, for him, for her, for us? Did I want to be in a committed relationship with someone who at certain times needs to be a woman so deeply that he has to dress and behave like one in my presence? What kind of a relationship could possibly endure such diversity? This experience was definitely way outside my comfort zone.

A range of emotions have surfaced over the past ten months of this relationship. It has not been easy. Fear, anger, anxiety, stress, sadness, depression, wrenching conflict, warmth, happiness, joy, and intimate love have all been experienced. My morals, values, biases and prejudices have all surfaced. Issues regarding my own sexuality and gender have become very important to me.

I made a serious commitment to learn as much as I could about this paraculture. I read books and articles. I went back into therapy. I read books on relationships. We began to share our deep fears and concerns, as well as our hopes for the relationship's success. But still, we needed to do something together, to look at our continuing concerns with other like-minded people. Thus, we attended the HOPEFUL Weekend in Vermont.

This is not just any weekend. It is designed to have couples gently look at issues and concerns around gender, sexuality, and relationship. It is exactly what we needed. The sharing with other couples helped lessen many fears. The warm friendships that developed help us share our deeper inner processes. I mean, as the issues of crossdressing are addressed and integrated more healthily, the underlying issues that we all carry with us from childhood begin to surface. This is good because deep healing can happen when people feel close enough to be able to share their deep pain, hurt, and sorrow, as well as their joys and happiness. The group grew close together, and because of this, many learnings were experienced by all the participants through this sharing.

We went to learn more about gender, communication, crossdressing, and relationships. We learned, and are learning, a great deal more.

We learned to celebrate and honor our short life together with people who support, nurture, respect, and appreciate differences and diversity. When respect grows, caring grows, and then love can bloom. And really, isn't that what "quality of life" is all about? Not what a person wears, but who she/he is at their core. How much love can they feel, and how much can they share it with those closest to them. The very first step is learning to love yourself. Not an easy task. But how can you give something away that you do not possess? To a crossdresser it means loving both parts, the man

and the woman, the man dressed as a man needs to love himself, and the crossdressed woman needs to love herself. Sometimes it is easier to love one part and not the other. But for true integration, both must be loved; then inner peace and harmony is experienced.

So my continued work is to keep learning how I can love myself so I can love my partner, dressed or not dressed. This is not a selfish love, it is self-love so it can be shared with others.

The Hopeful Workshop helped us to realize and prioritize our values and come to grips with what is truly important to us. I was very isolated with regard to the crossdressing community. This weekend gave me the support network I needed not to feel so alone. The connection and emotional warmth shared with the other wives created the breakthrough I needed for me to explore my deepest fears. I have always needed support groups throughout my life; being a part of this community will be no different. I plan to attend future conferences so I can fulfill this important need.

My fiancé and I found it is our nature to view all life as a growth experience. That this is a vital and essential part of our refreshing life together. We are still learning and growing from our Hopeful Weekend. It will take time for all the learnings to integrate.

In the meantime, the bonds of our connection are a source of sustenance for me. Being a loving wife, a caring friend to my stepchildren, finding a nurturing work environment, providing some service to my new community, taking care of my physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs, having fun, and paying attention to life's various meanings, changes, transitions, and transformations are all the "stuff" in my existence right now, and I try to attend to them with deep and profound gratitude.

I know the Hopeful workshop has helped me unconditionally with the tasks of my life at this very important time for both of us.

Hopeful Couples Program is a specific workshop designed for couples in which one member of the couple is a crossdresser. It focuses on individual gender histories and perceptions and introduces the principle of unconditional love. Jack/Christy and Bonnie Lee have participated in this program. For more details, please write to HOAI.



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AN EVOLUTIONARY PROFILE
OF A CROSSDRESSER

An interview of B. Daniels by W. Henkin, M. F. C.

Bruce Daniels: In all of the readings I've done about transvestism, drag, crossdressing, I have never seen any intelligent discussion of the men who date transvestites and transsexuals. There are wives' support groups, but there are no support groups for men who are involved with crossdressers and there are men who are involved with crossdressers. There are long writings about the different kinds of psychological reactions the wives may have, yet nothing intelligent about the men. The only book I know that even mentions the subject is an English book called *Men in Frocks*, which is a history of the London drag scene and has about a two-page chapter called, "The Men Who Fancy Men in Frocks," and it just says, "Yeah, there are some," and that's about it. So what I wanted to do is to make, through discussion, a portrait of myself as one example of a person who is attracted to men in skirts.

Henkin: I offer as my own prelude here that professionally I have seen relatively few men who like, as you say, men in frocks. And part of the reason is that they don't tend, I think, to come to therapy. Either they don't see that this is something to address therapeutically or they don't have the money to go into therapy at all or they don't want to medicalize their lives. After all a lot of the way therapeutic psychology comes down to public consumption is that it's a medical profession and that it somehow is going to cure illness. I'm not very fond of the medicalization of psychology. I will also say that I have seen some men for whom men in skirts or transvestites or she-males—all different levels—are attractive. I don't think I've ever had somebody come to me with that as a problem. I have had people come to me around other issues for whom that was one feature of the person but not a presenting complaint.

BD: Have you ever done couples counseling with a crossdresser and a male lover?

Henkin: No, I have not. I have done couples counseling with female crossdressers and their lovers. In one instance, a female crossdresser and male lover who is also himself a crossdresser, and in several instances females, who were biological females, morphological females, who are crossing gender, either as transvestites or as transgenderists or as transsexuals,

and their usually female—but sometimes also cross-gendered—lovers. One of the things about being a therapist working in the gender community at least here in San Francisco is that the male-to-female population tends to prefer to see female therapists, at least as far as I can see, whereas the female-to-male population is more comfortable with a male therapist.

BD: Why don't I start with a little history? My history is very similar to the literally hundreds I've read in transvestite magazines. As an adolescent borrowed my mother's and sister's clothes, tried them on in the darkened house, was discovered and then didn't do it for many years. Never owned any clothing. After college I went to New York and discovered drag magazines which kept the fantasies fed without my ever "doing the deed."

I didn't start dressing till I was in my mid-20s. My first miniskirt was made for me by the woman I was living with. Up until this time I had one homosexual affair and many girlfriends, some of whom I'd lived with for six months, a couple of years. The woman who made my skirt and I moved to San Francisco where I confessed to her my fascination for dressing. My first night out in public I wore the mini skirt and we went to see the Cockettes on Halloween, 1971. I got so excited we went out again for New Year's. This time I shaved my legs. The dressing was not a big factor in our relationship when it did break up.

