



# THE JOURNAL OF GENDER STUDIES



VOLUME XV #1

WINTER-SPRING 1993

\$8.00



**T**he *Journal of Gender Studies* is the official publication of the Human Outreach and Achievement Institute. It is published two times a year and subscriptions are \$16.00 per annum. ©1993. All rights reserved. Other publications may quote from our articles provided they cite the Journal of Gender Studies as their source. ISSN 1062-6751.

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

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**FROM THE EDITOR...**

**I**n this issue of *JGS*, we share with readers some underlying aspects related to social gender conflict. The relationship between gender perception/role and journalism is discussed via an interview with Professor Caryl Rivers. The need to create unique gender spaces where a person may share their unique concerns is reflected in the article about the New Woman Conference. We also consider the historical perspective on crossgender behaviors among some native American tribes before the “discovery” of the western hemisphere.

In addition, we review several titles that have some relevance to the issues of gender. There is a letter to the editor, which we print because it brings into sharp focus the need to explore aspects of gender role that are not usually available in gender-rigid cultures. We welcome more such responses to the topics presented in *JGS*.

Finally, we are still relatively young as a professional journal. As such, we are experiencing growing pains. Not only is *JGS* a much needed publication on the subject of gender diversity, but it also serves as a harbinger of many forms of gender expression. We welcome articles that may give new insights to knotty gender questions. We also feel that one needs to preserve some historical and cultural aspects of gender-related subjects and activities.

Again, we apologize for the tardiness of publication of this issue and ask for your patience in our efforts to go to press on schedule.

—Ari Kane, Editor and Publisher



*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 is a sketch of a friend and cat, which she drew in 1993.

## HAPPENINGS OF THE OUTREACH INSTITUTE

**GARP (GENDER ATTITUDE REASSESSMENT PROGRAM)**—This workshop was introduced at the 25th Annual Meeting of ASSECT, held in Denver, May 1993. Over 100 attendees participated in the Program and the topics, exercises, and games presented were well received. Some video was used to introduce various aspects of gender perception and role. Both Marilyn Volker and Ari Kane were the facilitators. As a result of the positive response, we plan to do several more of these with health care agencies or university departments in 1994. Please write to the Institute for detailed information and dates.

**EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS**—We have produced our first in a series of videos on various aspects of gender presentation. The first of these is a 15-minute video about Fanstasia Fair. It touches some of the major aspects of this long-standing program of gender exploration. We are now in production for a 50-minute highlights video of Fan/Fair. In addition, we are working on several 30-minute colloquia with some prominent people who have worked in the various aspects of CD/CG behaviors. Please write to the Institute for costs and ordering information.

**FANTASIA FAIR**—This will be our 19th consecutive sponsorship of the most radical social gender education program. Highlights this year include a series of luncheon seminars with topics that include writings of some paraculture leaders and their importance in the formation and flowering of social contact groups both in North America and elsewhere; sex reassignment surgery, the technique (a slide presentation); homophobia and its effects on all of us; and much more. In addition, we have planned several other major events including a Town & Gown Supper, a Cafe/Cabaret, the Fabulous Fan/Fair Follies, the Fantasy Ball, and several Awards Banquets. Invited speakers include Dr. Eugene Schrang, Dr. Sheila Kirk, Warren Blumenfeld, Dr. Moya Andrews, Dr. William Stayton, and Dr. Richard Docter. For specific dates and detailed information, write to the Institute.

**PRESENTATIONS**—In the Spring, we were invited to speak at Indiana University by the Kinsey Institute and several university departments, including speech and hearing, criminology, and women's studies. In addition, we gave some workshops and were parts of some seminars at the Midwest region of the Association of Humanistic Psychology, the Be All Weekend in Chicago, and GAYLA XV, a UUA-sponsored program at Ferry Beach Camp in Saco, Maine. We also made a guest appearance on the Morning Exchange, a video talk show in Cleveland. For information about our speaking programs on gender, write to the Institute.

## GENDER AND JOURNALISM: THE MYTH OF THE OBJECTIVE REPORTER Interview with Professor Caryl Rivers

by Richard Seaman

**RS:** You are identified in the newspaper, that is, the *Boston Globe*, as a Professor of Journalism at Boston University.

**CR:** Right.

**RS:** So, could you tell me, and that will help orient our readers just a little more, what that means—journalism, and what your academic background is, so we get the overall picture of you.

**CR:** Well, I'm a former Washington correspondent. I covered politics before going into academia, and I've done a fair amount of science journalism. I've written two books on the psychology of women, with Rosalyn Barnett of the Wellesley Center for Research on Women. I'm now in the process of doing another book with her called *Ozzie and Harriet are Dead: The Transformation of Men, Women and the American Family*, based on a \$1 million grant from the National Institutes of Mental Health, and it's based on two-earner couples. So, I've been very much involved in media criticism as well as writing about the behavioral sciences.

**RS:** Oh, great. One of my pet peeves, or maybe not so minor, is the way the media do present things and ask questions. And yet, as you were saying to me briefly on the phone the other day, there's a lot of stuff floating around in their head that influences what they see and remember.

**CR:** Well, this is, I think, the myth of the objective reporter. And I think what journalists don't understand well enough is that there are all sorts of cultural myths, particularly about women and about minorities, that are floating around in their heads when they're writing their stories, that they're not even aware of. And a lot of this comes out in their stories, subconsciously. I mean, they don't mean for it to be there. But, boy, is it there.

### The Myth of Female Weakness

**RS:** Do you want to speak a little more about that right now, if you would. In other words, where you see it happening, or whatever examples you might be able to point to.

**CR:** Sure, on gender it seems to me there are two real myths that are almost always present. One—and they are contradictory—is the myth of female weakness. And that goes way back to Eve who was too weak to resist a temptation. And you saw it in all sorts of mythology about women being... their brains too small, the old science of measuring and weighing brains, and of course, blacks had smaller brains. And you see it in the sort of hormonal stuff. In the 19th century, it was actually the common accepted medical wisdom that the ovary and the brain couldn't develop at the same time. So that's why women could only do a little French, a little piano. And that really goes down to the modern day, this idea that women are this sort of unreliable sloshing-around of hormones and weaknesses. And where I see it come out in the media is, whenever a story pops out that suggests that women are unstable, weak, etc., it immediately becomes a big deal. PMS is a very good example. Now, here is a condition which affects a number of women fairly mildly, but very few women seriously. And yet, PMS became the medical story for a while. It had 30 minutes on *Nightline*. It focused on stories of women who allegedly chopped their lovers to bits in this sort of rage of hormonal imbalance. And I feel that the people who did the cover stories on PMS had no idea why that particular disease was such a big deal. And the reason is that it supports the myth. And the thing that happens with the media is that whenever a member of a minority group or a woman is involved in aberrant behavior, that reflects on the whole group. Whereas the man who walks into the McDonald's and mows everybody down because the burgers are cool is never seen as acting as part of a group. You know, nobody says "Oh my God, it's testosterone poisoning," and you know, "Are we going to let men have guns? They're so unreliable." It's never cast in that way. Yet, whenever there is a story about female weakness, it's always the group weakness.

**RS:** I remember reading things about, like, "How can we let a woman in a high position in business, or government or decision-making, because she may be having her period at that time, and so the hormonal influence would upset her decision-making capacity."

**CR:** That's exactly right. Yet, we never say that while we absolutely know that, you know, our prisons are filled with men who have committed mayhem and chaos, we never ask the question of a man, "Oh, my God, is this guy going to go berserk because his wife turns him down, or is he going to go crazy in some male rage and drop the bomb?" That question is never asked. And it also showed up in the "math genes" controversy. And that came out of a study of sort of talented kids, seventh graders, and these two researchers from Johns Hopkins looked at the results, which showed that

young men were doing much better. And they concluded that it was genetic; that men must just have better math genes. Well, the interesting thing was that the story made huge headlines. What didn't make huge headlines were the critics who came afterward and said, "This is nonsense. You'd have to look at the social environment." And another scientist took those same kids, to follow up, and found that the boys in the study were very much encouraged, and the girls were not. Another interesting fact is that that very same study showed that Asians were in every way superior to white males. But nobody said, you know, "Is there an Asian math gene?" and "Are white men deficient?" So, again, every time a story comes up that suggest weakness, as far as women are concerned, it's always a headline. Whether it's "Mommy track," or you're never going to get married, or you're going to have heart attacks. And again, it's there because of the myth of female weakness.

**RS:** And so, you think this influences the editors in their choice of article, and the writer in the choice of his, or even her...What about a female writer?

**CR:** Absolutely, they do the same thing.

**RS:** They assume the same myth about themselves?

**CR:** Sure, I think it's unconscious. We intuitively think certain things are right, and we don't know why we intuitively think they're right. And a lot of the reasons we think they're right are these mythologies.

### The Myth of Female Strength

**CR:** The other myth, of female strength, is the exact opposite. And it's the myth that somehow, women are so evil, seductive and bewitching, that they are going to... once their power is loosened it's excessive; it can't be controlled. And you see this a lot. I mean, the Hillary Clinton example. The demonization of Hillary Clinton was a stunning example of this. Here's a woman who is probably not very different from a lot of her contemporaries who were bright, went into the professions, did well, and there is this sort of absolute hysteria that somehow, if she gets in the White House, what is she going to do, you know, have a coup? And you take a look at all the language used for first ladies. Kitty Dukakis was called the "Dragon Lady." Rosalyn Carter was the "Steel Magnolia." I mean, it's so bizarre, the idea that women who get near power are somehow going to be uncontrollable. Whereas we don't worry about the men who manipulate presidents. And we look at the record. I mean, you have Ollie North, who, you know, subverted the Constitution. You have Haldeman and Erlichmann, who destroyed Nix-

on's presidency. You have Bobby Baker, who was totally corrupt in Lyndon Johnson's presidency. You know, when you look at the record, it's the President's men who have really done terrible things. The First Ladies have done, you look at their records, you know... Rosalyn Carter helped mental health. Betty Ford tried to help alcoholics. And yet, there's this paranoia and this fear of—let a woman near power and her power will be utterly uncontrollable.

**RS:** And this seems to be a fear...Have you read the book *The Chalice and the Blade*?

**CR:** I haven't read it, although I've read excerpts from it.

**RS:** It deals with how male superiority developed from a time when, perhaps, male and female were equivalent. And carries it from not only pre-historic times, but up through the present day.

### Different Language for Women, for Men

**CR:** There certainly is some evidence that back in the hunter/gatherer days when people didn't have time to waste on domination, there was more equity between the sexes. And that particularly when property and status and power and paternity and a those things came about, there tended to be some changes. But certainly the myth of woman as "the other" and this sort of dreaded power, some people suggest it comes from the power of the mother that adults always remember. There are a lot of roots for it, but it is certainly there. And media coverage of strong women, you start looking at the stories, and you start looking at the language. For instance, the *LA Times* did a profile on Susan Estrich, Mike Dukakis's campaign manager, and they used the words "witchlike," "snotty bitch." They use all this language which you don't see in profiles of men who do the same things.

**RS:** Precisely. When you say that, I remember reading things like that, and noticing even everyday articles, not necessarily on such prominent people, that they use those descriptive terms.

**CR:** Yes, the language is also the language of dread. It's "dragon lady," it's "witch," whereas if you read profiles of men who do the same thing the language is much more admiring. It's "he's really tough," "he kicks ass." I mean, you know, the "Ragin' Cajun," which is the nickname for Bill Clinton's campaign advisor, there is no suggestion that he is hormonally nuts. It's a very admirable term. But, when those terms are used for women, they're always those terms of dread and unnatural and evil.

**RS:** Yet I think that's come...That's why I brought up *The Chalice and the Blade*. She, what was her name, Riane Eisler, is saying that in order for

male supremacy to develop, especially during, say, 2000 years ago, there had to be a concomitant put-down of the female. So that the woman was either weak, as in your example of the Eve story, which is even older than 2000, or when she is strong it's evil strength, rather than good strength.

**CR:** That's right. And I think, you see the language of the modern media. If you went to a reporter and you said, "You believe these things," the reporter, both male and female, would probably laugh and say, "That's nonsense." And yet, you look at their copy and this language and this stuff comes out that reflects those myths still have lots of power. The Anita Hill story, where both of these myths came out at the same time. The senators said either she was this sort of sniveling, hormone-wracked, love-besotted girl, who, 10 years later, was still so in love with Clarence Thomas that she had to find some way to stay attached. Or, she's this steely, Joan of Arc, feminist martyr, who spent her weekends reading cases on pornography, to nail him.

