

To the editor,

In a recent article in GCN, *The TV-TG-TS Phenomena*, the author grossly misrepresents transsexualism by lumping it together with transverticism. Such errors are expected of the 'straight' press, but are unacceptable for consumption in a community which has contact with, and must interact with, the transsexual.

The transvestite, as accurately indicated in the article, "... expresses *his* feminine feelings by dressing completely as female." The transvestite defines *himself* as a man, defends his *manhood*, and focuses upon his "sexual equipment" as appropriate and most valuable.

The male-to-female transsexual does not think of *herself* as a man, and has no desire to be or to remain a male. The male genitalia are not focused on a "sexual equipment," nor is sex the motivation for reassignment surgery. The transsexual experiences *her* identity as a woman at a far deeper and more meaningful level than merely clothing or social roles. She does not have to be feminine to be a woman—she is a woman and remains so regardless of the clothing worn or the activities performed.

Additionally, most male-to-female transsexuals choose to relate to men both during the transition process and after surgery. Only a few transsexuals define themselves as "women-identified-women." This does not imply that these women are seeking female "sex partners," but rather are choosing to focus their energies on building and maintaining complete human relationships with other women.

[Name deleted upon request]

Dear GCN,

I was pleased to see such a long and thoughtful feature on transvestism in the July 20 paper. I think there is not enough information readily available on this subject to either myself or others. Therefore the full page article by Ariadne Kane was most welcome.

My hope is that women or others were not offended by this article. The author clearly means "feminine" to suggest those things which our common media-deluged culture symbolically attaches to that term. It is the images and not the persons of the opposite gender which are apparently mimicked; used by, or attractive to, transvestites, according to the author.

What I think could be amplified in another article, however, is an explanation on why other, less stereotypical, more contemporary images of "feminine gender attributes" seem not to be utilized by the TV-TG-TS phenomena. Personally, my image of even the stereotypical "feminine" of "femme self" in our culture is not fully covered by "... panties, bras, ... small hands or female torso ..." or "womanly legs ... cosmetics."

Nevertheless, the article did do a good service in providing more facts and ideas on an oppressed subculture within both gay and straight subcultures. With a sense of anticipating its critics' arguments, this was the best written explanation of the situation I've yet seen. Also, I think its distinction between gender identity and sexual identity was important.

Vincent Hoskinson