



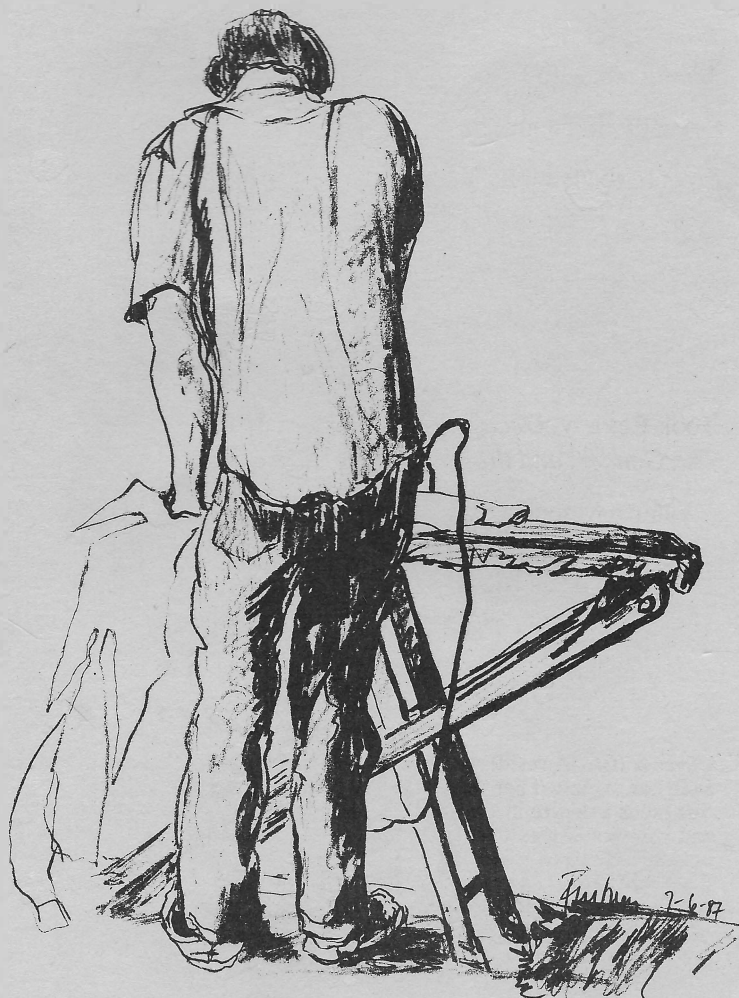
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A NEW JOURNAL ON GENDER STUDIES

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We have published the *Outreach Beacon* for the past 12 years. During that period we included articles on many diverse aspects of crossdressing, transvestism, transgenderism, transsexuality, and androgyny. Some were of regional interest, while others had national appeal. All were selected to provide the readers a broad understanding of these behaviors and compassion for individuals who are on various "gender journeys."

The *Journal of Gender Studies* will not only continue this tradition, but will also attempt to allow for important bridging between gender issues and relevant topics in sexuality and sexology. Included would be such issues as crossdressing and the world of art, crossgenderism and the world of theater, and social and political issues as they relate directly to gender issues.

The *Journal of Gender Studies* will also include articles (as received) in the now established areas of women's studies and of changing attitudes in masculinity. Hopefully, it will include some New Age thinking with regard to gender roles and the changing mores structure in the USA and other Western countries, and a more enlightened view of gender shifts and lifestyle options.

To be of service to all of our readership who are interested in this field, we will continue to review relevant literature that is made available to us from publishers; academic centers; theater, movie, and video producers; and important art and photography exhibitions of relevance to the subject.

We would ask our professional colleagues to inform us of their current work, clinical experience, and current and future programs related to gender studies and to submit manuscripts and papers to the *JGS*.

In this final decade of the 20th century, let us bring together all of our efforts to push back the envelope that imprisons personal gender growth and to broaden our understanding of the world of gender option and lifestyle, so that we can be truly tolerant of gender diversity in its best forms.



Human Outreach and Achievement Institute

1991 PROGRAM CALENDAR

Denver, CO

- April 5-7 HOPEFUL Program I (see Brochure)
 April 8-14 Coming Together, IFGE major presentation

Minneapolis, MN

- May 3-5 HOPEFUL Program II (see brochure)
 May 6 Training Workshop in Public Speaking About Crossdressing/Crossgender Issues
 May 7 AAASECT Chapter Meeting: Gender Expression and Spirituality, a presentation (Ari Kane)

San Francisco, CA

- June 7 SSSS Chapter of Bay Areas. The Changing Gender Perceptions for the Nineties (probably by Ari Kane)

Houston, TX

- June 14-16 HOPEFUL Program III (see brochure)

Essex, MA

- Sept. 20-22 National Conference for New Women (see brochure)

Boston, MA

- Sept. 28 GAIN Workshop: New Visions of Gender, an all-day panel and appropriate workshop on four selected topics (brochure and description in production as of this writing)

Provincetown, MA

- Oct. 17 All-day Outreach Institute Board Meeting
 Oct. 18-27 17th Annual Fantasia Fair (see brochure)

New Orleans, LA

- Nov. 8-10 National SSSS Meeting. Panel presentation, details to follow shortly.