After grad school I got a place alone. Began dressing more heavily, but many times with a public hook to it. It was in the punk days of the late '70s. I was involved in the art scene at a punk club. I used to do the door, take money at the door in drag every Friday and Saturday night. I tried to tie what I was wearing into the theme of the evening's performance. All this time I seemed to average one gay affair approximately every seven years to decade.

About 6 years ago I met and fell in love with a very well known drag performer in town. When she was younger she had identified as a gay man, but by the time I met her she was in her middle 30s and she was really a transsexual. We never considered ourselves a gay couple. I was the man, she was the woman and that was very clear at least to us. Through the four-and-a-half wonderful years that we had together until her death, her genitals did not enter into the affair at all. She was very uncomfortable with her body and that aspect of it. The one time I tried to touch her and satisfy her was very disturbing for both of us. I always used to say that for me our relationship was like having an elf for a lover. Because elves, sylphs and fairies have no genitals. Like making love to a Barbie doll.

Now, since her death, I find myself very attracted by men in drag and transsexuals. I have dated someone who is very clearly a gay man. He often dresses in women's clothes and might be called a transgenderist. But, its in a

very new-style way, really outside of the realm of the very clinical definitions you read in magazines. I'm finding now that I'm capable of dating someone who dresses or performs in drag, but has a fully developed male personality. My departed transsexual loved didn't have any male personality at all. Beside the gay man, I've also dated a transsexual and I've been dating a woman. I guess I'm finding out for myself what I'm interested in.

What I'm fascinated by is the fact that my history is so much like so many crossdressers whose histories I have read. Yet there was a point where I became less interested in crossdressing myself, while my interest in TV magazines and literature grew—there's all these tons of things written about how you can never stop dressing, yet that really goes counter to my experience.

Henkin: You're talking about a spectrum. There are people for whom dressing is extremely important. There are people for whom dressing is not very important. And every place in between. Some people, for example, transgenderists dress pretty much all the time. But there are also people who dress on Halloween, period. And it's important to them. It's real. It's not just a costume; it's saying something. But it's saying something that doesn't have to be said very often. There are guys who may put on a skirt every week; at home one day they just sort of feel that way and they don't do make-up; they don't do wigs. And they don't do heels and they don't go out—they just want to put on a skirt. So there's a big spectrum. You can fall any place on it.

I don't think it's a matter of you can't stop doing it. I think it's a matter of, if you try to "cure" the predilection or the desire you will probably meet with failure because it is not curable. It's not an illness. People can stop. People for whom it's very important tend not to stop and a lot of those people are so threatened by their own behavior, by what they think it means, that they try to stop and their form of trying to stop is really a form of repression and, needless to say, it doesn't work. It's like squeezing a balloon in one place. It just pops out in another. That's where you get the binge and purge cycle. And you get somebody throwing out \$10,000 worth of clothes and swearing he'll never do it again and a year later, two years later, he's got a whole new wardrobe again.

BD: The spectrum of dressing you talk about makes a lot of sense to me. I think that though it may not be "curable", it changes over a person's life. Or can.

Henkin: I think one of the difficulties that people have with things that upset them is that we tend to think that everything is static. If somebody gets involved in a new kind of activity that's compelling, he or she may get deeply, intensely involved with it and will think that this is how it's always

going to be. And a year or two years or three years or a month—depending upon the activity—down the line the activity may still hold interest, but it's not consuming and isn't fraught with the hopes and fears, the anxieties, the anticipations that it did once sort of contain. You're talking about a change that may look very dramatic to somebody who has gotten into crossdressing and it is important across the board in his or her life for 30 years.

BD: The interesting thing to me is that, when I was so involved in dressing, I was not looking for crossdressed partners or male partners. I was dating women or was trying to date women, depending on my success. Once I got to the stage where the dressing wasn't itself such an important issue, I became more interested in crossdressers. I guess meeting this one person, my lover, was what changed me and that was really quite an experience. We spoke no more than a dozen words at a party and then for two weeks I could not forget the exchange. This is someone who I had seen perform for over two years, whom I had known on-stage and therefore recognized. And it's just interesting to me now that since her death I feel like I've opened up. I'm dating more than I ever have in my life and I certainly am dating more people who are crossdressed or cross-gendered than I am dating genetic girls. (I always felt that was a very unflattering term.) It's also interesting to me to think of the transvestite community which has still, I think, in many ways barely outgrown its homophobia and I mean barely.

Henkin: When you speak about the transvestite community do you mean the largely upper middle class white guys who dress in women's clothes, who may have very well-developed female personas, who attend a lot of conventions and belong to clubs? Or do you mean the street crossdressers who are more often lower middle class or lower class, but for whom the compulsion or the need or the experience is no less important, but who are not so frequently upper middle class or middle class, not so frequently white, not so frequently able to travel to conventions and join clubs, but who are very a strong community? Or, do you mean the gay crossdressing community which is altogether different again?

BD: Yes, I mean the former who, because of their financial stability, is able to present itself. They have clubs, they have publications, many publications at this stage. More than I'm sure will be able to survive unless the community is larger than anybody imagines. They're the most public in that way. They're the ones it seems to me are trying to develop an image for the society.

Henkin: They're the ones who have a vested interest in the society itself. They're the doctors, the lawyers, the pilots, the engineers. They have a stake in the socioeconomic status quo. So in order to preserve their right to do what they want to do they must and in a sense can go out into the politi-

cal world, into the social world, into the economic world and attempt to wreak change. The other parts of the community or the other communities, depending, don't in a sense have a stake in whether a society approves of them or not. The street hustler, the upstairs maid who lives with Mom, the postal mail worker who also crossdresses. These are very different cultures that are still gender cultures.

BD: It's so interesting that these cultures barely relate.

Henkin: They don't have the same interests.

BD: I was reading a report, I think it was in *Tapestry*, from one of the International Foundation for Gender Education conventions. The writer actually copped to going to the hotel bar after the scheduled events and flirting with men. That's like one culture experimenting with the customs of the other without adopting the whole world view. After all the IFGE member was truly only flirting, not trying to turn tricks. There was no talk that anything sexual came out of it or was intended. You read so many things about people who crossdress yet completely disavow any interest in men with a militancy that I think protests too much.

Henkin: Let me in my capacity as psychotherapist ask you a little bit about your childhood and particularly about your relationships with women—with your mother, with sisters, if any, aunts, grandmothers, other women who were around—other females who were around.

BD: Nobody ever loved me as much as my father's mother. Nobody probably ever will. That was a very, very special kind of love. I was her first grandchild and even when I was a hippie and the rest of the family thought I was hell-bent she would talk to me. That was a relationship like none I will ever enjoy in my life and that is a special prize to me.