**RS:** Whichever way you look at it she comes out down.

**CR:** Absolutely.

**RS:** Yeah, now that came out during the hearings itself. People were making statements to that effect. Some of the testimony, maybe not quite that language. So, I mean, it wasn't just the media. That took place during the hearings.

**CR:** Yes, and the Senators used, I mean, "the scorned woman," I mean, you know, the language, again, if you listen to the language of the Senators, it was all that language of fear and dread or weakness and instability.

**RS:** I think it was Ellen Goodman who had a column not too long ago, because it's the anniversary of that event, about Anita Hill actually, in the long run, winning, or coming out ahead, because of the spread of effect it had of polarizing or even radicalizing women.

**CR:** You know, what I think I saw on this campus was a lot of young women who had said, "Oh, I'm not a feminist," and who looked at feminism as sort of something that happened 20 years ago, and was about women in combat boots. Then they saw this young woman up there who was just like them, who had done exactly what they were told to do. She made the right networks, she'd gone to the right schools. And she tried to find mentors, and she stayed in touch, even when Clarence Thomas sexually harassed her, she didn't leap up in feminist outrage. She tried to stay in touch, and not to make waves, you know, all along. And she did all the things she was supposed to do. And yet, here she was getting trashed. So, I think they were kind of stunned that this could happen.

## Gender and Lies

**RS:** Okay, so now what other ways, what other media activity or events, I don't know what to label it, do you notice that also affects gender and how gender affects it. You know, there's this kind of yin/yang kind of, or double aspect to it all.

**CR:** Well, another myth that, in fact, I just heard Anita Hill on a panel, it was on C-Span, I think, and I think it's absolutely true, she was saying that one of the things, one of the myths that floats around is that when women are telling tales involving sexuality they are absolutely not to be believed. And I think that is quite true, that when a woman is telling a story about her own sexual experience, she is always suspect. And we saw this with Anita Hill.

**RS:** You mean that she's lying?

**CR:** Yes, that she's essentially lying.

**RS:** No matter what kind of?... Yeah, weird.

**CR:** Take the Palm Beach rape trial. Now, here is a woman who was widely disbelieved. Now, when you look at William Kennedy Smith, here's a man who was accused by three other fairly reliable women of behaving in this fashion. And yet, when you looked at the characterizations of Patty Bowman... the *New York Times* story, for example. The *New York Times* did a profile of Patty Bowman, when it used her name. And it used, a lot of the language it used, it talked about when she was 18 years old she used to ride around in cars, and she was pretty free, and she liked to party. It used all this information in a profile on her. In a profile of William Kennedy Smith it used none of the other information. So that here was the media saying nobody believed Patty Bowman, in essence, when she said she was raped, even though looking at the evidence, it became, when she couldn't remember where she put her pantyhose, remember that? It became enormously damning. The media really picked up on that as if somehow, a woman who couldn't remember where she put her pantyhose must, of course, be lying about being raped. So that, when you look at the stories, the media really trashed her over and implied that "How could this woman be telling the truth? She's this wild-living person." And yet, the stories on William Kennedy Smith, who was at least, certainly, equally suspect, whatever happened down there, were much more respectful.

**RS:** Okay, the difference in the articles, never mind the trial or the outcome, the articles describing these two people were very different.

**CR:** Were absolutely different. They had no compunction in describing her adolescent behavior. Now this is a woman 29, you know, why is it rele-

vant that when she was 18 she drank beer and rode around in convertibles. And yet what was not mentioned in the stories about William Kennedy Smith were some of the allegations about him.

**RS:** Well, they did come out in the newspapers but not at the trial as far as I recall.

**CR:** They were not allowed in the trial, and they only came out in the press when these women came forward. In fact, I happen to know that the media, that reporters knew about these stories about William Kennedy Smith, and didn't print them. Now, why, then, if you know that, are you printing these stories presenting Patty Bowman as this sort of wild, unreliable person, but the stories that came out about William Kennedy Smith were all Mr. Nice Guy? It wasn't until these other women came forward and told their stories with their names attached to them, in public that the media tended to start presenting William Kennedy Smith as something other than this angelic young man. You had the same kind of thing in the rape trial of Mike Tyson. There were a lot of people who simply didn't believe Desiree Washington. A lot of media columns saying, "She shouldn't have done this." Despite the fact we knew that Mike Tyson, when you read about Mike Tyson, had a habit of mauling women in public. So, that's one of the myths that came around: whenever a woman, unless she is a nun, she is considered not to be telling the truth about sexual behavior.

**RS:** If she's a nun she's sort of neutral.

**CR:** Yeah, she's probably telling the truth. If a nun says she was raped she probably was. But there's this mythology that women are always suspect.

**RS:** I'm reminded while we're talking, of the woman reporter, sports-writer, and the Patriots?

**CR:** Lisa Olsen's story.

**RS:** Right.

**CR:** Absolutely.

**RS:** No one was believing her.

**CR:** Nobody was believing her. Not only that, she was getting death threats. She was literally driven out of town. She was literally hounded out of the business.

**RS:** But nobody mentioned, at least I didn't see it, is something like, why reporters, male or female, are allowed in the dressing room. I mean, that was a big thing, women don't belong in the dressing room, you know, so she shouldn't have been there in the first place.

**CR:** That's right, and the idea, I mean, I know a lot of women sports reporters, believe me, they are not going into the dressing room to look at

male genitalia, you know. Most of these women have been in and out of dressing rooms for years. It's not a big turn-on, but there's this myth that somehow the women are in there for sexual kicks. You know, they're in there to do their job. And that always comes out. "Aha! These are evil, sexual women, trying to get their thrills."

**RS:** Are men sportswriters allowed in the women's dressing rooms?

**CR:** Actually, in some of the sports like tennis, for example, where women are big, nobody's allowed in. The players have to come out right away, to meet the press, but nobody's allowed into the dressing rooms. So, the issue is either, you let everybody in, and let's face it, what's the big deal, if a guy's in the dressing room, he wraps a towel around himself you know, if he's shy. Or you just do something sensible and you let them shower, then let them come out.

**RS:** In my experience in dressing rooms, not as a reporter or anything, just being there, men act differently with the absence of women. They swear more and act macho, and of course, that's a sporty crowd to begin with.

**CR:** Yeah, sort of a lot of male bonding behavior.

**RS:** And they'd just as soon not have the women there. Well, some, you know, I'm not talking about younger men, but...

**CR:** Yeah, you see, I think there is a generation gap. I think older men are much more uncomfortable. I think younger men feel, I mean, younger men who have gone to college where they have coed bathrooms and coed showers probably take it in stride, whereas I think there's this real sense, among older men, of some turf violation.

## Media, Myths and Race

**RS:** Yeah, right. What else, in terms of sex, lies and media, can you think of as interesting to our readers? All that you've been talking about I think is fascinating.

**CR:** One of the things that I talk about, in terms of race, one great myth about race goes back to the Calvinist myth that the poor are evil. You remember that it was the Calvinist myth that God shows his favor by granting largesse and punishes sinners by making them poor. And one of the things I find in coverage of the poor is that that kind of language and that kind of assumption is very much alive today. I looked at a couple of recent *Time* and *Newsweek* stories in which... the *Time* story, for example, was a story about black underachievement. And the thrust of the story clearly was that blacks have to do it themselves. They have to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. It was interesting. I looked at the way the reporter deliber-

ately picked quotes from blacks which were saying, "Hey, it's not really racist, you know, we messed up, we have to do it." And while racism was given, it was given a typical set-up/knock-down that the media does. It's the way a reporter knocks down something that has to be mentioned but he doesn't think is true. First you set it up and then you let someone else knock it down. In this case the writer said, "Though it has been suggested that racism is the problem, principal so-and-so said, 'But this is all a black school, 100% black, how can racism be the problem?'" Well, that seems to me to be absurd on the face of it, because it doesn't matter whether it's a black school or not, racism is out there in the society. But what the reporter did was to deliberately choose quotes and everything else, to really say that the failure of black underachievers was due to blacks; that blacks muffed it. And that again goes back to the myth of it's the fault of the poor; it's their fault.

**RS:** And does that dovetail at all with the issue about women being seen as the weaker sex? I mean, is it all women's problem, do they have to fix it themselves, or anything like that, in terms of media presentation?

**CR:** There isn't any kind of "fix," I mean, with women it's just sort of suggested that that's what they are and there's no hope to it. With the poor, since poverty is seen as something that, in a democratic society, shouldn't exist, it seems like the writers have to find somebody to blame so that the affluent don't have to fix it. I suppose it's somewhat similar in gender that if women are hormonally deficient and not so smart then men don't have to make any place for them in corporations, you know, it's the same kind of thing. Men, then, have no responsibility for sexism because sexism is not their fault, it's just that women can't hack it. So, that's somewhat akin to what we're now seeing about blacks and about the poor, that it's not our fault. We affluent have what we have because we are smart, motivated, bright, favored by God. And the poor are where they are because they're slovenly, you know, not too smart, unmotivated, etc.

## Journalism and Objectivity

**RS:** In scientific training, we try to instill objectivity and fairness and balanced viewing of the data and so on. Is there some kind of training like that? I mean, to get rid of our prejudices and biases and myths. What happens for journalists?

**CR:** Well I think that one thing we have to understand is that journalism is an art. It's not a science. And that when a journalist chooses what to lead with, the journalist alters objective reality. The notion that journalists

can be objective in the sense of a double blind study just isn't true. And I think what journalists have to recognize is that they can be fair, they can attempt to understand their biases, but to pretend that they're objective, and that they're free from these biases, is nonsense. They're not. I think they just have to try to understand them.

**RS:** It is hard for us to do. I mean, I feel like I'm in more of an art than a science in the practice of psychotherapy. And it's very hard to keep ourselves neutral or unbiased.

**CR:** It really is, and, in fact, I think the best a journalist can do is to understand that he or she comes in with a set of biases, understand where they come from and then, in that light, try to be as fair as possible. But one of the things that happened in journalism, I think, as journalism moved upscale, as it began to be more a province of the middle class than the working class, it sort of got beyond its old yellow journalism kind of past, and it began to take on the language of science because that sounds respectable. I mean objective sounds so nice and scientific, but it creates, I think, a false idea. This is an art. It's not a science.

**RS:** So a lot of, let's say, newspaper articles that do not have "written by so-and-so," still are written by somebody, and we have no notion as to how much of that is observable fact that 10 other reporters might present, and how much of it is just that one particular individual.

**CR:** And reporters find ways, for example, if you notice in a sort of, "Observers point out, however, that thus and thus and such." That observer is usually the reporter. That's how reporters sneak in opinion in all sorts of ways. And rightly so. I mean, I think if the reporter just goes and says, "John X said this and Mary Smith said this," and reports, you get no context, you get none of the reporter's ability to judge, you know, who's an idiot and who isn't. So, I really think that you take a piece of journalism as the reporter's best effort to tell you the world the way it is, and try to be fair, but to understand that you're getting it filtered through a human intelligence, and a sensibility. And that's inevitable.

**RS:** Well, I hope when your book is published... When will it be coming out?

**CR:** I'm not sure. I'm just actually going to presses at this point. I'm talking to several of them.

**RS:** I hope the *Globe* will not only review it but maybe publish some excerpts of your ideas. I think it needs to be out there. And not just to the journalistic crowd, but to everybody—readers as well as writers.

**CR:** That's right, because I think readers tend to think that when they see something in print it's somehow a product of this robot. And it's not at all.

**RS:** Well, I appreciate very much having this chance to talk with you. Thank you.

**CR:** You're quite welcome. Thank you.

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*This article is reprinted by permission from Family Issues, a publication of the Society for Family Therapy and Research. Mr. Seaman is a psychologist and has a therapy practice in Newton, MA.*



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**Ari Kane, M.Ed., Gender Specialist**



## SICK DAY

Watching the others trudge to the morning bus,  
like linked elephants past my living room windows,  
I danced in my head, great arching leaps, then down,  
en pointe, 12 liquid twirls, to waves of applause.

My mother had called in for me. I was "sick."  
She was gone to work.  
Here was a day without pain.