THE MYTH OF SEXUAL ADDICTION

by William A. Henkin

Since the late 1970s, a growing number of Americans unhappy with the intensity of their sexual desires have joined groups such as Sex Addicts Anonymous, Sexoholics Anonymous, and Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous. These programs, based on the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, assume that when a person thinks or feels that he or she is out of control sexually, that person is somehow "addicted" to sex.

Sexual addiction has become big business in the past few years. Psychologists and best-selling authors such as Patrick Carnes and Melodie Beattie offer seminars and workshops that associate sexuality with childhood abuse, codependency, and a variety of other personal and social problems. Their lectures inspire people to join sex addict groups, while sex addict groups inspire people to attend their lectures. Both the groups and the authors' bookings proliferate.

But is sex addiction real? Or is the idea itself simply a fabrication of sex-negative stereotypes devised to denigrate behaviors that do not fit some people's concepts of normalcy? Do we have a national obsession with finding criminal or medical labels to fit every feeling, thought, or behavior that frightens us or that we do not understand? In this two-part article, a version of which he presented at the 1990 Western Region Meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex, psychotherapist William A. Henkin suggests that there neither is nor can there be an addiction to sex. In Part One, Henkin places the idea of sex addiction in a social and historical context. In Part Two, he examines several sexual scripts—sets of social values—that govern the ways people think about erotic acts. His essay concludes with a warning about the dangers posed to all our civil liberties by the myth of sexual addiction.

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

— the prayer of Alcoholics Anonymous

*Failure is an opportunity.
If you blame someone else,
there is no end to the blame.*

*Therefore the Master
fulfills her own obligations
and corrects her own mistakes.
She does what she needs to do
and demands nothing of others.*

— Tao te Ching

Sex

However natural and innate the physiology of sex acts might be, the way their practice is seen in humans depends as well on cultural norms. Nearly 20 years ago, anthropologist Donald Marshall wrote that on the Polynesian island of Mangaia, "there is no social contact between the sexes, no rendezvous that does not lead directly to coitus—copulation is the only imaginable outcome of heterosexual contact." From childhood on, he reported, Mangaians were trained to enjoy sex and to assure sexual pleasure to their partners.

At about the same time, an entirely different perspective on sex was provided by John C. Messenger, who studied an Irish island he called Inis Beag. There, not just partnered sex, but *any* kind of sexual expression "such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed."

As Havelock Ellis demonstrated nearly a century ago, social comparisons need not take us to remote islands. Concerning modesty, for instance, Louis XI was greeted upon his first entry into France by three naked women representing Sirens; they "were greatly admired by the public." Similar welcomes were accorded royalty elsewhere in Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries. In 18th century France and Prussia, members of royalty and the intelligentsia alike often welcomed to their homes the lovers of their wives and husbands, men and women bathed nude together in Russia, and women bared their chests in Italy's warm summers. As Edward Brecher has pointed out, nude bathing was common on some of England's popular beaches well into Victoria's 19th century.

We cannot reasonably understand sex or sexuality without recognizing the extent to which sexual mores express the specific sociology of a particular people in a particular time and place. While a Mangaian youth might regard one fuck a night, every night, as sexual poverty, her Inis Beag counterpart might equally regard one fuck a month as sinful, or at least pathological.

Closer to home, in 1952, when the American Psychiatric Association published the first *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), homosexuality, promiscuous sexual activity, fellatio, cunnilingus, and masturbation were all officially designated mental illnesses. By 1980, 28 years later, the *DSM-III*, third edition, included none of these ailments. If Kinsey, Hunt, and Hite can be believed, the behaviors had not changed, of course; human judgments had. And human judgment is what the vogue for sexual addiction is all about.

Addiction

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word "addiction" derives from Roman law and originally meant a formal surrender by sentence of a judge. Over time, the word came to mean devotion to a habit, place, person, or idea, or the pursuit of some interest. Since it implied a preference, inclination, or penchant, people were said to be addicted to reading, art, their trades, melancholy, virginity, or thoughts of the next life, as well as to wealth, strong drink, and the devil. Addiction as such was not considered a bad thing, although one person might disapprove of what another was addicted to.