My relationship with my mother I felt was very good, though it was really weird in my house in that my mother was extremely modest. I never saw my mother naked in my memory, except once when I was a teenager. Literally I walked into her bedroom and caught a glimpse through the crack of the bathroom door which was quickly closed. Whereas my father would walk around naked with no problems. Even in front of company or at least in front of family he would walk around in his shorts. This was so very contrasting to my mother who was extremely modest. My sister and I, unfortunately, had a relationship based on rivalry. We never really got close, I don't feel, and we are not close to this day. It's a sadness to me that we're not closer.

All through high school I had no problems with girlfriends. There was one woman who I saw one for a year or more and then after that I saw another woman who I thought was one of the most beautiful girls in the class. My biggest thing in relating to women, which I think was really a big

mistake, is I went to an all boys' college in a very small town. And I think it was a crucial time in my life when I should not have removed myself from female companionship to a situation where females became objects.

Henkin: But you felt as if you related to women until then?

BD: Yes and at the time I didn't realize this deficit. This is hindsight speaking. I don't want to say that not having women in college caused me to like crossdressers or buy drag clothes. Nor do I want to say that buying drag clothes caused me to fall in love with men who wear dresses. I don't see it as a cause and effect. But, I think it was a factor in the way I related to women. After I got out of college I didn't have a real solid relationship with a woman for a couple of years outside of occasional dates. But nothing that lasted more than a month or two and I felt very clumsy. Just flat out clumsy at relating—just uncomfortable. It didn't stop me and I did meet a girlfriend. We moved west together. We lived together for a year and a half, almost two years. This was the woman who was supportive of my initial crossdressing and made my first miniskirt. Pink corduroy. We were hippies, there wasn't any money—that was the cloth we just happened to have around. I think I still have that skirt.

Henkin: So, were you and are you more comfortable relating to men generally, than to women? I'm not necessarily referring to sexually or romantically.

BD: I wouldn't call it comfort exactly, but yes, there are many times when I realize that when I want to get together with someone to hang out, it's usually with one of my male friends.

Henkin: Let me see if I can formulate a question that I want to pose for you. If you are more comfortable hanging out with a male than with a female and you are erotically more attracted to females than to males, then might you look for a person who embodied the best of both worlds for you? The comfort of hanging out with a male with the erotic attraction of a female, that is, a man in a skirt?

BD: I understand the logic. It strikes me as a bit simplistic, but there is definitely some truth in that. However, I don't want to imply, but I suppose this implication is there, that someone who is a crossdresser now will evolve as I have. I don't expect some one who crossdresses now to necessarily go through a stage and then find that they're attracted to crossdressers.

Henkin: Everybody goes through his or her own evolution and it may lead in your direction. It may lead in the direction of your late lover. Who knows where it can lead? What you were saying earlier about this not being static is what's important. It is a process as all of life is a process and you don't know the specific direction it's going to go in. We of our generation

and the generations following us had the benefit of growing up with Freud's realization that what happens at the beginning affects what happens later on. I don't mean that Freud is the first person who thought of it, but he is certainly the first modern to codify it in a way that made broad-based sense. Now we're sort of suffering because it's reached its lowest common denominator and it's been very well watered down and people are raging against Freud who never read anything he wrote. Something I don't want to leave implied is that just because one is close to or antagonistic with a female early on one is going to crossdress, or just because one crossdresses at age four means that one's going to crossdress at age 40. I am chary about putting this kind of process into anything rigid, though I recognize that most of the studies suggest that there is a usual pattern. That's, I think, at least part of the reason I'm reluctant to medicalize this kind of stuff. People do what they do. If it works for them, it works for them. If it doesn't work for them, then they try to figure out how come.

BD: Right. My first long term relationship with a crossdresser was the most loving relationship I've had with a sexual partner in my entire life. It's just something to be able to say to somebody, "I love you" and, even if you say it 10 times a day, to have them say it back with more feeling than you put into it. It warms your soul.

For a long period before then a woman I'd had a very close relationship with would help me try and meet other women. One situation was a party and I had said to her, "Look, I really want to meet some new women at this." So what did I do? I dressed in drag for that party. Afterwards she said, "What are you doing? I brought these women for you to meet and there you are dressed in drag. Well, this is not the way to try and start a relationship with a woman who's never met you before." And I realized after looking at it that there were many ways that I was undercutting my relationships with new women. So I kept trying to date women and it kept not working and that was the way of my life through the bulk of my thirties.

And so by the time I met my one lover—the transgendered lover—it had been almost a decade between really meaningful relationships that lasted more than, say, six months. I had thought at that point, when you go through almost 10 years without a partner and soulmate, "Hey, that's the way it's going to be. I'm going to be pretty much alone. I figured, that's the way life was going to end up." Well, surprise, surprise!

One of the things I learned out of this relationship was I really enjoy having someone to take care of. About six months after her death I "adopted" an 18-year-old gay crossdresser. He's a kid who's been on his own since he was 14. He's had a difficult life—very little support. I'm just

trying to give him a little stability in his life. I bought him two new pair of shoes and a raincoat. And he's now living in my home. I'm trying to get him a job and it gives me a great satisfaction to try and help someone. I never knew I had that in me. This is something I've learned out of the relationship with my transgendered lover. And it's opened me to a tenderness toward the rest of the world that I had barely been able to imagine before, among all my sarcasm and sometimes brutal wit.

Henkin: It sounds kind of paternal.

BD: I'm being a Daddy for him. And it's not Daddy in the sense of the gay 900 number porn ads either. Our relationship is not sexual, rumors aside. We know what's goes on between us and our friends know. I'm parenting and it's nice to have a kid without having to change the diapers.

Henkin: Going back for a moment to my fondness for dealing with personas, you find lots of relationships—normal, middle America, het relationships. Nancy and Ronald Reagan—where the guy calls the woman “mother” and she calls him “father.” I think as a culture we sort of glossed over this. But I would suggest that in many intimate relationships, one of the components is that we parent the children in each other, to heal the wounds, to make it all right, at last, to be. And when this is done unconsciously I think you end up with a lot of infantile interactions. When it's done consciously it can be enormously healing for both the father or the mother in the adult persona and for the children in the child personas. Both ways.

BD: The other thing about my son is and I can say this with due pride, he's one of the most androgynous creatures on the face of God's earth. And he does not try to look like a woman; he does not try to look like a man. And he is completely androgynous looking. I usually call him “he,” but most people say “she.”