Up to the drawers, closets, and small hiding spaces.  
Panties from here, a scarf from there, and a skirt rolled up  
At the waist to show just a bit more leg.

Rouge, lipstick, a touch of perfume.  
Dressing, dressing, but never really looking in the mirror.  
Just feeling. At home, comfortable, appropriate.

Not until hours later, when passing a hallway mirror  
I stopped and looked  
And my eyes met, in a new face.

My face.

Then a rush of recognition.  
A big sister? An old friend?

No, me.  
But a me with such a calm, cool, clear sense  
of identity that I stared in disbelief.  
Here was a girl who could do anything.  
Anything? I asked.  
My eyes looked back, understanding and warm like  
a movie doctor.

"Yes," my eyes said, "anything. It is all possible."

I looked and looked.  
Then I looked diving into a cool lake,  
deep into a trackless, welcoming infinity.  
A sense of complete security flooded me,  
a great surge of energy an purpose.  
It was all there.  
I saw it so simple in my eyes.  
In my new face.  
In the person I was.

And the joy was so terrifying  
I ran to put everything away  
and spent the rest of the day in bland and aimless  
activity trying to  
forget what I had just  
seen.

—Chris H., 1989

## HE(LL)AVEN(R)

Her eyes glint  
Yellow orange flame shoots from them  
He beats his body to put them out  
Is enveloped by soft green flame  
Fine white ash falls from him  
He is naked and smooth

At her center a white globe blazes  
Floats upward and stops between  
Eyes covered he runs away  
Enters a room of mirrors  
In his reflection  
Her eyes glint  
Yellow orange flame shoots from them

—Ira Saypen

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## RITE OF PASSAGE: THE SECOND NEW WOMEN'S CONFERENCE (NWC)

by Dallas Denny

It was woman-only space, and nowhere was it more apparent that there were no men about than in the hot tub. Twenty-two naked female bodies, my own included, soaked and splashed and laughed, courting hyperthermia. Women with breasts big and small, skin white and tanned; stomachs flat and paunchy, inclined against the side of the tub, discussing their love lives, their careers, and especially the varied and many paths which had led them to the blood ritual which linked Twenty-One of them, and which had finally brought them here, to this seaside retreat in rural Massachusetts, this weekend in early September.

In all important ways, the Twenty-One were like any other group of socially and politically aware women. The only clue to their commonality, the incredible thing which they had shared, was their voices, which were on the average somewhat lower in pitch than those of other women. Their bodies, their names, their accomplishments, their problems, and even the foods they preferred were indistinguishable from the twenty-second, the lucky one. There between their legs was the Ancient Thing, the inverted V; there on their hips was cellulite; there on their plates were New-Age wonders concocted from straw mushrooms and almonds and whole grains and coconut by Mirabai, the retreat's cook, who was another of the lucky ones.

Mirabai and the twenty-second woman were lucky, because they came about their womanhood by birthright, growing into it logically and naturally, with support of friends and family. The Twenty-One had not had that advantage. They had acquired their womanhood in the face of great adversity, loss, pain, and expense, dedicating years and sometimes decades to the pursuit. And yet they too were lucky ones, for they had reached their goal, had shared the blood ritual, had grown in spirit and personhood because of the adversity. There were too, too many who had not and never would. On Friday night, sitting in a circle, each of the Twenty-One blew out a candle for those who hadn't been so fortunate, who had fallen by the wayside, victims of suicide, of murder, of car accident, of cancer, who had not made it to and through the blood ritual. And then each lit a candle for someone who was just starting out or for someone who had become lost on what has to be one of the most difficult paths for a human being to walk. The room, which had

gradually fallen into darkness and sadness, once again began to lighten as the flames bravely, hopefully, began to burn.

The blood ritual these women shared had taken place individually, often years and thousands of miles apart. Most had been alone, alienated from friends and families, when the blood flowed, and had still been alone when they had awakened, healed in body. Now they were in pursuit of a healing of spirit and mind. Now they were sharing their lifetimes of pain and the triumphs and the difficulties of their lives as women in a patriarchal society. Now, they were ceremonializing the end of the past and the beginning of the future. In a ritual on Sunday morning, the Twenty-One, bound in a soft red twine which symbolized their physical conversion via surgery and the menstrual blood they would forever be denied, formed a circle, welcoming the newest women into the company of those who were almost as new, and those who had been new for decades. The twenty-second woman, a twenty-third, also one of the lucky ones, and a twenty-fourth woman, a physician who was perhaps on the way, but had not yet made the blood sacrifice, looked on in support and wonder as the cord, the red umbilicus, was cut, freeing each participant to go back into the workaday world. Suddenly, there were planes to catch, lawns to mow, deadlines to meet, mountains to move. The conference was over.

I've been describing the Second Annual New Woman's Conference, a meeting of postoperative transsexual women—that is, women who've once been considered by the world to be men, who had had penises, who had experienced what practically everyone at the conference described as “testosterone poisoning.” All had legally and physically and socially become women, and all had paid the price—alienation from friends, estrangement from their parents and children, loss of income, estrogen-related and surgery-related health problems, ridicule and ill-will from strangers. Some were still paying the price, being harassed by those who knew of their past lives, being ignored or snubbed by family and old friends. One had been ejected in 1991 from the 16th Annual Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, under suspicion that she was transsexual (the festival promoters couldn't prove it, and didn't feel the need to; they thought she looked transsexual, and out she went—something which should alarm all but the most feminine “women-born-women” who plan to attend next year's event, for they may find that a panty and ID check won't save them, if they are pegged as transsexual).

The subject of transsexual women in woman-only events is a sticky one. Despite evidence that most women consider transsexual women to be women and do not wish them excluded, a small but vocal minority cry for transsexual disenfranchisement. They are fueled by *The Transsexual*

*Empire*, an incredibly biased and hateful book by Janice Raymond. Raymond's laughable thesis was that transsexualism is a plot by male doctors to manufacture superior women, making “real” women obsolete. This completely ignores the reality that transsexual women will go to whatever lengths they find necessary to achieve feminization, even to the point of blackmailing doctors by threats of suicide or, if all else fails, by operating on themselves with *Gray's Anatomy* in one hand and a kitchen knife in the other. Arguments for transsexual exclusion are often, like Raymond's, logically faulty, ranging from the now-discredited chromosome test (there are considerable numbers of women with XY chromosomal structure), to “male prestige” (something the transsexual person certainly never enjoyed and has just as certainly permanently given up) to lack of menstruation or fertility (criteria which would exclude tens of million of women of childbearing age, and all above or below childbearing age). Unfortunately, such folly is often taken seriously by otherwise intelligent persons.

If transsexual people are discriminated against by the far left, they are shunned and persecuted and sometimes murdered by the far right and by society-at-large, which I sometimes think of as the same thing as the far right. Many transsexual women have trouble finding employment, joining a church, or establishing a circle of nontransgendered friends, so long as people “know.” Being transsexual can be physically dangerous at times; three transsexual women were found murdered in Atlanta last year.

Every transsexual person lives with the reality of being hated for what he or she is rather than what he or she has done. The Twenty-One, sitting in the circle which characterized all of their comings together, discussed how “out” to be, concluding that one does whatever one thinks is right. Some, like Merissa Sherrill Lynn and Anne, who proudly wears a t-shirt with the caption “Sex Change,” are, because of their activism, completely out about their transsexualism; others had been active for a time, eventually distancing themselves as much as possible from their transsexual sisters (but needing to talk and visit with them badly enough to fly or drive across the country to attend the Conference). One was in “stealth mode,” decrying any sort of transsexual activism. The group had no value judgments.

Most Americans tend to think of transsexualism as a new thing, but it is ancient and polycultural. Rena Swifthawk, one of the Twenty-One, is an Ute Indian, a shaman, who had to reintroduce the concept of gender diversity to a tribe whose oral traditions had been decimated in the last century by disease and the U.S. Cavalry. At last year's conference, Rena picked up a burning ember from a campfire and put it in her mouth. Participants saw the inside of her mouth glow as she performed a healing ceremony on a

woman with leukemia, which last year's participants swear is now in remission. This year, one of the Twenty-One, an Episcopalian nun who runs the world's largest and most often accessed AIDS-related computer bulletin board out of her bedroom, conducted a beautiful ceremony by the retreat's waterfall. Rena and Merissa and I found our way to the ocean's edge, where Rena conducted an equally beautiful ceremony, giving Merissa and I and then herself a ritual smudging with sweetgrass and eagle feather as the tide, the blood of Grandmother Earth, came in at our feet.

Modern technology has given us the medical means to help those who don't want and who have never wanted to be men (or women) to transform their bodies, making them very like the bodies of other women (or men). The requirement for attending the Conference—that one have had male-to-female sex reassignment surgery, is one that I find offensive, for it is not penises and vaginas, but our gender identity and role, which gives us our gender. Our society, and transsexual people are no exception, continues to equate manhood and womanhood with penises and vaginas, even though others rarely see our genitals. Many transsexual women are unable, for health or financial reasons, to have surgery; others simply choose not to. They are no less women, and I would have liked to have seen them at this year's Conference. The actual process of surgery provides, like the clitoridectomy or circumcision practiced at adolescence in some cultures, a concrete event on which to "hang" the ritual which was of such importance for the Twenty-One. The surgery is not without complications, and many of the Twenty-One had need of private consultation with a physician, herself transgendered, who visited specifically to help them with surgery-related problems and questions. Those who have had sex reassignment surgery have questions that those who have not will not have; there were frank discussions of dilation (a process required to keep the neovagina open), of orgasm, of douching, of sexual intercourse.

It was politically correct to wear no, or at most minimal, makeup at the New Woman's Conference. Many of the women were out about their lesbianism, others about their bisexuality. Those who were exclusively heterosexual in their new role (i.e., attracted only to men) were a clear minority. Participants were free to be themselves, free to admit and embrace their sexual preferences, free to dress and behave in less than stereotypically feminine ways, free to admit that yes, at one time they had been sexually aroused by crossdressing or had felt moments of pride in being a man. There was no self-consciousness as Merissa and I led voices into low notes with our guitars.

Shorts and tank tops were the order of the day, and physical closeness

the norm. The sexual attraction some of the participants felt towards others was expressed freely; in fact, some of the participants are permanently paired. There was an atmosphere of sisterhood, of belongingness, and I emphatically reiterate that it was woman-only space. No men were present. There were no overriding egos, no talk of things rather than feelings, no rigid imposed structure. The event flowed and ebbed as it would. The participants, all of whom had long histories of telling themselves and of being told by society that they do not belong, did belong, for four glorious days, and I was glad to be one of the twenty-two women who shared in the joy and caring. It was an incredible experience.

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*Dallas Denny is the executive director of AEGIS and a board member of HOAI. The New Woman Conference was a program created by HOAI in 1991 to help New Women (postoperative transsexuals) network and share mutual interests and concerns. For more information, write NWC, PO Box 67, South Berwick, ME 03908.*



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## TRANVESTISM\* AND INSTITUTIONALIZED HOMOSEXUALITY IN NORTH AMERICA

by I. Signorini

From the anthropologist's point of view, North America is undoubtedly one of the most privileged areas of the world because of the wealth of data gathered, during almost five centuries of contact, on the indigenous groups that populated it. This body of information has increased considerably, particularly during the last century, because of the easy access to Amerindian groups in the area, for North American ethnologists right at the doorstep. Proximity has been a determining factor in the development of anthropological research in North America: on one hand, by increasing the number of scholars, attracted by the possibility of doing study in the field, and, on the other, because of the variety of approaches and broadening of knowledge made possible by ease of direct experimentation. One can see the high degree of sophistication of most of the articles on traditional North American cultures by merely scanning any anthropology review: at this stage, the articles are essentially involved in dissecting secondary elements, or even details, often in heated arguments.

In a scientific atmosphere of this kind it is surprising, to say the least, that a typical and highly problematical question such as the presence of different kinds of transvestism and institutionalized homosexuality has been dealt with by so few scholars and also with so little depth. This is an example of the degree to which an ethnocentric and misplaced sense of modesty can create obstacles, even in the most favorable intellectual environment. The appeal Kroeber (1940, p. 209) made to scholars to produce a synthetic work on the subject goes back more than 30 years. His appeal has been practically ignored.