During the 20th century psychiatrists adopted addiction and made it specific to biochemistry. The *Psychiatric Glossary* of the American Psychiatric Association defines addiction as:

Dependence on a chemical substance to the extent that a physiologic need is established. This [need] manifests itself as withdrawal symptoms . . . when the substance is removed.

The *Psychiatric Glossary* cross-references addiction to drug dependence, which it defines as:

Habituation to, abuse of, and/or addiction to a chemical substance. . . . The term thus includes not only the addiction (which emphasizes physiologic dependence), but also drug abuse (where the pathologic craving for drugs seems unrelated to physical dependence).

The glossary offers as examples of the drugs upon which a person might become dependent:

alcohol; opiates; synthetic analgesics with morphine-like effects; barbiturates; other hypnotics, sedatives, and some anti-anxiety agents; cocaine, psychostimulants; marijuana; and psychotomimetic drugs.

By the time the psychiatric establishment appropriated addiction and relegated it to a state of chemical dependence, the idea that devotion to or interest in books, politics, or money could be addicting had lost its currency. Though people do periodically attempt to "cure" themselves of habits such as nailbiting and leaving closet doors ajar, the only sorts of nonchemical dependencies modern doctors seriously endeavor to treat are better thought of as compulsions. According to the *Psychiatric Glossary*, a compulsion is:

an insistent, repetitive, intrusive, and unwanted urge to perform an act that is contrary to one's ordinary wishes or standards. Since it serves as a defensive substitute for still more unacceptable unconscious ideas and wishes, failure to perform the compulsive act leads to overt anxiety. Compulsions are obsessions that are still felt as impulses.

The large importance of the small semantic distinction I am making lies in the difference between a condition and a behavior. A condition such as addiction describes the way one *is*, however temporarily; a behavior, which one may or may not perform compulsively, is something one *does*. Many kinds of psychotherapy treat compulsive behaviors, but apart from hypnosis and the grosser forms of behavior modification, no strictly medical or psychological program has ever clearly demonstrated success in treating addictions.

Stanton Peele, author of *Love and Addiction*, has pointed out that "self-cure can work, and depending on someone else to cure you usually does not." Inpatient rehabilitation facilities, recognizing what combination of efforts can enhance success in treating addiction, have made self-help concepts the core of their programs. The understandings that underlie all these self-help approaches began to take shape in 1935, when Bill W. met Dr. Bob and the seeds of a fellowship were sown that soon became known as Alcoholics Anonymous, or AA for short.

Close Encounters of the Anonymous Kind

Friends, if you are not and never have been a problem drinker; if you have never even known someone who was a problem drinker; nonetheless, AA has probably touched your life. And it is increasingly likely that the part of your life AA has touched has to do with your sexuality.

Twelve-step programs like AA help addicts recover in part because they provide external systems that specifically support people in staying away from their chemicals of obligation while the physical addiction fades and they develop the internal resources they need to cope with their psychological dependence or habituation. Though chewing gum instead of smoking does not provide the group support of people sharing a problem and a goal in common, it does provide a similarly alternative habit into which an addict can channel some of his or her craving during withdrawal.

Gum and groups have been pejoratively described as crutches for people who cannot resolve their habits on their own, but using a crutch to support a fragile freedom from an addiction may be as critical as using a crutch to support the body's weight while a broken leg bone heals. After all, the addict is wrestling with chemical dependence and its concomitant withdrawal symptoms. Suddenly removing the addictive substance can provoke sweats, tremors, convulsions, hallucinations, and even death. Whatever can reduce that strain, short of giving in to the addiction itself, can help the addict struggle free. Group support is one such valuable aid.

Freedom from chemical dependency and the kindness of strangers may not be the end, however. "Addicts may switch not only from one chemical substance to another, but from a chemical to a social 'high'," says Stanton Peele, and in any kind of self-cure, the "key word is self: taking charge of your own problem."

If your own problem is not based in biochemistry or genetics, as chemical dependency seems at least in part to be, then what is restrained by participation in an Anonymous addicts group may not be a habit at all. It may be, instead, exactly what is supposed to emerge after the addiction has been overcome: your self, and along with it the concomitant freedom to take charge of your problem.

Participation in almost any support group has the potential to alter a person's behavior. Peer pressure, the insights afforded by other people's autobiographies,

and the pleasures of belonging all conspire to bring a person into line with the edicts of the group he or she has chosen.

In recent years, programs based on AA's precepts have been devised for people who feel dependent not only on chemicals, but on just about every kind of foible that could ail a human mind or body, including, of course, sex.

The problem with sex addict groups is that they conspire to identify as addictions behavior patterns that may be compulsions and may be no more than shame responses to presumptions of social pressure. In either case, peer pressure, insights, and the pleasures of belonging encourage people to relinquish hope of achieving the kind of mastery over themselves, and control over their own free choices, that they joined those groups in order to discover.