Henkin: What is the one thing that you have not said that you would like to be in this profile?

BD: One thing and I don't know that this is the most important, but it's true, is from when IFGE had their convention here in San Francisco. My transsexual lover and I wanted to go. She was interested in the scarf-tying session more than anything else. The rest of stuff she knew already. No problems with make-up and all that jazz. Her personal public style was well developed. We wanted to go to one of the big evening events, but I thought very seriously whether any of these militant “hets” would be upset at a same sex couple, though of different genders. We really seriously wondered whether we'd feel out of place and how welcome we would be and ultimately we were both booked to the gills so we did not attend any events and find out.

Henkin: For me, and I speak personally as well as professionally, as a

therapist working in these communities, it is that middle universe—whether it's gender or anything else—it's that middle universe that I find most exciting. “Pushing the envelope” is exactly right, borrowing the metaphor as it is. Testing reality. Where can we go? Why are the limits that we are given supposed to be limits? There turn out to be reasons, but they're not necessarily the reasons that we're told. There are limits because the society needs to keep us in a package in order to keep itself together and as our society has been getting increasingly repressive the past decade the invalidity of some of those limits becomes increasingly apparent.

BD: There's a scene in town called Klubstitute. It happens once a week and it's basically a party with mostly cabaret performances. There are couples there, younger people, who fit this description. A computer programmer who does very high-level, Silicon Valley work with his formerly lesbian girlfriend. She is definitely the active partner at least that's how its portrayed. A young guy who was straight, got into drag and got into men. Now he still does drag and calls himself a “trans-dyke.” His lesbian lover always refers to him in the feminine gender. You see them together and he's in drag and she looks like a lipstick lesbian. And all this whole spectrum really is outside the IFGE scene. For people who need those magazines and clubs they're manna. But, I don't think they realize how much else is going on, especially among younger people, that's outside of their view.

Henkin: I think the clubs, like San Francisco's ETVC, serve a vital function even for the people who don't end up there because sometimes it's sort of a turnstile. It's a way in and then you find out where your exit is and you go off and do something else.

BD: The other scene is for me totally liberating. These people are pushing the envelope in the way that most people, straights, gays or the traditional heterosexual crossdressers never imagined, can't even conceive of. And it's stunning in its courageousness.

Henkin: It's not what you do, it's how you do it inter- or intrapersonally, and it's not what you do, it's what other people think about it socially. And these two may not have much in common.

Bruce Daniels (BD) is not the real name of the subject of this interview. The real man is in his mid-40s. Born on the east coast, he's lived on the west for 20 years. He has several degrees in the fine arts. Though his principal income is from part-time teaching in community colleges, colleges and universities, he has professional careers in the performing arts and educational media as well.

ABBY

She drinks more than me
And always leaves something on her plate
There are people who know only her
She loves silk dresses, high heels
And perfectly shaped lips

Her nails are coral
That surprised me
I wanted them red
She loves to powder her nose
And touch up her makeup
She embarrasses me by doing it in public

She stands with her hands on her hips
And sits with her legs together or crossed
Thinks nothing of showing a bit of leg
She wants to be independent
Explore the world and its reaction to her
People, she tells me, prefer her to me
Here, where she is the center of attention,
I must take a back seat

She wishes I would disappear
But she needs me for protection
Ultimately, she teases
You will be unnecessary

She is dependent and never
Goes anywhere by herself
She needs company
Feels protected in a group

She loves to trick me
"Put on a little makeup
Wear that satin camisole
Under your shirt no one will see'
Then she loosens the shirt buttons one at a time
'A little more makeup, just pencil and mascara
Will make those eyes almond shaped
Try the blush, use the brush
To outline the lips and long strokes
to fill it in"
She loves finding traces of polish on my nails
And knows I love it too.

—Ira Saypen

I AM WOMAN, I AM MAN

I am woman, I am man.
I have beauty inside me,
I have strength.
There was always beauty inside
me,
but it was buried, locked, denied.
I have always had strength,
but it scared me, worried me,
seemed dangerous.

I am woman, I am man.
Outside I was only a man.
My woman was my deepest secret,
locked in a hidden magic
garden.
Mostly I couldn't get there
except in my dreams.

I am woman, I am man.
Why was my man so scary?
so fraught, desperate, devoid?
Perpetual vigil
lest strength do Caliban-like harm.
At best tight-lipped tolerance from
the world—
earned by perpetual service.
But always the risk of a mistake,
with the consequences unthinkable.
Punishing myself,
to get right with the world.

I am woman, I am man.
Therapists tried to help me
cure myself of my womanhood.

That would be a living death
with tube feeding from Hollywood
and a meaningless job
and a prickly pear, to go round
at five o'clock in the morning.
But where is joy? Where is life?
Where is love?

I am woman, I am man.
At last I found my hidden garden.
I found it in a canyon in Colorado;
I found it in music;
I found it in my womanhood;
I found it in my dear ones.
I'm learning to be in my secret
garden
whenever I want—
which is most always.

I am a woman, I am man.
Now my beauty shines out.
Now my strength is safe,
and good, and joyous.
I stand tall, and proud, and happy.
I run in the woods.
I revel in the beauty of nature, of
art, of people.
I glory in the beauty of my friends.
Now my love for them can pour
out.
Now I can accept their love.

—Robin Esch



To Be a Woman

To Be a Woman is moving and educational, humorous and titillating. Sensitively written by a practicing journalist, this account gives the reader a new understanding of how women really are treated differently—by both women and men. Novelist Jerry McClain spends an entire year as a woman—getting a job, experiencing life in a totally new and different way, surmounting periodic bouts of depression and insecurity, even falling in love. Able to view life from both sides of the gender spectrum, he comes to grips with his own sexuality and makes decisions that will determine the course of the rest of his life. Acclaimed by both men and women readers, *To Be a Woman* provides unique insight into how those of the other gender experience life.

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DEEP LOVE

My spirit compels me to reach for impossible love
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 With deep love to give not knowing the one to give it to.
 Needing a healthy way to express my passion;
 Accepting a token of lust;
 Short circuiting a path to life-long fulfillment.
 When do I stop rebelling like an adolescent and accept time on
 time's terms?