The only deeply committed interpretative work is Baumann's (1950). However, his work was certainly not stimulated by Kroeber's invitation, since the subject was an integral part of the author's field of primary interest: in addition, the problem was dealt with in an ecumenical sphere and in a diachronic perspective.

\*The original wording has been retained throughout this article, although currently the term crossdressing is preferred over transvestism; nonsexist terminology is used to replace "man" when used to mean humans.

Among other works, that of Angelino and Shedd (1955) stands out: however, the interests of the two scholars are not interpretative but instead essentially semantic. Also outstanding are the studies by Downie and Hally (1961) and by Munroe, Whiting and Hally (1969) that attempt to grasp the link between phenomenon and type of culture on a statistical basis. Along with them we may place the two studies by Waxman (1960) and Goldberg (1952). The article written by Oestreich-Lurie (1953) on transvestism among the Winnebago is also interesting, although it does not go beyond the descriptive level.

This last work is added to that long series of data—in many cases nothing more than a mere allusion—that starts with the first contacts and follows analogous accounts about the Mesoamerican and Central American groups, the first ones known, and gradually extends to new peoples after continued exploration and colonization. I realize that it is actually extremely artificial to attempt to crystallize a study on transvestism in America exclusively on the northern subcontinent. The phenomenon is widely diffused and covers both North and South America in a precise spatial continuity: from Chile, along the Andean chain to Central America, to Mesoamerica and from here, branching out toward the north to Alaska. Given the presence of the phenomenon in northeastern Asia, probably it would be better to invert the order in listing the geographical areas of distribution, starting from the north rather than the south. In any case, at least as regards certain manifestations, and bearing in mind what was mentioned previously, a study limited to North America may also be conducted.

The earliest accounts refer to peoples living at the two extremities, southeast and southwest, of what is today the United States. The first, in about 1530, comes to us from Nuñez Cabeça de Vaca (1565); his account makes mention of sodomy and transvestites married to men in groups on the coast of Texas. He considers them impotent effeminate and describes their principal characteristics in a few lines, however with precision and vivacity: woman's dress, woman's work, capacity for bearing heavy burdens, prohibition to carry a bow (1565, p. 324a). This last characteristic is a clear indication that they were recognized as being integrated into the social group of the opposite sex. It also curiously calls to mind the same prohibition in force for the transvestite, recognized as belonging to the female world, clearly pointed out by Clastres (1966) in the case of the Guayakí of Paraguay. The same prohibition to use, bear and, carried to extreme, even touch a bow, was also extended to other North American peoples, and it is mentioned for example by Marquette (1855, pp. 52–53, from Karsch-Haak 1911, p. 327) concerning the Illinois and by Duflot de Mofras (1844, vol. II,

p. 371) from Karsch-Haak 1911, p. 354) about the Tulare valley Indians, that is the Yokuts of California.

The second account, in chronological order practically contemporary with the first, comes to us from the Spanish captain Alarcón and it refers to the Yuma of lower Colorado, visited by him in 1540. It is of great interest because it includes an account that will not reappear in later ethnographical literature on this group and that seems to indicate that transvestism was a definite religious necessity. Having asked an old man who came to him, accompanied by one of his sons in woman's dress, how many individuals of that type there were in the group, the old man replied that there were four and that when one of them died he would be replaced by the first male child born. He also said that these men, obliged to dress as women and do woman's work, were prohibited from having sexual relations with individuals of the opposite sex, but that they were permitted to have relations with unmarried young men. They received no compensation for their services; however they were allowed to support themselves by freely taking anything they needed from others (1565, p. 368b).

Until the 18th century, data on the subject at hand involved, as is logical, essentially the native groups in the eastern part of the United States, from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. Numerous instances come down to us from French authors. In fact, we owe the fable of the "hermaphrodites" to two of them, Rénatus de Laudonnière (1586) and Jacobus Le Moyne de Morges (1591), who describe the customs of the Indians of Florida. This fable will drag on until the 19th century and will stimulate the many writings of philosophers, philologists and historians, marshalled for and against this belief. This is not the proper place for detailed exposition on the polemics and disquisitions that arose among scholars, particularly during the 18th century, even though they may be of great interest because of some surprisingly modern scientific intuitions gleaned from some of them. Naturally, these works are also precious documents for the enrichment of a bibliography on the phenomenon of transvestism and homosexuality in North America, and for a greater knowledge of the fundamental problems and the particular scientific bent of European thought during the 18th century.

However, I would like to call to mind how in 1769 Johann Cornelius de Pauw even wrote a treatise, "Des Hermaphrodites de la Floride," incorporated into his work "Recherches philosophiques sur les Américains ou Mémoires intéressants pour servir à l'Histoire de l'espèce humaine," and how in 1779 Christian Gottlob Heyne dedicated fully a third of his treatment on homosexuality to discrediting de Pauw's thesis, grouping the American

“hermaphrodites” along with manifestations of sexual inversion. Also interesting because of its perspicacity is a work published in 1722 by a Frenchman, Coreal; it deals with his experiences in the New World between 1666 and 1697. He does not consider transvestites hermaphrodites but effeminate that nevertheless—and I quote his words—“en un sens sont des véritables Hermaphrodites” (1722, p. 34, from Karsch-Haak 1911, p. 308). The sense is evidently psychological and social.

With the end of the 18th century, news of the existence of transvestites also comes from the extreme northwest of the continent. It is brought by travelers, explorers and traders from Russia or in the service of Russia in Alaska and in the Aleutian Islands. The Russian term *schupan*, meaning transvestite, is therefore added to hermaphrodite, to berdache, the latter term being applied to the eastern groups and then extended to those on the Plains, to *joya* in the Southwest, and to various others taken from the indigenous languages.

With the progressive penetration of the white people into every region of the continent, the 19th century is rich in accounts of voyages with descriptions of the “aberrant” customs of the natives. Thus the unusual manifestations of transvestism on the Plains become a part of literature. The 19th century is also the century of treatises, in the presumptuous conviction of being able to offer total, true and irreversible solutions to every problem. The great development of scientific knowledge in fact leads our culture to fetishistic overestimation of this knowledge, almost as though it were charismatic. The consequence of this was the excessive inflation of ethnocentrism, until that time held to positions of acceptable “normality.” A clear expression of it is the evolutionary theory applied to the field of anthropology, with its evolutive scale in fixed stages, mechanistically determined and arranged according to an order that is the expression of an a priori evaluation of the superiority of our culture. This obviously conditions an opposite evaluation of the culture of others, but at the same time, almost because of a sense of insecurity, seeks in the opposite evaluation, in a vicious circle, the confirmation of the assumption of superiority. The more different, the more inferior, becomes the dogmatic rule. The frequency of homosexual manifestations, their public character, in some cases even their obligatoriness, the lack of sanctions, all are considered signs of a spiritual abomination that can only be the expression of a stage of barbarism, of a lower degree of evolution. This is the position of the majority of scholars, and an illustration for all of them is that, for example, of Letourneau (1887) who explains the widespread diffusion of homosexuality in “primitive” societies with the fact that the less a society’s concepts of morality are developed, the less importance that society attributes to the differences between the sexes and their

functions. Therefore, certain acts that are sanctioned by our “civilized” society are not in “primitive” societies, halted at lower evolutionary states, nearer to the animal world from which humanity springs. The presence of homosexuality in cultured societies would therefore be seen as a survival or rather, as Letourneau says, as “retours ataviques vers les instincts sauvages” (1887, p. 408).

The same horror, producing the most cruel sanctions, may also be found in the writings of authors in the preceding centuries, who were also conditioned by the Judeo-Christian tradition that sees in homosexuality one of the most horrible sins and therefore crimes. However, there is also a form of modesty in 19th century writings that in many cases even prohibits mention of the subject, even in reports that are extremely detailed in other areas. In some cases it results in expression so veiled as to leave the reader often in doubt as regards interpretation. Expressions such as “extreme lasciviousness,” “customs that modesty prevents describing” are rather common and contrast with the ancient expressions that are always clear, even when the specific term is not used: for example, “vicio immundo,” “pecado nefando,” “abominable officio,” “unnatural filthiness to be punished with death,” and so on.

Another difference consists in the fact that the culturally conditioned negative emotional reaction is used to found scientific theories, as I mentioned above, concerning the superiority of one culture over another. In earlier times, instead, execration was basically directed toward customs believed to be the result of the evil arts of the devil, given free rein by the lack of knowledge of the true faith among those groups which practiced them: therefore, these customs could be corrected, and without inferring from all of this criteria of global superiority or inferiority among cultures.

In the 19th century we also have a school of scholars that considers homosexuality a physical and psychic pathological phenomenon, by some naively held to be dependent on the climatic and environmental factor (De La Salle 1814, p. 238, from Karsch-Haak 1911, p. 310). Nor are interpretations of a psychological type lacking. Von Gagern (1808, p. 283, from Karsch-Haak 1911, p. 317), for example, is a precursor of the cultural “values,” connecting the homosexuality of the “uncultured” Americans with that of the “refined” Greeks because both are the fruit of cultures characterized by an over-evaluation of the male, with consequent relegation of the female and the bonds of marriage in comparison to [male] friendship, to an inferior position.

Von Schlagintweit (1876, p. 113, from Karsch-Haak 1911, p. 320) instead traces North American transvestism back to the male’s contempt for

all "true" work, this being proper to the female. Therefore, a man who works is considered a woman and is forced to live as if he were one.

Finally, there are also scholars that begin to recognize the phenomenon of homosexuality as universal and not tied to individual cultures or evolutionary stages. Thus we find a Döllinger who in his "Heidentum and Judentum" (1857, p. 658, from Karsch-Haak 1911, p. 40) affirms that cultural level has no bearing on the frequency of the phenomenon, but only on its exterior forms. This is already a great step forward, even though it does not yet deal with the problems connected with its particular manifestations such as transvestism in North America, the subject of interest here. In a certain sense the same position (all individual manifestations attributed to homosexual instincts alone) is found in what can rightly be considered the most valuable of the works, from the point of view of bibliographical research, in the field of descriptive and comparative literature on homosexual manifestations worldwide. I refer to "Das Gleichgeschlechtliche Leben der Naturvölker" by Karsch-Haak (1911). However, with this scholar we are already in the 20th century, and alongside the ambitiously planned treatises in the search for total solutions to human events, there are also particular studies or reports on the phenomenon among single groups. There are not many of them and will not be in the future, even today, for the reasons mentioned at the beginning of my exposition. Moreover, these works are also rather poor in content and often not even thorough on a descriptive level. One of them nonetheless merits particular mention because of its breadth and because it is the result of careful fieldwork: the work is "Institutionalized Homosexuality of the Mohave Indians" by Devereux (1937). It is of considerable value even if its ethno-psychiatric approach ends up by giving a decidedly unilateral interpretative picture of the phenomenon, excluding from the analysis connections with religious concepts, among other things. However, these connections shine through the scanty references to ritual and mythology, and for these we do possess some precise indications for the groups in the area he studied. transvestism is seen by this scholar as merely a means contrived by society to integrate the abnormal tendencies of some individuals with the result that "It deprived certain modes of atypical behavior of the glamor of secrecy and sin and of the aureola of persecution" (1937, p. 520). In any case, the interpretations offered by Benedict (1959, pp. 262-265), Mirsky (1966, pp. 416-417), and Hoebel (1949, p. 459) are not much different.