The Myth of Sexual Addiction

In a 1986 presentation to the American Psychological Association, Martin P. Levine and Richard R. Troiden addressed "the newly discovered 'conditions' of sexual addiction and sexual compulsion from the sociological perspective of symbolic interactionism." In the revision of their paper, published in the *Journal of Sex Research*, they demonstrate that the definitions are conceptually flawed and that the criteria for these "conditions" are subjective and value laden. There is nothing inherently pathological in the conduct that is labeled sexually compulsive or addictive. Rather than referring to actual clinical entities, sexual addiction and compulsion refer to learned patterns of behavior that are stigmatized by dominant institutions.

In the United States, the authors observe, three distinct sexual scripts or erotic codes coexist; since the ideals that underlie them are mutually exclusive, the codes are in competition. For that reason it is not even a person's sexual behavior, but rather the prevailing script that determines whether "a behavior is labeled as a psychosexual disorder or as sexually normal."

Levine and Troiden call the three sexual scripts they discuss procreative, relational, and recreational. The first holds that

sexual expression is dirty, sinful, and wrong except when it occurs in marriage and for reproductive purposes. . . .

Casual sex and frequent sexual intercourse are defined as pathological conditions.

The relational script, on the other hand,

regards sexual activity as a means of expressing and reinforcing emotional and psychological intimacy. . . . Any act is appropriate in the relational context, provided that both partners mutually approve.

The recreational script

perceives mutual pleasure as the chief purpose of sexual activity, [and] endorses sexual contacts between mutually interested partners, even if they are total strangers, and permits them to engage in any agreed-upon act that enhances sensual pleasure. . .

These three scripts have different definitions of control over erotic conduct. The procreative code views any nonmarital or nonprocreative sexuality as indicating a lack of sexual control; the relational code regards nonrelational sex as indicating a lack of sexual control, whereas issues of control are irrelevant in recreational scripts, which define only nonconsensual sex as deviant.

According to Levine and Troiden, the procreative ethic was this nation's primary erotic code at midcentury, when psychiatrists described such nonprocreative erotic acts as masturbation, homosexuality, and oral sex as evidence of mental disorders. Once reproductive sex lost its holy patina, relational and recreational scripts gained ascendancy; and in the 1960s and 1970s, large numbers of Americans "came to view nonmarital sex, mate swapping, one-night stands, homosexuality and the use of pornography as viable sexual options."

By 1980, in fact, not only had masturbation, oral sex, and homosexuality disappeared from the *DSM*; at the same time, therapists discovered a whole new collection of sexual pathologies, including premature ejaculation, failure to achieve orgasm, fear of sex, and low levels of sexual desire. Whereas in 1952 Americans were considered sick for wanting too much sex, by 1980 they were sick for wanting too little. Once again, the specific nature of each behavior had not changed; people who wanted to fuck a lot still wanted to fuck a lot; people who were bored by sex remained bored by sex. What had changed was the sexual script—the human judgment—favored by the people who dominated social thinking in those years.

In the 1980s sexual revisionism set in with a vengeance. Herpes, hepatitis, and AIDS; the rise of radical religious and social movements; and, perhaps, the inevitable return swing of the cultural pendulum: Any or all might be blamed or credited for the shift. But if the procreative script shared preeminence with the relational script, the recreational script was out in any case.

Soon, self-help groups founded on the same premises and steps that made AA successful appeared to help people conquer this whole new battery of nominal disabilities. As antisex became a hot topic in the dailies, some sex-negative groups assumed the Anonymous mantle. They espoused heterosexual monogamy with a kind of holy zeal and sought to recast mate-swapping, cruising, and other recently popular behaviors as disorders that required therapy—or as addictions best served by self-help groups.

But wait—however pumped up some people get on their fantasies or hormones, sexual behavior is still not a substance, nor does the unsatisfied need for sexual expression provoke withdrawal symptoms. Sexual behavior is a highly charged facet of human experience, however, that affects and is affected by biochemical changes in the body and brain that are associated with emotions. Consequently, sexual behavior also has a history of frightening some people so badly that rather than labor to understand it, they seek to suppress it in themselves as well as in others.

Throughout the centuries people have rationalized their sexual fears, and hidden their resulting bigotry behind the skirts of bureaucratic religions, legal proscriptions, and pseudoscientific authority. To 18th-century Western physicians, masturbation was a well-known cause of insanity; to their 19th-century counterparts, it was clear that women had few sexual desires. So, as the 20th century draws to a close, an increasing number of psychologists seem to know that human beings can be addicted to their own erotic behaviors.