—Sonja Smith

GIRL/BOY—MALE/FEMALE— MASCULINE/FEMININE

by S. Moore-Bridger

Are we not truly caught on the horns of a dilemma? Society says as soon as we are born, we are male or female, boy or girl. But inside ourselves, we all feel this to be either a half-truth or a complete lie. We know that inwardly we often feel female or feminine (if we were born men), but outwardly for the world of so-called facts, we have had to conform to the demands of others and “act male.” But why do we consider ourselves abnormal? Simply because we appear to be a small percentage of the population? Why do we not consider the other possibility, namely that it is a normal state to feel inwardly opposite in gender to the outwardly apparent one? Why do we not accept that society may be totally abnormal in attempting to limit human beings to one gender? Perhaps the attempt to confine especially men within one gender role is the source of the terrible symptoms of sexual confusion and breakdown that are manifest in rape, child abuse, sadism, etc. Perhaps it would be a source of great inner peace if one could learn to get used to and feel free with the idea that one is inwardly, in one's feelings and sensitivity, feminine while one has an outward body that is masculine, anatomically. And vice versa for women, for whom the problem is far less acute in one form and far more acute in another.

What would it mean to have an “inner life” that one could genuinely feel was feminine—so feminine that it would give that sense of contentment and wholeness that all cross-dressers feel sometimes, but not always? What does it mean to absorb into oneself the feminine element so completely that one can feel it is oneself? Here we come to the painful part. Let us examine our own souls. Must we not admit that our own feelings and habits are heavily contaminated by unnecessary “male” attitudes? It is the essence of a male body to be usually stronger and bigger than a female one. But is it the essence of maleness to be crude, aggressive, vulgar, brutish, and self-involved? There is absolutely no necessity for life in a male body to involve any of the “herd” characteristics found in football matches, pubs, smoking rooms, banks, etc., where the human element is ignored and a kind of mechanical barbarism and ugliness rules. Yet these elements have insinuated themselves into our own habits. It is these attitudes and habits that then approach the idea of feminine with a sort of “thirst” and burning desire. Out of these attitudes, “feminine” becomes the hearty made up tart. Let us look

frankly at ourselves. Have many of us really found the complete ease and confidence with our feminine persona that enables us to feel happily at one with it? Or are we, when looking in the mirror still seeking the complementary picture to satisfy our male crudities, which society excites on all hands?

We use lots of make up, more sexy clothes, more exciting styles. Do we really succeed thereby in becoming more feminine? Do we know a woman more from knowing her sexy surface? Does a "sexy surface woman" a "mini-skirted tart" know more about her femininity than a woman of effortless and deep beauty? Or does she only know herself through her effect on male crudity? In other words, the more we pursue as crossdressers and transsexuals the sexy image of woman, the *less* we find the inner woman we actually are. What will help us find the true inner woman? To examine that we have to look at the experience of women, struggling to find the inner masculine. What does this mean? For women, life is almost a conspiracy to avoid the sense of "sober appreciation of the factual truth." Life conspires to prevent women from contacting the world free from subjective responses. But this is the very world dominated today by the machine, army, factory, car, etc. There is no future at all in hating one gender principle; one thereby becomes a miserable caricature of a human being.

The principles were often pictured in sagas of old. In the Middle Ages, the Romance of Parzival carries pictures of the true masculine and true feminine. Parzival is the lonely chivalrous knight whose devotion is to God and his lady. He has to learn by bitter trials to purify the masculine principle (knighthood). Conduriamur is the feminine principle. She cares for and nourishes her community and endures great hardships steadfastly until Parzival can claim her truly. This picture is each of us. We are all like the old "weather houses" in which a man and woman appeared in opposite doors of a house. When it rained one would appear on the left with an umbrella, in fine weather, the other would appear in the other door with a sun hat. Each of us puts either the male or female forward at any one time, but behind the scenes both are connected, are one. When both principles operate truly, the uniting third will also appear. *This* is really our quest.

The struggle for women has been to break into this world and arrive at "factuality" and "outer responsibility" and not to be restricted in a world where they are reduced to mere "images of men and for men." If women could humanize (using the forces of family and home and caring) these outer worlds, they would achieve the perfect balance from one direction. But women are often caught in the ravages of self-doubt and dependence and insecurity of thought, whereas men show the ravages of a neglected and mechanized inner life. Our efforts to act as women generally show us how

terribly scarred by male (and not true masculine) habits we are, how crude, vulgar, inattentive to our bodies, etc. We imitate the most insecure of women. Women's efforts to act in the male world, to enter reality fully, often leave them battered and frightened at their own intellectual insecurity. They are emerging from dream into reality, as a self. We are trying to enter a dream world consciously. We are repelled by our own emotional immaturity. Either course requires self-honesty and courage and remorseless inner work.

It was late August, 5293 AD. Calyx and Morinda were enjoying their last summer holiday in their old forms. For Calyx was 41 and his change was already well advanced. Morinda was half-jealous. She was only 36 and her change, although her breasts were quite definitely decreasing was really confined to irregular periods and strange momentary pains. She could feel the cleaning of the grain beginning, though, the sense of calm objective certainty that the 35th year usually brings. But Calyx was a bit frightened. His breasts were already painful, but there was no real development yet, and his male organs were decidedly smaller and tender. They would spend the ten moons together in the mountain retreat of Scotland. The doctor had insisted that before Calyx's changing they should take a "compassion moon" and visit the sufferers in London. It took a lot of courage. They had, of course, been instantly recognized as different. When the ant-men and women had come out of their underground cellars, they would follow them all round. Calyx and Morinda had been filled with horror at first, but then, with awful sorrow. Their guide explained in solemn tones that these were also human brethren, and that Calyx and Morinda must never forget them. It was almost incredible that these shrivelled forms had maybe only five or six lives ago been indistinguishable from Calyx and Morinda. The change began on September 1st. Calyx felt feverish and took to bed. Morinda joined him and held him gently. By afternoon, Calyx was in high fever. He would murmur in his sleep, tossing and turning and calling out. On September 2nd, she became alarmed. The room grew terribly cold and she could only warm herself with difficulty by focusing all her love on Calyx. She remembered his handsome boyish face when she had married him. He had been 25 and she in the bloom of girlish beauty. It made her nostalgic. Suddenly, an icy feeling of hatred gripped her. She had been beautiful. She had been a lovely woman. Now years had deprived her of all this. But she could have had moon pills, like the ant-people took. They didn't any longer work for them, but it was said that for the Sun race they worked dra-