Clearly a work of interest, because of its novel approach and the deepness with which the subject is treated, is the already mentioned study by Baumann "Der Kultische Geschlechtswandel bei Naturvölker" (1950),

which the author then re-elaborated and incorporated in a broader sphere in his work "Das doppelte Geschlecht" (1955). Whether or not one accepts his thesis, this work is too important to be neglected. This notwithstanding, it is never referred to by North American scholars, the only ones that have dealt with the problem, as regards America, over the last 30 years. This is probably due to a somewhat snobbish attitude on their part, that has now become the norm, vis-à-vis continental European production (with the reluctant exclusion of the French), with the certainly not positive result of neglecting it completely at times.<sup>1</sup>

Baumann distinguishes three forms of transvestism. The first has an exclusively sexual basis and is the product of the presence in every society of a certain number of homosexuals or hermaphrodites. The second, which he defines "spontaneous," is not connected with sexual anomalies, but has the aim—by means of dress, taken as a projection of the body and thus the essence of the qualities of the wearer—of completing the male ego with the female one "...nicht nur, um sich einem Zustand, einer Person, einem Gott anzupassen, sondern auch um die eigene Wirkungsmächtigkeit durch Vereinigung des Weiblichen und des Männlichen zu erhöhen" (1950, p. 18).<sup>2</sup> According to Baumann, this type of transvestism is characteristic of the most archaic agricultural cultures that are expressed on a religious level by means of a mythology centered on the figure of the twins and on a social level in a division of the community into two parts supported conceptually by its own body of myths.<sup>3</sup> The figure of a bisexual god does not yet appear in those cultures; by means of androgynous myths, the bisexual god surpasses the conceptual system of dualistic oppositions—even of the most complex type (sky-earth opposition) widely diffused in the most recent agricultural cultures—regarding the nature of the cosmos and of humans. It is in this other cultural horizon, which he defines as the "älteren Hochkulturen" (1950, pp. 25-39), that we find the third type of transvestism, cultural transvestism. It is tied to priesthood and to religious heterosexual or homosexual prostitution, intended as a means of adapting oneself to the bisexuality of the god.<sup>4</sup> This type of transvestism developed in the Mediterranean and the Near East and in southern Asia, and it is therefore in those areas that it is most evident, greatly influencing adjacent zones (north-central Africa, Indonesia). As far as America is concerned, Baumann limits himself to indicating precise data for only two peoples, the Pueblos and the Araucanians (1950, p. 32), among whom the combination of transvestism and bisexual gods is found, while for the other peoples cited he simply records the presence of transvestism on the basis of the scanty reports of the past. After having previously affirmed that this kind of transvestism in America is also



connected with the presence and the influence of advanced cultures, he curiously neglects them in his survey, and simply mentions the fact that transvestites are recollected both in the Andean and in the Mesoamerican areas and that in North America the clearest forms of transvestism appear in the territory of influence of the latter (Pueblo, California, Plains).<sup>5</sup> And yet in the Mesoamerican and Andean advanced cultures there are many elements to support his theory. It is sufficient to consider the Aztec pantheon and its various gods, each having its own pendant of a different sex and intended as sectorialized projections of the prime duality, Omoteotl; of the existence of a god of homosexuality and its founder (for example, the god Chin among the Mayas of Verapaz); of the many religious aspects in Mesoamerican transvestism that will become an object of persecution by the Aztecs only in the final epoch; of the temples on the Central Andean Highlands cared for by priests who were forced into religious prostitution.

Baumann's thesis is somewhat exaggerated and heavy mainly because of a certain rigidity in the schemes resulting from the culture historical approach, but on the whole it stands up well to criticism and in any case illustrates how interpretations of the clinical or psychologist type or that consider the phenomenon only from the point of view of social integration cannot alone solve the problem.

One point in his theory that appears to be in contrast with the results of recent studies is the affirmation that transvestism is found only rarely in the lower hunting and gathering societies. This is *because* the division of labor between the sexes (men hunters, women gatherers) creates a climate of cooperation that does not permit the rise of the antagonism that characterizes relations between the sexes in more "recent" cultures and stimulates the presence of those practices and rites held capable of reconstituting the original bisexual being (1950, p. 34). The statistical analysis of Munroe, Whiting and Hally (1969), that goes back to and enlarges upon a previous study by Downie and Hally (1961), illustrates in fact how transvestism tends instead to be much more frequent among those groups in which the sex element is not at the basis of social and economic distinctions, so that the predisposed individual may slide toward the other sex, becoming a transvestite, without this involving great, dramatic changes. The results of the analysis made by the authors of the essay are therefore in contrast with the interpretations of transvestism as a permissible way out, by societies having extremely demanding male roles, for their own members who feel incapable of dealing with them. Therefore, although they are not referring to Baumann, whom they do not know in any case, their criticism also touches this scholar indirectly.

However, it must be kept in mind that the criteria of evaluation on the antagonism between the sexes are not exactly the same for Baumann and for Munroe, Whiting and Hally. In addition, the latter do not distinguish among the various types of transvestism and do not examine (at least as far as appears from the list presented in their article) those societies in which cultural transvestism developed to a high degree, in particular the advanced cultures in the Mediterranean basin and, in America, those in the Mesoamerican and Andean areas.

An entirely separate work because of its objectives is that of Angelino and Shedd (1955): the authors' interest is not interpretative but essentially semantic. In fact they intend to establish and formulate a concept of berdache that would prevent the varied and often indiscriminate use that has been made in literature of the term as a synonym for homosexuality, transvestism, hermaphroditism and effeminacy. Their starting point is that while for the French, who first used the word, berdache meant a passive homosexual in woman's dress, later it was extended to male nontransvestite prostitutes, to heterosexual transvestites, to "institutionalized" transvestite homosexuals and even to prisoners of war forced to assume female dress, role and status. Considering this state of conceptual confusion and after having criticized and refused any characterization of the berdache founded on exclusively sexual or psychological factors or limited to the simple crossdressing, Angelino and Shedd set forth their definition according to which a berdache is "an individual of a definite physiological sex (male or female) who assumes the role and status of the opposite sex and who is viewed by the community as being of one sex physiologically but as having assumed the role and status of the opposite sex" (1955, p. 125). Should one wish to specify his particular sexual qualification, this will have to be accomplished by means of apposition of a specific adjective (heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual). According to Angelino and Shedd, berdache and transvestism are not therefore synonymous because the change of role and status that the definition requires in the case of the berdache implies much more than simple crossdressing. A berdache is always a transvestite, while a transvestite is not always a berdache.

Although a critical reexamination of the terminology and of the use that has been made of it may be necessary and useful, the article by Angelino and Shedd is of limited interest since in this case the disquisitions of semantic order result in very scanty contributions on the interpretative level. On the whole the definition is too restrictive as regards the general picture of the phenomenon of transvestism in North America since it leaves a certain number of cases uncovered: at the same time the definition is inadequate

since it requires an additional qualification each time) specification of the sexual tendency). In addition, in the case of the qualification "heterosexual," it seems to me that this is opposed to the requisite of full integration into the role and status of the opposite sex, as conceived by the two authors. In any case, it is precisely sexual ambiguity that is publicly manifested by wearing clothes of the opposite sex and that in turn enables the transvestite to attain his own social recognition. This is basically expressed under the form of consideration and respect because it is believed that the transvestite possesses qualities superior to those of a normal individual or at least particular qualities superior to those of a normal individual or at least particular qualities that society needs for its own ends.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, cases of institutionalized transvestism of the heterosexual type should be reexamined and thoroughly investigated individually in the light of a more vast documentation both as regards heterosexuality, which perhaps may not be absolute, and as regards the function of the transvestite in the society considered. For example, the Omaha transvestite should be classified as a heterosexual type merely on the basis of an account cited by Fletcher and La Flesche (1970, pp. 132–133): it relates the story of a warrior who became a transvestite (*mixu'ga*) after having heard the words revealing his true nature spoken to him by a bird while he was celebrating one of his glorious war feats, married a woman and had children by her. However, the data available is too scanty to make a positive statement of this kind. Whether the individual also had homosexual relations, how transvestism was rationalized among the Omaha, and what functions the transvestite had in society were not mentioned. In addition, not a word was said to connect him with those of the neighboring groups (among the related Oto, for example, "all" the *mixo'ge* came from the Moose clan (Whitman, 1969, p. 50) or to consider him in relation to the ideological context of the Omaha culture, which could supply the reason. The latter displays cosmological conception in which the transvestite with his sexual duplicity fits in well: a sky (above, male)—earth (below, female) dualism that set its mark on everything, including the social organization given to it by men, divided into two exogamous halves, and directed toward the repetition of the mythical coupling between people of the sky and of the earth, the founding act of humanity, and therefore to reintegrate in a certain sense the initial unity in the *coincidentia oppositorum*.

In any case, if Baumann's interpretation is correct, the sexual tendency of the transvestite becomes less important. As Eliade (1971, p. 106) states, the union between the sexes that the transvestite attempts to express may be only symbolical or the bisexuality may instead be expressed ritually and

consequently concretely. Between the two extremes there is naturally a full range of intermediate types. The end however is always to reach "totality" and therefore the means utilized must be kept distinct from the aim pursued. On the other hand, it is also understandable how in societies where the institution of transvestism exists, in addition to the individuals destined by society itself to assume the role of a transvestite, others tend toward it. This occurs since, because of the prestige usually enjoyed by the figure of the transvestite, they see in transvestism the possibility of attaining a satisfactory social status, otherwise difficult or impossible within the scope of one's own sex. In some cases this may also involve "normal" individuals from a sexual point of view; varying from case to case, they may or may not adapt themselves to playing the role of the opposite sex erotically as well. However, it is obvious that in the majority of cases all those who have homosexual tendencies will find a safe refuge in transvestism.

Finally, one must keep in mind that certain, even substantial differences encountered in transvestism as it exists among the various groups where it is found and that concern both its form and contents, are due to the fact that transvestism is a cultural element like any other. Therefore it spreads, and it is natural that during this process it may be integrated in ways that make it differ considerably from the way it was in the diffusing group.

In conclusion, it seems to me that actually the essential fact on which the attention of the scholar must concentrate is the very presence of the institution of transvestism which we know is widely diffused in North America, and that this phenomenon which so shocked European observers from the first contacts because of its extraneity to Western culture, on the whole has its own unity apart from the internal variants that must be studied case by case from both the point of view of their structure and function, and eventually of their historical genesis.

Before concluding this brief survey on the problem of North American transvestism and the studies conducted on the subject, I would like to call to mind an aspect that I believe merits more attention that it has received to date. I refer to the link between transvestism and good luck that has been mentioned by various authors, but only limited to the fact that the transvestite is often considered a lucky individual by members of his group; this because his "duplicity" permits him to move freely, with considerable economic advantage, both in male and female labors and occupations, or at least to carry out female ones with greater strength and success. However, another aspect emerges from some reports, that is the position of the transvestite as a talisman (see, for example Lisiansky (1844, p. 199, from Karsch-Haak 1911, p. 285) regarding the Kodiak Eskimos). His sexual

abnormality is considered a "sign" of a particular magical or religious power, of a positive relationship with the supernatural, spreading good, in the same way as some physical malformations (hunchback, etc.) or mental lack of balance (madness, epilepsy, capacity for trance).

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>This attitude was determined basically by the fossilization of the German school, the most numerous and important on antiquated theoretical and methodological positions that in most cases justify the sometimes serious accusations of provincialism and sterility. Even if some of the judgments are decidedly excessive, Turner (1970, pp. 419–420), for example, writes "...the theoretical apparatus provided by the (German) University training of the students is so antiquated, provincial and reactionary by the standard of French, British and U.S. anthropology that they are prepared to raise significant questions in relation to the data available to them." The German school may be criticized of many things: however, to reach the point of refusing to acknowledge any merit or denying that there are or have been any valid contributions is far from the reality of things. In addition, it seems to me that the assumption of a position of indiscriminate prejudice, particularly when considered in the light of a so frequent, notorious ignorance of any foreign language, may easily, and with some reason, revert the accusation of provincialism against the accusers.

<sup>2</sup>"...not only to adapt oneself to a situation, a person, a god, but to augment one's own operative powers by means of joining the male and female principles."

<sup>3</sup>Most of the cases regarding Africa interpreted by Gluckman in an exclusively sociological key and placed at the basis of his category of "rites of rebellion" (1955, p. 109ff) are of this type. The interpretation of Eliade (1971) is along the same lines as Baumann's. He speaks of androgyny as the "...caratteristica della totalità originaria nella quale tutte le possibilità si trovano riunite..." (...characteristic of the original totality in which all possibilities are found united...) (1971, p. 101) and of intersexual transvestitism and ritual androgyny as "...restaurazione simbolica del caos... ritorno all'indistinto [che] si traduce in una suprema rigenerazione, in un prodigioso aumento di potenza" (...symbolic restoration of chaos... return to the indistinct, that is transformed into a supreme regeneration, into a prodigious increase of power) (1971, p. 104), or as "riti o teniche mistiche di reintegrazione" rites or mystical techniques of reintegration) (1971, p. 99).

<sup>4</sup>Baumann's thought as regards this may be summarized in his sentence,

"Der rituelle Geschlechtswechsel ist gewissermassen eine extreme Konsequenzbildung alter einfacheren Kultravestitischen Bräuche" (1950, p. 14).