Now, whether the subject is masturbation, flashing, or rape—or eating, jogging, or watching television, for that matter—any behavior can be done compulsively. While I do not wish to imply that child molesters and rapists are free of pressing problems, I object to denominating those problems as addictions.

First of all, to do so is to raise the value of a transitory social ideology above the variety of ongoing human experience; second, it offers a simplistic explanation for an issue that deserves detailed attention. At one end of the psychological spectrum, compulsions may reflect a person's shame or guilt for having feelings—in this case for having sexual feelings specifically—at all. At the other end they may represent a single facet of a complex character disorder.

Perhaps the pathology that does not change with the winds of social reformation lies in the need some people have to meddle in other people's affairs. As Levine and Troiden write, there is nothing intrinsically pathological in the behaviors the *DSM* defines as psychosexual disorders, whether the definitions are taken from the category that prevailed in 1952, the category that prevailed in 1980, or the category that prevails in the revised *DSM-III-R* today.

Instead, sexual behaviors

are defined as pathological only because they violate prevailing erotic norms. Rather than referring to actual clinical entities, psychosexual disorders denote forms of stigmatized erotic conduct. In this sense they are value judgments cloaked as pseudoscientific diagnosis. By inventing and treating these "conditions," that is, by "medicalizing" morality, mental health professionals and sexologists pathologize non-normative sexual practices; they function as social control agents, enforcing conformity to culturally hegemonic erotic standards. . . .

As used currently, the terms "sexual addiction" and "sexual compulsion" employ prevailing cultural standards as the basis for determining erotic control or deviance.

The Death of Sex

The man who put sex addiction on the map is psychologist Patrick Carnes. In the preface to his book *Out of the Shadows*, originally published in 1983 as *The Sexual Addiction*, Carnes explains how the book grew out of a paper he wrote in 1976, based on his experiences treating sex offenders for two years.

Although he reports that his paper was influential and circulated widely, he refrained from publishing his work for several reasons: Not everyone he regarded as a sex addict was a sex offender; he did not yet have adequate data to support his belief that sexual acting out could constitute an addiction; and there was no network of programs in place—no Sex Addicts Anonymous, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Sexoholics Anonymous, or the like—to help people troubled by their alternative sexual urges. "Most of all," however, Carnes explains, "I was afraid of the public reaction, which is always unpredictable in sexual matters. In short, it was an idea whose time had not come."

Indeed, in 1976 American society was still in the throes of a recreational sex script. By 1983, though we were not ready to resurrect the procreational scripts promulgated by foes of abortion, homosexuality, and extramarital intercourse, at least the time *had* come for a change. Before a relational script could dominate the scene, however, the ruling recreational scripts had to be overthrown. In the fine tradition of American clinical psychiatry, the simplest way to overthrow those scripts was to medicalize the behaviors that defined them.

No one person can redefine entries for so Biblical an opus as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. So far, each revision has required

a huge committee and more than a decade of debate. But one influential person can spearhead a movement that redefines a social ideal, and can thereby profoundly alter the context in which a *DSM* committee sits.

Carnes and his followers attribute addiction to behavior. This revisionist judgment is not written in stone, and it is not written in biochemistry, but it may be written in a future *DSM*, as oral sex and masturbation were in *DSMs* of the not-so-distant past.

Carnes does not claim that every person who engages in any behavior represented in his schema is a sex addict in need of rehabilitation. As he writes, "behavior by itself does not make an addict." It is Carnes' contention that "addicts are people who cannot stop their behavior which is crippling them and those around them," and that, by implication, behaviors that are damaging and out of the actor's control are addictions.

The script Carnes would put in place lays the ground for a social ideology that dictates which erotic pleasures you may take tonight and which you had best forswear; and if you do not like the limits of that tolerance, Carnes warns, your discomfort or rebellion itself suggests that you may be the new sex addict on your block.

Addiction to the Myth

Perhaps we should start to contemplate the meaning of our society's "addiction" to addiction terminology. Psychological health is advanced through increased awareness of personal responsibility for one's feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors. By couching sexual behavior in terms of addiction, the psychological meaning of a person's erotic experience is diminished and his or her personal responsibility for that experience is demeaned.

On an individual basis, the lack of personal responsibility that is thus encouraged, formalized by organizational structures, and given credence by professional caregivers with a great deal to gain by identifying a whole new bailiwick of illness, encourages people who are distressed or confused by their sexuality to think of themselves as impotent in the face of their own problems.

Socially, rapists and other sexually abusive individuals are provided with a sanctioned legal defense for their dangerous practices—"I couldn't help it, I'm an addict"—while people who read erotic literature or watch erotic theater are stigmatized for their harmless ones. Thus, the safety, psychological health, and civil liberties of us all are jeopardized by a cultural ideal that encourages both the suppression and the repression not only of people's behaviors, but of

their thoughts and feelings as well, in private and in public, in the names of social service and our own good.