matically. She began to long for the womanhood she was losing. She began to hate Calyx, to hate men in general. He was going to become the woman she had been once. She began to hate them all, "the thieves!" The room grew icy cold. Calyx moaned aloud. "I hate you. You rob me of my strength. You will destroy my freedom. You devil!" Suddenly he rose up out of bed with a look of fierce animal hatred. He looked like a huge ant-man. The shock of his face cleared Morinda's intelligence. Behind Calyx's head she saw a shining figure. Golden and stern. At once the room grew lighter and Calyx, as if fighting himself, sank back. His face suddenly lightened into a wonderful smile. "Beloved," he whispered in his dream. The crisis was past. Morinda suddenly was herself again. She knew. She was certain. She embraced the sense of honest intelligence and steadfast strength. She knew at last what "man" meant. The figure of gold was withdrawing, gazing at her. She would be its "knight," a guardian of truth. All the next day, Calyx's face was radiant. His features softened and a mild light surrounded him. She loved him so much that the thermometer in the room reached 40°C, but still it felt only gently warm. She sang breezes to him, noticing that her voice was definitely deeper than before. How happy she felt. She was stronger, too. And Calyx grew more and more lovely. The doctor had said she must not touch him, but in the end she couldn't help it, and kissed his wonderful soft face. She was a bit surprised at first not to find the usual beard growth. His skin was so tender. His eyes opened. He looked around in amazement and wonder. Then he smiled. The ten months seemed long in one way; each day brought more surprises but such expectancy. By the end of the time, Calyx's body was fully developed, and it was time to return to York and to greet people. They left the retreat, but before they did, Calyx pledged Morinda to help her in her change, probably in five or six years. It was so strange for Calyx coming home to all their friends. People called, and Calyx, slowly becoming used to being called "she," had much adjusting to do. People were marvelous. Poems and songs were made, and a special compassion poem in honor of Raphael sung, while a service of "Michael the Pure" was celebrated at the Shrine of the Eternal Feminine. Lastly, the story of the dividing of the Human Race was read, and a pledge of healing taken, the one dating from the 20th century, which has been repeated ever since by the Solar Race for the reunification of humankind.

S. (Stephen/Sandra) Moore-Bridger is an academic affiliated with a major university in the UK. He/she offers this piece to the readership of JGS. The opinions expressed herein are not those of JGS or HOAI.

PROVINCETOWN

A R T S

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“Life doesn't imitate art. Life is art. That's what confuses so many up and comings. They're too busy being artists to live.

—John Ono Lennon
BBC Interview

IN MEMORY OF CHARLIE HOWARD: TOWARD A WELCOMING CONGREGATION

By G. E. Smith

As I remember, the early July evening so many years ago began with our attending a concert of "Up with People," sitting there on bleachers in the Bangor (Maine) Auditorium, watching dozens of scrubbed-faced young people of all races and creeds, dancing and singing some glorious symphony to the goodness of life, "up with people" indeed. We must have come out that night to our cars, humming the tunes, believing in the future, "up" with ourselves, thanks to those ambassadors of diversity.

The evening ended with the unbelievable and sickening news that, while this concert was going on, a gang of high school boys, out on a Saturday evening of "gay-bashing," right in the middle of the business district, had thrown Charlie Howard over a bridge railing into the Kenduskeag Stream thirty feet below. Witnesses said that nineteen-year-old Charlie had begged for his life. He couldn't swim, he cried, and he was right. He couldn't swim, and he drowned in what is more than a stream; it is a river about to merge with the Penobscot and the open sea, and that is where Charlie's body was found early the next morning.

Charlie was gay; he was way out of the closet. He was gay and "in your face" with it. He had moved from the Boston area to Bangor only weeks before. Bangor was hardly ready for him, and these high school boys must have known about him, were threatened by him, and could not resist it when they drove by him that night and yelled some insult out the window, and he answered back.

We learned later what we should have known all along, and that was that this was a usual Saturday night pastime for more than a few high schoolers, a way to pass the time, bashing gays, beating them up. It happened then, and it happens now so regularly it doesn't even find its way into the paper any more. The Charlie Howard story found its way into the paper, though, even to the wire services, maybe even here to Concord. There were marches. The trials of those who pushed Charlie, the pictures of their mothers and fathers, it was in all the papers.

The Bangor school system was ready in the fall. The community was up in arms. School board members and other politicians made lots of speeches. You can imagine some of the letters to the editor of the local

paper. Vitriolic is one word that comes to my mind. Some of the religious communities in town engaged the issue; some didn't. The schools decided to take this on in the fall as an issue of tolerance: how do we learn to tolerate one another, they asked, which I found to be a strange twist on the Golden Rule: "tolerate your neighbor as you would have others tolerate you."

With Charlie's drop to the water, Bangor lost some of its veneer of innocence, and so did I. How could we sing about "up with people" when at that very moment one was so tragically dropping down. Let me hasten to say that this story of Charlie Howard is not just a story about some isolated event, long ago, far away. This is a sermon about our brothers and sisters, our sons and our daughters, our neighbors and our coworkers, and our white-hot attitudes as a society toward homosexuality. It's in all the papers: most recently, in the actions of Concerned Christians at Harvard toward the chaplain at Memorial Church, Peter Gomes: it surely was in the fury and flurry around the St. Patrick's Day Parade in South Boston; it was in the shooting of three people outside a health club in Boston earlier in the winter. It's in all the papers, and it's hardly ever in the papers: in the way in which we tend to push people over into this category or that every day and make our Judgments with a capital "J."

"Each of us," said Gordon Allport, "is born into a complex and subtle web of prejudices: prejudices perpetuated by our culture, our families, our friends, our schools." He tells the story of a small boy, taught by his father that those who believe in monopolies are evil, and so this child spends the rest of his life hating people who live in Minneapolis. "Prejudice," says David Rankin, "is being down on something we're not up on. Prejudice is the result of either fear or ignorance or both. Whether it's leveled against blacks or women or Unitarians or homosexuals, we're talking about a basic fear," he says, "and our attempt to try to preserve our own personal existence against something we can see to be threatening."

Following Charlie Howard's death, the Maine Association of Christian Schools, in an effort to throw gasoline onto the fire, brought in a guest speaker for their annual convention, a doctor of sociology, who argued that "homosexuals should be quarantined until cured." Believe me, that was in all the papers. "Homosexuals are sick," writes Hans Knight, "very sick. They're sick of wearing masks. They're sick of being snickered and sneered at. They're sick of being called queers, faggots, and fairies. They're sick of being insulted on the one hand and pitied on the other. Most of all," he concludes, "they're sick of being told they're sick."

"They're sick of being banished for being honest," I read, and then I remembered just two weeks ago, one of the young women who was active in

the St. Patrick's Day appeal, on a television panel, looking into the camera and remembering growing up as one of ten children in an Irish Catholic household, and she remembered the day her mother sat her down and said, "I am going to ask you one question, and if the answer is yes, I will never speak to you again. Are you a lesbian?" "Yes, I am," her daughter answered. "Why," screamed her mother, "did you answer me?" "Because," replied the daughter, "you have taught me ever since I was a little girl above all to be honest."