<sup>5</sup>Baumann does not mention transvestitism in the extreme north (Kodiak Aleutians, Northwest), but in another section of his work he says he considers the circumpacific area the zone of greatest concentration of the phenomenon (1950, p. 14).

<sup>6</sup>The frequent transvestitism-shamanism combination is an example of this. A different interpretation of this relationship, that however goes back to a theme developed in the past by Sternberg (1925), was recently offered by Bleibtreu-Ehrenberg (1970). It links the transvestitism of the shaman to the type of shamanism called possession shamanism in which the relationship with a personal protecting spirit is conceived as a love union. The shaman is forced by the male spirit to change himself into a woman in order to have sexual relations with him. Transvestitism would also be determined by the belief in possession by a female god or in identification with her. Where shamanism has fallen into disuse as a form of religion, some of its particular elements may have then favored the formation of a class of male prostitutes.

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*The above article appeared in the Proceedings of the 40th International Congress of Numismatology, Volume II, Sept. 1972. The information and sources are well researched, and we find it remarkable that it was published, primarily in an ancient coin collectors' group. Hopefully it will be a good resource for their readership.*

## THE CAPE

Lengthening shadows cross the cape  
 Distort the border of land and life  
 Like jewels caught by the world at its nape  
 We struggle with all our might

An angry arm of land against the sea  
 Yields light and color to the dancing day  
 With waltzing shadows to outline mystery  
 Wind keeps night from going astray

In this place, two embrace and change  
 In a mix of color and whirl of gowns  
 It's hard to tell the husband from the wife  
 And decide which beauty is to crowned  
 With small faint stars neatly placed  
 And dusk with borders tightly laced

—Ira Saypen



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## CLAIMING THE RIGHT TO LOVE CAMILLE\*

by M. S. Kennedy

I've been waiting for 20 years for someone like Camille Paglia to come along, but now that she has, a hailstorm of politically correct orthodoxy makes appreciating her difficult. Ironically, to use a term of feminism on feminists, one has to "break a silence" even to say her name.

This volcanically opinionated critic of literature and culture burst upon the scene two years ago with the publication of her daring book, full of rock'n'roll energy and crazy scholarship, *Sexual Personae*. Simultaneously, she made the undeniably narcissistic character of Camille Paglia herself into a media supernova, endlessly and wildly bragging about herself in print and on television. Trapped, though bubblingly, inside her books, the written version is more palatable than the public personality Camille. And, although she claims to be a feminist herself ("My feminism stresses courage, independence, self-reliance and pride"), one who even passed through the more traditional, doctrinaire phases of feminism years ago, she is one of the first women to boldly, irreverently criticize, mock and even ruthlessly satirize some of the sacred cows of the movement—both the ideas, and the actual heroines of its ideology. Offended women, who have never read a word of her extremely original prose, hate her on principle. But isn't it odd that, while feminists apparently prize independence of thought and subversiveness, they can't stand it when it's turned on them?

Shielding my head with a steel umbrella to say so, I think it's high time someone (and it had to be a woman, by the way) was brave enough to question some of the tenets that have been repeated to soberly nodding heads these last two decades: ideas that have been treated both as if they were sinewy and solid, and yet too fragile to bear being challenged.

Iconoclastic Camille reminds me of a giant, a guy giant. She admits to strongly androgynous urges, and an earlier desire actually to be a man (Oh, male identified! Yes, that's right!) Something so annoying in feminism is the way one is always running into its tut-tut! interdictions, and part of the fun of Camille is her refusal to think and do what she's told by other women. This giant has gobbled up a library, had a terrible stomach ache, and vomited up books and rocks and thoughts and ideas in a new way. It's

\*In a previous issue of *JGS* (XIV #1) we reviewed *Sexual Personae*. Here we present another critique of the work and its author, Camille Paglia.

exhilarating that she's so full of intellectual information, but information that's wildly absorbed and crazily spewed forth, rather than put forth to a limited audience of academics (another group she mocked for being "ninnies, tyrants, and pedants" in a *New York Times* book review). She's got the intellectual goods to write about Walter Pater, Whitman, Emily Dickinson, the Greeks, Byron, Shakespeare, Henry James, side by side with Elvis and Madonna. A major theme running through her book is the interplay and opposition between the Dionysian spirit—earthy, unruly, passion-driven—and the Apollonian spirit of reason, coolness and intellectual purity. Often, both themes are working at once. Take Emily Dickinson, that sparrow of spinsterly sparseness. Her poems, as Camille demonstrates, combine the romantic, Wordsworthian aspect that is her more familiar aspect with the Sadean (from DeSade) spirit of blood and guts. "The brutality of the belle of Amherst would stop a truck," Paglia writes. "Her fractures, crippling, impalements, and amputations are Dionysian disorderings of the stable structures of the Apollonian lawgivers."

This, to put it mildly, is not the theme of "woman-as-victim" that is so common. Nor is it Woman as Carol Gilligan describes Her, everlastingly the giver of "care." One of the fascinating ironies in the development of feminism has been the way that a certain image of women that was violently, too violently, repudiated in the late '60's has been reconsecrated in the "Different Voice" theory which claims that women are good and loving by nature. Once that image was seen as limiting, a lie; now it's holy writ. Well, Camille isn't having any of it! Rather than operating safely from inside any of the established discourses of feminism (they may be different from each other, but they are all equally protective of themselves, and equally uninviting of criticism), she has dive-bombed down from her own personal Mars to crash both into the contents and into the containing package. In keeping with her own avowed androgynous spirit, she brings to mind Falstaff, Rabelais, Swift, sometimes madly messy and overwrought, sometimes sharp and incisive. She's also slung an abundance of slang and '60's looseness (she howlingly laments the passing of that decade's pervasive spirit) into the brew, mixing her lofty intellectual notions with the chewing gum of everyday talk. The one woman of the women's movement she does recall is Germaine Greer, another daring madwoman. She, however, has disappointed Paglia; "All right. Here's something: Germaine Greer. What a loss. What a loss! If she had stayed on her original track, all of feminism would have been different. She was sophisticated, sexy, literate. What happened to her? After three years, she turned into this drone, this whining 'Woe is me, all the problems of the world!' Something went wrong in feminism."

Paglia goes way beyond the usual "sex role" or "sex-role stereotype" talk, leaning so far away from the conventional feminist wisdom that she sometimes ends up—in a very, very different voice—upholding old ideas discredited by feminists for ages. Paglia, from her own radicalism, indeed it's a much reviled radicalism, even questions the popularly accepted notion that women are as strong as men. She is not against motherhood of a highly mother-and-child-connected sort that's put before careers (even though she isn't a mother herself); she is an avowedly jumbled and evolving incarnation of the bisexual. Camille also wants to reinstate Freud, at least some of Freud, and lambastes the antipsychologic way that he was reduced to being merely the inventor of penis envy in the '60's by Kate Millet and company, and banished from existence by people who knew nothing of the complexity of his ideas behind that admitted outdated one.

And she loathes what she sees as feminism's "repressive" hatred of beauty. Mockingly as ever, she describes a lecture-slideshow given by one Diana Fuss from Princeton criticizing the imagery of women conveyed in advertising. Camille admits that she was an obstreperous member of the audience as she watched and sighed: "I was writhing in my seat (imitates electrocution-like spasms). It was awful. There was a Revlon ad of a woman in a blue pool of water, and she was beautifully made up, and there was obviously a reflector being used to shine the sunlight, especially intensely on her face. This was a beautiful ad. And Diana Fuss was going 'decapitation, mutilation.' Then there was another picture of a black woman wearing a crimson turtleneck pulled up around her chin. It was very beautiful. It was like a flower. And she was wearing aviator glasses... Now, Diana Fuss said 'She's blinded.' I would have said 'She has mystic vision.' Anyway, with the turtleneck, what do you think? 'Strangulation, bondage.' It went on like this picture after picture. I thought, 'This is psychotic.'"

She also appreciates, and in many surprising places in her academic work, the rolling energy that rock'n'roll has brought to the world and deplores the emphasis on such dismissings as "the sexism of Mick Jagger," etc., at the expense of its wonderful Dionysianism.

Moreover, and more unpopularity, Paglia, given that she believes in the positive power of sex, is dismayed to see the degree to which date rape (which she believes does exist, just not to the extent that it has developed) has taken over the discourse on relationships. "Lust should be a positive force," she declares. "It should not be something that men are directing toward us—'Yuk! Pooh!'"

Not surprisingly, she defends pornography in a wonderfully funny article in *Playboy* (yes, *Playboy!*), where she took to task two of the biggest

stars on the antipornography circuit, who happen to fit nicely into the categories of the Dionysian (Andrea Dworkin) and the Apollonian (Katherine MacKinnon)—both of whom she very humorously loathes. It's fascinating the way this modern Mutt and Jeff (and, echoing Camille, I will claim my right to compare two women to two men) combination comes tilting at pornography from totally opposite positions, viewpoints, styles. The one so cool, crisp and rational and classy, the other so slobbish, crazy and out of control.

She has this to say on the subject: "Pornography lets the body live in pagan glory, the lush, disorderly fullness of the flesh. When it defines man as the enemy, feminism is alienating women from their own bodies. MacKinnon never deals with woman as mother, lover, or whore. Snuff films are her puritan hallucinations of hellfire."

MacKinnon and Dworkin's positions, even in the face of her excoriations, could be in fact, stronger and more meaningful for being pummeled, satirized, attacked, I would say, if only the world would accord Paglia a place, however outrageous, of validity. Look at politicians; they are viciously criticized and caricatured all the time. It's a sign of strength and daring that there can be other viewpoints, and the suggestion of other valid values. Camille certainly has her fans (as she'll be the first to admit), and also her attackers (she takes a somewhat martyred position on this). She is probably the most famous academic person at this moment making enormous declarations from a not very famous university. She's also one of the most notorious ones to leap out of the cake of learning and into the media (this is not Carl Sagan politely selling the cosmos on Channel 2). And that's part, but only part, of her charm for me.

There's been plenty of anger from feminists over the last 20 years, but this is a far more vivifying anger. Except for infighting, there hasn't been half enough criticism of feminists or feminism. Here comes Daffy Duck, Puss in Boots, the Pink Panther, naughty, mischievous and excoriating. (I'll take a pint of Paglia blood and permit myself to use male animals as the models for admiration.) I like to see that in a member of my, as they say, "gender." But, of course, I'm not allowed to like her.

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*This article is reprinted by permission from Family Issues, a publication of the Society for Family Therapy and Research. Ms. Kennedy is a well-known freelance writer on important social issues in the U.S.*

## THE MOUNTAIN

On the crusted snow  
 Tiny jewels flash the sun's message  
 Cliffs and overhangs use icicles  
 As rhinestone accessories  
 The bearded and ruddy pines  
 Wear downy white lace  
 Puffs of snow and pine needles  
 Form frozen blossoms  
 That swell out from  
 Crystal encrusted bark  
 Even at the peak  
 Where the pines become  
 Dwarfed and sparse  
 They wear their sequined coats  
 Like majorettes out of step

The mountain wears winter  
 Like a disguise  
 A change of gender

—Ira Saypen



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## MEN'S BOOKS

### Primer on the Men's Movement Through Books

by Gordon Clay

**T**his primer looks at the four major segments of the men's movement and 25 of the 100+ men's issues through the books written about each subject. This information has been garnered from a review of over 1600 books published since 1958 covering more than 100 men's issues. Some important out-of-print books are included because of their historical value and can often be found in used bookstores. This information was gathered from three main sources: the rather extensive library at the National Men's Resource Center and two bibliographies, one put together by the Men's Study Task Group of the National Organization for Men Against Sexism and the other a book entitled *Men's Studies: A Selected and Annotated Interdisciplinary Bibliography* by Eugene August, published in 1985.