If we accept the idea of sex addiction we give up the rights to our own erotic processes. If we relinquish the rights to suffer our own pains and ignominies, we give away the rights to learn from them and to grow into increasingly responsible adult human beings. And as history shows, if we do not embrace our own responsibilities, others will readily do so for us.

Laws are already in place regarding sexual activities that clearly have victims; activities, in brief, that are nonconsensual. Whether those laws are adequate, whether they are appropriately enforced, and whether their enforcement is or can be effective are all questions beyond the purview of this essay. Here, the question boils down to whether the food is to be blamed if I overeat.

After 20 years of relative freedom, it has once again become the vogue to legislate morality and to usurp individual rights, sexual and otherwise. But it is precisely those processes by which sexual freedom among consenting adults is denied that the life of one person and the life of a whole society is suppressed, because it is precisely those processes that infantilize a person and a people; first by relieving them of hard choices, next by withholding their responsibilities for making those choices, and finally by taking away their power to make them altogether.

This is why the debate about sexual addiction is not a debate about whether sex is good or not. It is a debate about who shall determine which of us shall be free.

William Henken, M.F.C. (Marriage and Family Counselor), is a sex educator and therapist practicing in the San Francisco Bay area. He is a frequent writer for the Spectator and the Samutopia Journal.



THE TRANSVESTITE HUSBAND

George R. Brown, M.D.

Crossdressing is a secret but not uncommon practice. You can educate the wife of a transvestite to accept his behavior and maintain a successful marital relationship.

Karen, a 65-year-old woman who had been married for 40 years, came home unexpectedly one afternoon to find her recently retired 66-year-old husband John wearing her clothing and high heels, sporting a blond wig, and sitting in front of the television sipping tea. She was shocked and amazed to discover that John had been borrowing her clothes throughout their marriage and that he had crossdressed in private during his military career and when out of town on business trips. She became depressed and confused and was too embarrassed to discuss her feelings with friends. Distraught, she discussed the problem with her trusted physician of 22 years.

A transvestite is currently defined as a heterosexual postpubertal male who crossdresses, initially for sexual excitement.¹ Transvestism should be carefully differentiated from the gender identity disorders, e.g. transsexualism.¹⁻³ (Transsexualism is a severe disorder of gender identity wherein an individual abhors his/her own genitals and secondary sexual characteristics and relentlessly pursues crossgender hormonal treatments and sex reassignment surgery.)

The majority of transvestites are, or have been, married. The sexual arousal and masturbation while "dressed" frequently subside with time, but crossdressing may continue throughout life, as it enables the man to express the "femme self" and provides for an inner sense of tranquility and relief from anxiety. Conversely, preventing the transvestite from crossdressing for extended periods of time leads to dysphoria and anxiety.

The exact prevalence of transvestism is not known, but it is certainly not rare, as evidenced by the organized support groups, social clubs, dedicated literature, and information clearinghouses on the subject. In the United States, an estimated 2% to 3% of adult males are transvestites, while in England the estimate is 5%. It is thought that less than one quarter of transvestites are ever seen by a psychiatrist⁴; when they are it is usually at the insistence of a distraught spouse or, occasionally, a judge faced with a transvestite involved in a divorce or other proceeding such as a routine traffic violation that occurred while the defendant was crossdressed. (It is generally not illegal to crossdress.)

Why Wives of Transvestites Seek Medical Help

Crossdressing may be a private, carefully guarded secret for many years within the context of an otherwise satisfying and communicative marriage. Many transvestites discuss crossdressing with their spouse early in the relationship, often before marriage.⁵ This approach seems to evoke less anger, feelings of betrayal, or acute sense of inadequacy in the woman than accidental discovery later in the marriage.

Lack of Self-Esteem. Women who are married to crossdressers often suffer from low self-esteem reflected in self-defeating behavior, fear of abandonment, and obesity.^{5,6} Such women may tolerate abusive and humiliating behavior by their spouse because they see the relationship as "better than nothing" and preferable to being alone, thereby warding off separation anxiety.⁷ They have a difficult time negotiating mutually acceptable limits with their husbands and tend to become withdrawn and depressed.

Changes in Crossdressing Behavior. More frequent crossdressing or other changes in behavior that occur during the marriage can be distressing even if the wife knew about the habit. (See Table 1).^{5,7}

Table 1. Common Reasons Spouses of Transvestites Seek Their Physicians' Advice

- Surprise discovery of husband's crossdressing
 - Belief that husband is having an affair
 - Increase in crossdressing behaviors
 - Sexual dysfunction (spouse, transvestite, or both)
 - Concern over public exposure
 - Concern over own identity as a woman
 - Emergence of gender-dysphoric symptoms
-

Treating the Spouse

As a primary care physician, you can be very effective in educating and counseling the wives of transvestites. An attitude of openness and willingness to discuss the woman's "secret" will go far in reducing anxiety, since many of these women believe they are alone in this unusual marital situation and there

must be something very wrong with them.