I saw parts of the Boston parade on CNN International, as I was away that weekend in Europe. "Kill the fags," some of the signs said that followed the marchers, carried by the kind of thugs who will never be candidates for the "Up with People" cast. In medieval times, these kind of hoodlums burned gay people at the stake, and the little sticks they used for burning them were called "faggots."

If we had time, this sermon could speak of how we have misplaced the importance of sexuality in our society, how we have misunderstood ourselves as the sexual beings we are. We have separated sex from love, sex from self-esteem, and we have made sex some cold, mechanical, biological function apart from human relationships and human feelings. If we make the mistake of defining each other in terms of sexual orientation, we lose sight of the authenticity and preeminence of love.

If we had time, this sermon could head off any number of directions, but we have gathered as a religious community, and it is up to us, I think, to look at our own religious attitudes, to examine our own religious traditions. How does our faith speak to this hatred, these prejudices, this kind of dehumanizing divisiveness. James Nelson, a teacher at the Boston University School of Theology, once spoke of what he saw as four different theological stances toward homosexuality. I'm using his outline for my own, and I understand these four attitudes as a part of a spectrum through which we all move, back and forth.

The first attitude, he says, is the rejecting, punitive stance. We don't have to look far for this. It was on the signs that followed the marchers in South Boston; it is always on that kind of sign: crude Biblical references that label homosexuality perverse, repugnant, and sinful. From the Book of Leviticus: "You shall not lie with a man as with a woman; it is an abomination." What we are not told is that the same Hebrew word for abomination applies equally to the eating of pork.

The rejecting punitive religious folks like to tell the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, and yet they gloss over the part of the story that has Lot freely offering his daughters to his guests for fear of being inhospitable, and you

know what I mean by "offering his daughters." They try to cite Jesus' attitudes toward homosexuality, but there is absolutely no record he ever spoke of it, not once. It was his disciple Paul who took on the subject, with a similar attack, by the way, toward women. Paul was never big on "honoring all persons."

William Sloane Coffin writes that "it is not Scripture that creates hostility to homosexuality, but rather hostility to homosexuality prompts certain Christians to retain a few passages from an other wise discarded code of law. The problem is not how to reconcile homosexuality with scriptural passages that appear to condemn it, but rather how to reconcile the rejection and punishment of homosexuals by the Church with the love of God."

If the first attitude is rejecting and punitive, the second possible religious attitude is the rejecting and nonpunitive stance, which condemns the homosexual act, but not the gay or lesbian person. "I love you but not what you do." This is the attitude that says that homosexuality is no crime but is rather a disease waiting for a cure. The fact is we do not choose our sexual orientation; we discover it, and the question rather might be, should a loving relationship be judged by its inner worth or by its outer appearance?

The third attitude moves from rejection and either this punitive or pitying attitude to an acceptance, but the third attitude is a conditional acceptance. And I think many sensitive and loving people have struggled to come to this point. This is the person who will say yes to gay rights, BUT. And the but is the gnawing feeling somewhere inside that homosexuality is inferior to heterosexuality. This is what allows some people to say "some of my best friends are black, or Jewish or Unitarian or Democrats," and then we feel better because we have set ourselves apart and can anoint ourselves tolerant.

We are together this morning as a Unitarian Universalist congregation, part of a greater religious tradition that champions the freedom of the individual, the "inherent worth and dignity of every person," and an "acceptance of one another." This is a tough faith; Unitarian Universalism points us toward the fourth theological stance toward homosexuality: not a rejecting punitive attitude, not a rejecting pitying attitude, not even a denominational acceptance, but an unconditional acceptance.

Coffin writes, "Just as the 'black problem' turned out to be a problem of white racism, just as the 'woman problem' turned out to be a problem of male sexism, so the 'gay problem' is really the homophobia of many heterosexuals. I know gays have hang ups," he says, "but so do straights. Just as blacks used to be labeled shiftless by whites who made sure there would be no reward for their diligence, so straights call gays promiscuous while denying any support at all for overtly gay stable relationships."

Unconditional acceptance. This means more than simple passing resolutions in yearly denominational meetings. This means more than reading journal articles and going on with our lives. We need dialogue. We need more than tolerance. For the month of April, for four Wednesday evenings beginning this week, we're inviting you to join us for some conversations and questions on how gay and straight can live together, how we can all move beyond whatever phobias we have, all of us, move beyond whatever attitudes have been planted in us, to an acceptance of one another, unconditionally. "I love you just the way you are," Fred Rogers used to say, and did we ever realize he might be the last person to say this.

"I believe in love," David Rankin writes. "I don't think that anything in our society—oppression, hatred, prejudice—can stand against love. And when I see love between two people, I rejoice. And I celebrate that love. And I fear nothing where love exists. And I ask no questions, for love is good—and not even the gates of hell can prevail against it."

There's the story of a child putting the pieces of a puzzle together: the picture is that of a globe, a map of the world, and teacher has cut the map from the newspaper, cut into small pieces, sure to take some time: Within minutes, this child has put the puzzle together, and when the surprised teacher asks the child how this could be accomplished in such a short time, the student explains that on the other side of the puzzle, on the other side of the map cut from the newspaper, is a picture of a person. "Once the person was put together," the child explained, "putting the world together was easy."

Let us be about the important business of putting people together, all of us.

This article is reprint of a sermon delivered by senior minister Gary E. Smith of the First Parish in Concord Unitarian-Universalist Church in Concord, Mass., on March 29, 1992.



MY MANHOOD—1945 TO 1990

"It's yours!" they said, smiling broadly,
With the full, expansive smiles of those who give a wonderful gift.

"Of course, it's a little big for you now, but you'll grow into it."
And they smiled and wished me well.

I looked at it and admired its form.
It had a shape and a presence I was familiar with.

Quite handsome and solid, actually.
And since it was mine, I climbed in to look around.

Once I grasped the heavy metal door and latched it behind me,
I knew I was in a very foreign place.

Dark and dank, with the smell of old metal and gear oil.

I sat on the hard steel seat and looked at the instruments:
An array of shift levers and dials that defied any logic.

But, I thought, surely I will be able to operate it when I get used to it.

So many others do, and do it quite well.

So I started the engine and it rumbled to life with a fearsome shudder,

Bouncing me where I sat,
Forcing me to grip the steering wheel with all my might.

I tried to look out, to see where I was going,
But there was only a small slit of a window.