#### **Pro-Feminist**

- For Men Against Sexism*, anthology
- The Forty-Nine Percent Majority: The Male Sex Role*, Deborah David & Robert Brannon
- The Making of Masculinities*, Harry Brod
- A Male Guide to Women's Liberation*, Gene Marine
- The Male Machine*, Marc Fasteau
- A Mensch Among Men*, Harry Brod
- Myth of Masculinity*, Joseph Pleck
- Refusing to Be a Man*, John Stoltenberg
- Unbecoming Men*, anthology

#### **Men's/Fathers' Rights**

- The Hazards of Being Male*, Herb Goldberg
- The Manipulated Man*, Ester Vilar
- Men Freeing Men*, anthology ed Francis Baumli
- The Myth of the Monstrous Male & Other Feminist Fables*, John Gordon
- The Other Side of the Coin*, Roy Schenk
- Why Men Are the Way They Are*, Warren Farrell



### Mythopoetic

*Iron John*, Robert Bly  
*The Phallic Quest*, James Wylie  
*Pigs Eat Wolves*, Charles Bates  
*Puer Aeternus*, Marie-Louise Von Franz  
*Puer Papers*, James Hillman  
*To Be a Man*, ed Keith Thompson

### Men's Recovery

*At My Father's Wedding*, John Lee  
*Catching Fire: Men Coming Alive in Recovery*, Merle Fossum  
*Codependences' Guide to the Twelve Steps*, Melody Beattie  
*Healing the Child Within*, and *A Gift to Myself* workbook, both by Charles Whitfield  
*Men Speak Out: In the Heart of Men's Recovery*, David Lenfest  
*Mirrors for Men*, Charles Bates

### Important Men's Issues

#### Abuse

*Breaking Free* workbook, Pia Mellody & Andrea Wells Miller  
*Facing Co-Dependence*, Pia Mellody & Andrea Wells Miller

#### Anger

*The Anger Puzzle*, Betty Doty & Pat Rooney  
*Freedom from Anger* and workbook, Roger Daldrup & Dobie Gust  
*Learning to Live Without Violence*, Daniel Sonkin & Michael Durphy

#### Circumcision

*Circumcision: What Every Parent Should Know*, Anne Briggs  
*Circumcision: What It Does*, Billy Ray Boyd

#### Divorce

*Divorced Father: Coping with Problems, Creating Solutions*, Gerald Hill  
*Divorce Happens to the Nicest Kids: A Self-Help Book for Kids 3-15 & Adults*, Ed Robert Peters  
*Joint Custody Handbook*, ed Miriam Cohen  
*Second Chances: Men, Women & Children, A Decade After Divorce*, Judith Wallerstein & Sandra Blakeslee  
*Stepfathering: Advice on Creating a New Family*, Mark Rosin

### Ecology

*Thinking Like a Mountain*, John Seed, Joanna Macy, Pat Fleming, Arnee Naess

### Family

*The Fathers' Almanac*, Adams Sullivan Fathers & Sons, Lewis Yablonsky  
*How to Father a Successful Daughter*, Nicky Marone  
*The Intimate Circle: The Sexual Dynamics of the Family*, Miriam & Otto Ehrenberg  
*Men & Abortion: Losses, Lessons & Loves*, Arthur Shostak & Gary McLouth  
*The Nurturing Father*, Kyle Prueit  
*The One Minute Father*, Spencer Johnson  
*The Wounded Woman*, Linda Leonard

### Friendship

*Just Friends*, Lillian Rubin  
*Men & Friendship*, Stuart Miller  
*Men Without Friends*, David Smith

### Gay

*Coming Along Fine*, Wes Muchmore & William Hanson  
*Coming Out Right*, Wes Muchmore & William Hanson  
*Coming Out to Parents: A Two-Way Survival Guide for Lesbians & Gay Men & Their Parents*, Mary Borhek  
*A Different Kind of Love*, Michael Borich  
*Easing the Ache: Gay Men Recovering from Compulsive Behaviors*, David Crawford  
*Gay Spirit: Myth & Meaning*, Mark Thompson  
*Guardian of the Flutes*, Gilbert Herdt  
*Loving Someone Gay*, revised, Don Clark  
*The Male Muse: Gay Poetry Anthology*, Robert Duncan et al  
*Now that You Know*, Betty Fairchild  
*Primitive Partners*, Betty Berzen

### Grief

*The Grief Recovery Handbook*, John James & Frank Cherry  
*How to Survive the Loss of a Love*, Melba Colgrove, Harold Bloomfield, Peter McWilliams

*Men & Grief*, Carol Staudacher  
*Why Her Why Now*, Lon Elmer

**Health**

*A Doctor's Guide to Men's Private Parts*, James Gilbaugh  
*Green Man*, William Anderson  
*How a Man Ages*, Curtis Pesmen  
*Impotence: How to Overcome It*, Richard Manning  
*The Male Stress Syndrome*, ed Sallye Levanthal  
*A Man's Body*, Diagram Group  
*An Operator's Manual for Successful Living*, Nicholas Martin  
*The Potent Male: Facts, Fiction, Future*, Irwin Goldstein & Larry Rothstein  
*Private Parts: A Doctor's Guide to the Male Anatomy*, Yosh Taguchi  
*What Every Man Should Know About His Prostate*, Monroe Greeberger & Mary-ellen Siegel

**Intimacy**

*Intimacy: The Essence of Male & Female*, Skirley Luthman  
*The Intimate Male*, Linda Levine & Lonnie Barbach  
*The McGill Report on Male Intimacy*, Michael McGill  
*Men & Feelings*, David Kundtz  
*Men & Intimacy*, Franklin Abbott

**Masculine Spirituality**

*Enlightened Heart: An Anthology of Sacred Poetry*, Steven Mitchell  
*For the Love of God*, Ben Sheild & Richard Carlson  
*He, Revisited*, Robert Johnson  
*The Intimate Connection*, James Nelson  
*The Soul of Man*, David Heller

**Men's Groups**

*Tending the Fire: The Ritual Men's Group*, Wayne Liebman  
*A Circle of Men*, Bill Kauth

**Men's Lives**

*Absent Fathers, Lost Sons*, Guy Corneau  
*A Choice of Heroes*, Mark Gerzon  
*Finding Our Fathers*, Sam Osherson  
*The Flying Boy: Healing the Wounded Man*, John Lee

*From the Hearts of Men*, Yevrah Ornstein  
*Gods in Every Man*, Jean Bolen  
*Manhood in the Making*, David Gilmor  
*Men from the Boys: Rites of Passage in Male America*, Ray Rapael  
*Men in Transition*, Kenneth Byers  
*The Modern Man's Guide to Life*, Denis Boyles  
*Mothers & Sons*, Carole Klein  
*New Men, New Minds*, anthology, Franklin Abbott  
*Phallos: Sacred Image of the Masculine*, Eugene Monick  
*Rediscovering Masculinity*, Victor Seidler  
*The Secrets that Men Keep*, Ken Druck & James Simmons  
*What Men Are Like*, John Sanford & George Lough

**Midlife Crisis**

*Holding on or Letting Go: Men and Career Changes at Midlife*, Samuel Osherson

**Multicultural**

*The Black Male in America*, ed Doris Wilkinson & Ronald Taylor  
*Blackmen: Obsolete, Single, Dangerous*, Haki Madhubuti  
 Plays by David Henry Hwang  
*Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*, Ronald Takaki  
*Working Together: How to Become More Effective in a Multicultural Organization*, George Simons  
*Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement*, Carlos Munoz Jr

**Pornography**

*A Male Grief: Notes on Pornography & Addiction*, David Mura  
*Men Confronting Pornography*, Michael Kimmel

**Relationship**

*Challenge of the Heart*, John Welwood  
*Getting the Love You Want*, Harville Hendrix  
*The Hearts of Men*, Barbara Ehrenreich  
*Men, Women & Relationships*, John Gray  
*You Just Don't Understand*, Deborah Tannen

**Sexual Abuse**

*Abused Boys*, Mic Hunter

*Broken Boys/Mending Men*, Stephen Grubman-Black  
*The Courage to Heal* workbook, not book, Laura Davis  
*Men Surviving Incest*, T Thomas  
*Soul Survivors*, Patrick Gannon  
*Victims No Longer*, Mike Lew

**Sexual Addiction**

*Don't Call It Love*, Patrick Carnes  
*Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places*, Jed Diamond  
*Out of the Shadows*, Patrick Carne

**Sexuality**

*Earth Honoring: The New Male Sexuality*, Robert Lawlor  
*Erotic by Nature*, David Steinberg  
*The Hite Report: A Study of Male Sexuality*, Shere Hite  
*Male Fantasies*, Volume 1, Klaus Theweleit  
*Male Sexuality: A Guide to Sexual Fulfillment*, Bernie Zilbergeld  
*Sexual Solutions*, Michael Castleman

**Shame**

*Facing Shame*, Merle Fossum & Marilyn Mason  
*Fantasia of the Unconscious Psychoanalysis & the Unconscious*, DH Lawrence  
*Healing the Shame that Binds You*, John Bradshaw  
*Shame & Guilt*, Ernest Kuntz  
*Shame: The Power of Caring*, Gershen Kaufman

**Violence**

*Male Rape: A Casebook on Sexual Aggression*, ed Anthony Seacco Jr  
*Man to Man: A Guide for Men in Abusive Relationships*, Edward Gondolf  
*Men on Rape: What They Have to Say About Sexual Violence*, Timothy Beneke  
*Men Who Batter*, Edward Gondolf  
*When Anger Hurts: Quieting the Storm Within*, Matthew McKay, Peter Rogers, Judith McKay

**War**

*Everything We Had: An Oral History of the Vietnam War*, Al Santoli  
*Faces of the Enemy*, Sam Keen

*Fire in the Belly*, Sam Keen  
*Healing from the War*, Arthur Egendorf  
*Out of Weakness: Healing the Wounds that Drive Us to War*, Andrew Schmookler  
*The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle*, Glenn Gray

**Work**

*Work Addiction*, Bryan Robinson  
*Working Ourselves to Death*, Diane Fassel

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Originally published in 1991 by the National Men's Resource Center, this bibliography is presented to point out the large amount of literature available on men's issues in the nineties. Mr. Clay has done a good service in making it available to JGS readership. For more information, contact National Men's Resource Center, PO Box 800, San Anselmo, CA 94979.



“**A**ndrogyny is not trying to manage the relationship between the opposites; it is simple flowing between them. One does not need to ride the rapids, one can become the rapids... flow between the masculine and feminine, touching both.... The person who has become the androgyne, the hidden river that has risen to the surface, finds his or her own level.... Water is gentle yet it wears away rock. It is strong because it is not opposed by nature; nor does it go against nature. And so it can be with the person who chooses the way of the androgyne.”

—Dr. June Singer

## A LETTER TO SALMAN

You hide, Salman:

Because you are under attack  
from a rasping pulse of people.

Because your thoughts, your feelings,  
have been deemed too different and  
too offensive to be allowed to exist.

Because you know if you went in  
public, you might certainly be  
wadded up and tossed in a  
curbside bonfire.

They kill you, they kill your ideas,  
Salman, your "satanic verses."

We, too, hide.

We know the fear of discovery, the  
metallic taste of fear, of confrontation  
wit those who will not find a  
microscopic fold in their brain where  
our reality can live in peace.

We hide

because in the open we may be  
torched by the howling crowds,  
burn magnesium bright,  
and disappear.

But we are not here to disappear.

We are here to live.

So Salman, your words ring true.

Your words when you say,

"Freedom is always taken; it is never given."

Yes, there is a price.

A price some of us are ready to pay.

It is our time to say that we  
are entitled to freedom.

And we face the howling crowd  
with a truth simple as a new leaf;

We exist and this is how we are.

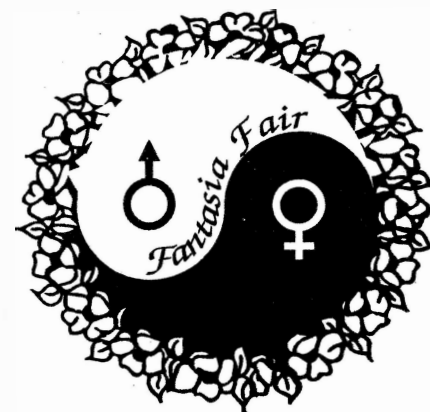
The consequences? Let them to me.  
We cannot plot and plan beyond this point.  
As you say, Salman,  
"Our lives teach us who we are."

And we are ready to learn.

—Chris H., 1988



**19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
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## BOOK REVIEWS

### *Feelings: A Transsexual's Explanation of a Baffling Condition*

by Stephanie Castle. Published by Perceptions Press, Vancouver, BC, 1992.  
Reviewed by D. Denny.