You can greatly reassure the wife of a transvestite by emphasizing the following points:

- *You did not drive your husband to crossdressing.* Onset usually occurs well before marriage, with 92% of transvestites beginning crossdressing before their 18th birthday and over half before age ten.⁴ Marital problems do not "cause" men to cross-dress.

- *You are not a latent lesbian.* There is no evidence that women who choose to live with transvestites, even if they have sex with their husbands while "dressed," are more likely to be homosexual.

- *Your husband is not a homosexual or a child molester.* Transvestism in married men is not associated with either homosexuality or pedophilia. There may be a greater incidence of other paraphilic interests among transvestites, however, such as bondage, discipline, and leather fetishes.

- *You cannot cure your husband of his transvestism.* Transvestism is extremely tenacious, and most transvestites (and many spouses) generally do not consider it a problem warranting treatment. Transvestites may intermittently "purge" their wardrobes only to find themselves starting their collection anew after a short time. The types of expression and frequency of dressing may change over time, but it is highly unlikely that all crossdressing behaviors will cease.

- *You do have rights as a partner in your marriage.* Each woman has to decide what her personal limits are in her relationship with a transvestite. Just as "ordinary" sexual relationships are a series of negotiations of "like" and "don't like," "will do" and "won't do," the successful transvestite marriage must be based on compromise.

Sharing her experiences with other women can help the transvestite's spouse to feel less isolated and learn how other such couples have negotiated their marriages. Transvestite support groups and social clubs frequently have affiliated wives' support groups.

Advising the Transvestite

Transvestites are generally satisfied with their assigned male gender and do not desire to change their sex, live permanently as a woman, or lose their ability to engage in sexual relationships with women.

Gender dysphoric symptoms may appear in a transvestite during episodes of stress, after a recent loss, or concomitantly with other psychiatric disorders such as major depression. These symptoms include loss of interest in sex, more frequent cross-dressing, and a request to a physician for female hormonal (estrogen) treatment.⁸ These patients usually require a referral to a psychiatrist or psychologist experienced in the diagnosis and treatment of transsexualism.⁸ Standards of care for the hormonal and surgical treatment of gender dysphoric individuals have been published elsewhere.⁹

Transvestism Evolving into Gender Dysphoria

Thirty-six-year-old Susan had been married to Steve for more than five years and found his transvestism to be an interesting aspect of their relationship. She enjoyed their lovemaking, which often involved crossdressing, and was tolerant of Steve's activities as long as he "dressed" in the privacy of their home. Then Steve was injured in an automobile accident and lost his job as a construction worker. Over the next six months, he began to drink heavily, crossdressed daily, and believed that all of his problems would be solved if he could be surgically reassigned as a woman. He no longer appeared sexually interested in Susan. She felt excluded and helpless and was very concerned that she would lose her husband. She was not interested in "living together like sisters" after his proposed sex reassignment. Extensive counseling assisted Steve in returning to both sobriety and a transvestite adjustment without the pursuit of crossgender treatments.

Wife Fears She Is Lesbian

Thirty-year-old Ilsa had been aware of Fred's crossdressing since just prior to their wedding ten years ago. Ilsa did not object to Fred's dressing as "Felicia" once a week in the privacy of their home. Recently, however, Fred had been pressing her for more active involvement with his crossdressing, including having intercourse with "Felicia" and going out to restaurants and shopping malls together "like sisters." Ilsa began to question whether she was a latent lesbian and was upset by Fred's development of impotence unless he was at least partially crossdressed for lovemaking. The couple was referred to a sex therapist by their family physician.

Summary

Not all women can adapt to the stress of being married to a transvestite. Some view their relationships as vital and exciting and are fully supportive of their husbands' crossdressing, especially when they learn there is nothing they can do to "cure" him. Other spouses are violently opposed to such behavior; for these women, transvestism poses a major obstacle to emotional and physical intimacy in their marriage. (Because of this individual variation in acceptance of transvestism, wives have been described as "acceptors" or "rejectors,"⁵ or placed on a grading continuum of relative acceptance from "A" to "F."¹⁰)

Those women who choose to continue their relationships must be able to make compromises that allow the partners to respect each other's limits. These compromises can often be negotiated more easily with their physician's help.