High above me.
So I could only glimpse a tiny piece of the soft blue sky.

But, I thought, this must how it's done,
Everyone else manages.

So I wrenched the shift lever down and we lurched off,
Going I know not where.

It rang clanging all about me as we surged forward (I can only imagine it was forward).

And when I tried to ease the ride by turning the dials,
they were too hard to turn and too oily to grasp.

So I hung on and hoped the ride wouldn't last too long.

But it did.

—Chris Howey



Transvestites—The Erotic Drive to Crossdress

by M. Hirschfeld, M.D. Translated by M. A. Lombardi-Nash. Published by Prometheus Books, Buffalo, NY, 1991, 424 pages. Reviewed by A. Kane.

After more than half a century of misunderstanding and misuse of the term by professionals and media people, a book about transvestites and the associated behaviors has been translated (from the German) and is now available for the students of this phenomenon. Here is a work by the man who, in fact, coined the word transvestite from the Latin lexicography: trans (meaning cross) and vestite (meaning dress). It was used to describe a phenomenon whereby males and females wear an item or items of apparel usually worn by the other sex.

Dr. Hirschfeld, whom some consider to be a founder of modern sexology, was fascinated by crossdressers and interested in studying various motivations that could be responsible for the behavior. Some of his findings are presented in the 17 case studies included in this volume. The work is divided into three broad segments: Case Histories—Analysis and Hypothesis; Criticism Theoretical and Differential Diagnosis; and Ethnology, Cultural and Historical Aspects.

Of these, I found the case histories to be most useful. What Dr. Hirschfeld did was to choose 17 cases (16 male and one female) from many that he studied and described the individual's history and feelings associated with their crossdressing. It is revealing that many aspects of these cases (which were done before 1910) are found in similar cases studied today. Hirschfeld, while accepting a natural duality in the sexuality of Homo sapiens, also felt that the differences between men and women are not fully separate entities. This could give rise to continuous condition of mixing (blending, crossdressing) aspects of masculine and feminine gender roles and their outer expressions. His approach to the phenomenon was that of a clinician trying to explain and understand some of the behaviors he saw in his clients. He also had some historical research on the literature of crossdressing and impersonation. He believed that the phenomenon was much too complex for any simplistic cause-and-effect hypothesis about it. The work is a goldmine of facts, possible interpretations, and diagnoses of the behaviors and philosophic rhetoric about the nature of humans and their cultural behaviors. It is a good reference source for all who might want a professional, clinical, and humanistic viewpoint about various aspects of crossdressing. It furnishes

the basis for much of what knowledge we have about transvestites and transsexuals today.

(Available from Outreach Book Service)



Unleashing Our Unknown Selves

by F. Morrow. Published by Praeger Books, Westport, CT, 1991, 288 pages. Reviewed by A. Kane

This book presents a new theory of psychosexual development along with that of psychosocial evolution. The author believes that the binary form of sexuality in nature is a primordial organizing principle for all cultures and that evolving qualities and gender attributes are determined by cultural diversity, for women and men. While biologic differences have, over long periods of time, been incorporated and superseded by this diversity, it is the cultural division between gender roles of men and women that cause much discord for Homo sapiens. She goes on to claim that it is this schism that allows for "cultural" subordination of women and patriarchal dominance, that inhibits the process of developmental wholeness for males and females.

Chapter headings like "Femininity and Masculinity," "The Genesis of the Divided Self," and "The Repression of the Majority Self" are intriguing and lend support to her thesis. She defines the "majority self" as being the result of the early childhood-mother relationship, while the "minority self" is constituted by the interaction between child and father. She believes that such a duality of the self is a necessary element for the social maturation of the individual. The majority self is represented through the attribute structure of the feminine, while the minority self reflects the attribute structure of the masculine. In much of this writing there is implied and direct reference to the work of Sigmund Freud. She devotes a chapter to interpreting Freud as an essential bridge to the future.

The book is well written and fully referenced. Using an interdisciplinary focus, the author develops her thesis of general hierarchy in most cultures and how it limits the potential for personal growth as a whole beings.

She offers some hope that by understanding the gender conflict between men and women, there can come new directions toward androgynous being and wholeness. *Unleashing Our Unknown Selves* is truly an inquiry into the future of femininity and masculinity.

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



Grandmothers of the Light

by Paula Gunn Allen. Published by Beacon Press, Boston, 1991, 246 pages.
Reviewed by N. S. Ledins, Ph.D.

Unless the reader is deeply into shamanic and native American rituals, ceremonies, myths, and symbols, this book is very difficult to peruse. The central theme presented is an important one: women must be enabled to recover their path to the gynocosmos, which is their spiritual home. Woven throughout this theme, the author moves in and out of the deeply spiritual concepts and realities of the medicine path, shamanism, and the need to seek, even demand, that the feminine balancing be sought.

This book very clearly points out, through a succession of stories and narratives that the essential note of tribal thought is that of mysticism and the need to weave myth and ritual together in a beautiful harmony. Unfortunately, as the author points out equally well, this attempt to pursue and discuss goddess spirituality is, of necessity, influenced by the patriarchal monotheistic religious systems we live under. As such, melding tribal thought and women's concerns is often trampled by a world view imposed on the native Americans by outsiders. As such, it becomes increasingly difficult not only for the indigenous people to share (and nonnative Americans to understand) the awesome cosmogony of balancing, harmony, tolerance, sharing, and wise use of all things of Mother Earth. Coming to the realization that the essential nature of the cosmos is female, as the author quietly but in-

sistently notes: woman is forever eternal. Man comes from woman and to woman he returns.

As noted above, these critically important themes are occasionally "lost" amid the myriad of stories, myths, and explanations. If one has the patience to "plow" through over 200 pages of such stories, namings, explanations, and definitions, the author accomplishes her purpose: women are, indeed, grandmothers of the light—a light that men desperately need to recognize. In fact, Mother Earth herself is in need of such illumination so that man can see what he has done to his "home." As Winston Abbott so poignantly and sadly writes: it is getting so very late and we have not listened to the sound of the cricket. Ms. Allen also points out that it is getting so very late and the sound of the crickets is, in fact, the cry of women who need to be heard for change. Mother Earth yearns to have the Grandmothers of the Light speak out.

Dr. Ledins 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 President of a Home Study School Program.



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1. The Needs of the Male-to-Female Transsexual
2. The Female-to-Male Transsexual
3. Wives/Partners/Significant Others of CD/TV/TS Persons
4. Crossdressing and Transvestism for CDs and TVs
5. The World of Androgyny and Androgynes

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Thank You!

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.

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