Sometimes we expect a lot out of a book or a movie, and are disappointed when it doesn't deliver. It may be that the work is flawed or unambitious, but more likely, the problem is that we expected it to be something that it never purported or aspired to be. So it is with *Feelings* by Stephanie Castle. Those who expect a scholarly work or a work of general applicability to all transsexual persons will be disappointed, for that is not Ms. Castle's intent, as she makes perfectly clear in the introduction. Nevertheless, I kept expecting more and had to continually remind myself that I was imposing my expectations on the book rather than accepting it for what it is and what it was meant to be. Once I was able to concede to myself that Ms. Castle had written the book she had written, and not the book I wished she had written, I was able to settle down and enjoy it.

What *Feelings* is is a frank discussion of the ways in which transsexualism affected Ms. Castle's life and personal relationships as she came to grips with her gender dysphoria and began to pursue sex reassignment. She does a wonderful job of explaining the predicament she and others like her find themselves in as they attempt to act with dignity under circumstances which must be some of life's most difficult to deal with. Like a shark circling a struggling swimmer, she attacks issues from many angles, using circumstances from her own life for purposes of illustration.

*Feelings* then, is not the standard transsexual autobiography. Although Ms. Castle discusses her life, she does not do so sequentially, but peripherally, to illustrate her various points. There is no attempt to convince her readers of lifelong femininity in her appearance or behavior, no anecdotes or attempts at humor, but only the story of what goes on in one man's head as he accepts his desire to become a woman and begins acting upon that desire.

*Feelings* does a very good job of letting the reader know about Stephanie Castle's transsexualism—and unfortunately, also about her personal views of the world, which are sometimes irrelevant to her transsexualism and neither needed nor desired by the reader. Her sentences tend, in the British style, to be uniformly long and filled with commas. She writes

cogently and clearly, and above all, frankly. Her book is a must-read for her friends and family, and perhaps also for the friends and families of other secondary transsexual people.

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*Dallas Denny is executive director of the American Educational Gender Information Services and a board member of HOAI.*



### *The Intimate Connection*

by James B. Nelson. Published by Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1988, 140 pages. Reviewed by M. O'Connor.

The "intimate connection" this book discusses is that between spirituality and sexuality. For many readers, this will be a radical proposition, for we live in a society that regards them as opposites. Nelson argues convincingly that they enrich each other, and that if there were such a connection, we would be a society that is more peaceful, less sexist and homophobic, and one in which genuine friendships between men could flourish. He is emphatic on the need for such a change. He argues that men are hungering for more knowledge of themselves as men, of each other, and of God.

The author sees the intimacy problem for men beginning with the genitalization of sex. Rather than diffusing sex throughout the body, men learn early to separate it and limit it to the phallus. This has tragic consequences for a man's ability to be comfortable with his own body. How can he relate to others if he cannot relate to himself? If he cannot know himself, how can he love himself, and thus love others, and grow in the love of God? Nelson notes that the "emotional damage done to men through the deprivation of feelings is enormous." This provokes such awful rage that often masculinity is equated with the resulting violence.

He writes that "the human hunger for physical and emotional intimacy is of enormous spiritual significance." If men had more connection with

their sexuality, he argues, positive masculine energies would be released. He calls these Zeus energies of intelligence, health, compassion, robustness, and service to others. It is important for men to honor the "intimate connection" between sexuality and spirituality, in order for men to unleash needed and positive male energy. Nelson's argument is convincing. Establishment sexual ethics serve an outmoded patriarchal system that is exploitive of the environment, demeaning to women and minorities—and which stands in the way of what men can really contribute to making this a better world.



*He: Understanding Masculine Psychology*

by Robert A. Johnson. Revised edition published by Harper & Row, New York, 1989, 83 pages. Reviewed by M. O'Connor.

**T**his short book highlights the usefulness of the myth of Parsifal's quest for the Grail to masculine psychology. This is imaginative for our time, the Information Age, which is glutted with verbiage in the forms of studies, books, media, and pervasive advertising.

Ironically, despite all this, men are ill-prepared to be men. Tragically, men are not responding to our times with enough positive masculine energy. They need to face a dire truth offered by women and the evidence of the ecology: that traditional masculinity is toxic, and dangerous to people and the planet. Men must look inward to create new masculine roles and apply masculine energy positively to nurturing the human and natural world.

Our times require new knights in shining armor—new Parsifals willing to right wrongs to the environment, to women, minorities, and to all the living creatures of the land and sea and sky. We need knights who have the courage to do the work of the 21st century. Since these are not the values of this society, which is hell bent on exploitation, money and status, Johnson suggests we hearken back to the myth of another time for help.

The author argues that the Parsifal myth can illuminate the male path, which is as much an inner spiritual journey as it is one of exterior adventure. Like Parsifal, the Everyman of today must progress from childhood innocence, to the difficulties and despair of midlife, to the wisdom of old

age—of knowing what it was all about.

The myth (Johnson uses the French version of Cretien de Troyes) has it that early in life we receive a wound from close contact with the divine, which is termed the Fisher King wound. It is a wound that can be borne only by doing inner spiritual work. It is a wound that can be cured only by a fool: a man's foolish innocent part of himself, that is, his Parsifal. A man is now equipped for his quest—he has an experience of the divine, and can begin to deal with it more maturely. Along the way, a man must deal with the inner feminism. This energy can help him relate and create, or it can, if he is overwhelmed by it, render him incompetent.

Johnson's discussion of the six feminine elements in men (the mother, the mother complex, the mother archetype, the fair maiden, the wife or partner, and Sophia) and of a man's femininity is an affirmation of the feminine in men. The author argues that a man must understand his femininity if it is to energize rather than enervate him. It is an energy he will need to complete his quest: to understand that the object of life is to serve God.

Those who think we need a new model of masculinity will be refreshed by this book. It is deeply moving and poetically written. Johnson has made a notable contribution to gender studies.

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*Michael O'Connor is a librarian at a major university library in the Boston area. He was a theology student and studied at a major seminary in North America.*



“**I**n a restaurant, if someone else's order looks better than our own, don't we often ask for a taste to appease our envy and curiosity? If a man likes women and enjoys their breasts and vaginas, isn't it logical that he might occasionally fantasize about what it might taste like to have female organs himself for once?”

—Nancy Friday  
*Men in Love*

## YOUR WORDS

Your words, hot stones  
 Press against my breast  
 Leave me like frayed wire  
 Ready to shock or spark  
 Or start a fire

They are electrical  
 And seek connections  
 To enhance flow

They are a river  
 Flooded over  
 Into new channels

They cut into me  
 As if I were cloth  
 To be unwoven  
 Your words, my needles  
 I am your wool

—Ira Saypen



## *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.

Available from Outreach Book Service, 126 Western Ave., Suite 222, Augusta, ME 04330. \$15.95 + \$4.25 P&H. Enclose a check or money order for the full amount (\$21.20) in US funds payable to Outreach Book Service.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I am encouraged to see your article on “Engendering the Paraculture” in the Summer-Fall issue of *Journal of Gender Studies*. I feel that bending the gender is the most immediate means to explore the cultural myths and physical realities of gender-related symbols and behavior. It is also the most practical means to defuse much of the social stereotypes and bias toward either sex, gender or sexual orientation.

While it is high theater to adopt the complete image and behavior of the opposite stereotype, no individual fully embodies all the attributes that are supposedly present in the “ideal.” The experience of all the pieces of an image at once is profoundly revealing. You bump into your own physical and emotional expectations and feelings, which are different from what you thought; you discover reactions you hadn’t imagined. The reactions of others to the new image of the same you is equally revealing, as are the different political, economic, social, and environmental circumstances the new role and apparel create. However, there are relatively few opportunities to port a full alternate image. It is often expensive, and a daunting emotional prospect. Having few occasions to explore the full dimension reduces the exploration and the perfecting of related routines, reactions and responses; the whole event becomes more exotic and not part of one’s daily life.

Bending the gender simply pushes the boundaries little by little. Since each element is a relatively smaller part of one’s presence, the crossgender aspect of one’s presentation is less threatening. Others must accept and deal with it without being able to dismiss the larger part of you which remains familiar. These many smaller explorations enable more people to investigate associations, behavior and values connected to the symbols of sex/gender/orientation that embalm each of us. Each small exploration can be as long-lasting and as constant as suits the individual. To the extent that each symbol, each image is demystified and considered nonthreatening—if eccentric—behavior for a person, we are all empowered and released to be more of who we are as individuals regardless of our sex/orientation/gender. The fixed kit-bag of images and associations loses its tyranny.

Bending the gender allows each individual to explore as much or as little as they feel able or comfortable. It is inexpensive and more a part of each day’s experiences. It is on the one hand fashion, and on the other therapy. It is not illegal or disruptive. And, the components are readily available in most stores. The purchase of what are simply clothes for a body should be taken out of the circus of sexual and gender taboos.

Buying and wearing the components of stereotyped gender/sex image is a direct exploration of the magical thinking that pervades our culture. It is not the fabric or how the pieces are joined that gives the clothes power. Rather it is the fantasies and ideas we bring to or project onto their experience and image. This will always be true, but it is important that we be better in touch with this dynamic. Gender bending allows such exploration. Gender bending explores all manner of symbols and magic making: the image and power of any uniform or costume—it just happens to start with that magic and those images attached to sex and gender.

The purpose of crossdressing is not to inevitably or automatically seek to acquire all the symbols that are now not permitted. Rather, the purpose is to loosen the bonds of what we feel we are allowed or not allowed to do; to better understand and to set the stage for understanding of others for who they are as humans, and to provide those experiences and images that most suit our own personalities.

One should be able to present oneself as one feels comfortable—exotic or not—and have it be acceptable and appreciated. What difference does it make for a male judge to wear eyeliner or stockings? Why must a woman always wear “feminized” versions of acceptable male attire? Perhaps only the head of the household or managers of business should wear lipstick.

Bending the gender is also an arena in which men and women can encourage and support each other and discover together—as couples and in groups. We don't often think of the fact that most of our sex/gender symbols are built on parts of the body shared by both men and women and not on elements unique to each sex. Nor are most people aware of the degree of overlap in body type, size and dimensions. Again, we always contrast the large man to the small woman or the large (unfortunate) woman to the small (unfortunate) man. Why shouldn't we appreciate the leg, eye, foot, lips, hair and their many rituals and presentations equally? Why shouldn't we think that new hybrid images can't be beautiful and fashionable? There is a long tradition of androgyny.

It is much more important to both men and women that men be able to slowly disengage from their rigid codes than for them to jump from one extreme to the other. Leaping from shirt and tie to skirt and pumps leaves the majority of our circumstances untouched. The point here is that filling in the “middle” allows those who wish to, to more easily explore extremes and enriches the field on which we all appear.

Why couldn't there be specific days or events established throughout the year in which it would be “appropriate” for people to bend the gender and challenge dress codes and “appropriate” appearances? This would not

only help unify the focus on issues related to gender and crossdressing, it would provide an opportunity for education, small demonstrations and great fun. I would like to suggest that there be such a national day or event at least once each season. A seasonal focus keeps the issue from being too seldom to be more than another Halloween, and a seasonal focus would involve some of the inequities related to weather and what is appropriate attire and behavior.

How about a series of subtle and beautiful gender-bender posters? If well enough done, these images might gain broad media coverage and provide the visuals to support articles in magazines. Perhaps such a series could be part of an annual poster contest and exhibit. I would be interested in discussing this further.

Perhaps there could be a gender-bender network: businesses that endorse or encourage patronage regardless of the image of the clients. A well-publicized list of businesses that have adopted a non-dress code which prohibits discrimination based on sex-specific clothing and image association.

I would like to see more coverage and news about bending the gender along with developments in understanding the complex stereotypes representing the supposed normal polarities.

—John Davis  
New York, NY



“In what proportions are you male or female? ...Each man must come to terms with his feminine aspect and each woman with her masculine side... Some people already understand that within each man dwells the soul of a woman, and within each woman the shadow of a man... [But] awareness of this second self has not been enough to make this double acceptable. The contrasexual aspect has usually been considered a despicable flaw to be overcome rather than a valued resource to be embraced.”

—Dr. Sheldon Kapp  
*Mirror, Mask, and Shadow*



## GENDER AWARENESS AND INVOLVEMENT NETWORK (GAIN)

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

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- Evaluation and Referral Network
- Book Resources

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## Human Outreach and Achievement Institute

### *Statement of Purpose*

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

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

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