It is very important to bear in mind that it is futile to try to persuade a transvestite who seeks your counsel to stop cross-dressing; such efforts will only result in alienating him. Psychiatric referral is recommended if the transvestite expresses symptoms of depression and gender dysphoria.

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OUT OF THE (CLOTHES) CLOSET

by Laurence Senelick

Some years ago I was speaking to a drama class at the University of Manchester on the history of crossdressing on the stage. During the lively discussion that ensued, one young man suddenly protested against his fellow students' seeming endorsement of sartorial gender-switching. "I can see women wearing pants," he conceded, "but I wouldn't wear a skirt. It's unnatural." His classmates rushed to point out the shakiness of his stance. The kilts their Scottish compatriots affect were only the most obvious refutation of his culture-bound belief that accepted custom is somehow divinely ordained.

When it comes to clothing, the seeming rationale for gender distinction varies from society to society. I noted that in the Ottoman Empire both men and women wore baggy trousers—the so-called harem pants—for different reasons. In the case of men, it was to leave their generative apparatus free and unimpeded; in the case of women, it was to enclose their sexual parts and prevent easy access.

In other words, this Islamic society's vestimentary tradition encoded its attitude towards the sexes. Men were regarded as sexual free agents, women as sexual chattels whose appurtenances required safeguards. The meaning of Turkish trousers, in both instances, comes clear only when the rebus of intergender relations within a given social system is deciphered.

Since such relationships are commonly defined and flagged by clothing, it explains why a change of gender-specific clothes—crossdressing or transvestism—may elicit uneasiness and uncertainty. The reshuffling of the social cipher is met with anxiety, distrust, and derision. If garments are so easily traded back and forth, thinks the average mind, perhaps the gender roles these garments stand for may as easily be exchanged. Because the signifiers and the signified can no longer be taken for granted, a fretful confusion results with its accompanying protests. The dangers inherent in such a reversal have to be defused by ridicule or repression.

In the theater, costume is also an important signifier. It is meant to give us apprehensible clues as to a character's class, profession, tastes, even to the genre of drama (a checked suit with a giant daisy in the lapel is unlikely to be found in classic tragedy). At those times and in those cultures when actors were exclusively male, costume also indicated gender. The ritualized apparel of the Japanese kabuki, for example, makes strong distinctions between

masculine and feminine in makeup, hairstyles, vocal timbre, gait, and gesture. In so doing, it intensifies and sublimates its society's attitudes, exaggerating what are taken to be the desirable and essential qualities of a man and a woman. The onnagata, the male actor who portrays women, is admired for his graceful attitudes, demure poses, piping falsetto, even his sexual allure.

But the theater is recognized as a "safehouse," a licensed haven for such impersonations. Outside its precincts, the rules are different. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the onnagata was indeed expected to behave like a woman in life as well and to prostitute himself, because actors were relegated to a low rung on the Japanese social ladder. What was admired and inaccessible onstage turned despicable and vendible offstage. Society maintained a double standard.

Another telling example comes from ancient Greek tragedy. In Euripides' *The Bacchae*, the actor who played the royal mother Agave was probably commended for his performance (he no doubt acted male roles in the drama, too), as was the male chorus that personated female bacchantes. But when, in the course of the play's action, King Pentheus is befuddled by the god Dionysos and appears on the palace steps attired like a woman, the dress code is meant to tell us immediately and forcefully that he has lost his wits. For a man, especially a man in authority, to dress as a woman is the surest sign of madness. He has abandoned his prerogatives in a male-dominated system. Actors may temporarily behave that way within the special territory of the stage, but in society conventional gender distinctions must be maintained.

These attitudes are still with us. When, at the end of *Madame Butterfly*, the hero begins to dress as a geisha, this is intended to show how demented, not how enlightened, he has become. Audiences that condemn transvestism on the street do appreciate it in the theater, but only when it endorses the gender status quo. *La Cage aux Folles* is a hit because its campy antics are confined to a nightclub setting, implying that crossdressing is simply a freaky aspect of show business, irrelevant to "real life." When spectators roar at the beefy high-kickers in a Hasty Pudding show, it is an affirmation that jocks could never possibly be confused with chorines. Despite all attempts to puncture its complacency through gender-bending, our society tenaciously clings to familiar but outworn notions of who should be wearing the pants.

From a publication of theater arts of Tufts University, April 1990. Professor Senelick is a member of the Department of Drama and Dance at Tufts University in Massachusetts.

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QUESTIONS OF LAW

Congress Rules TVs Not Handicapped

By Jan Elliot

Most people grow up believing that sex and gender are one and that one's "sex" is fixed for eternity. Protected by their ignorance, it is hardly surprising that when they are confronted by a reality that shakes their faith in unalterable verities many people lash out at the source of their confusion and fear. As a result, most crossdressers have encountered social rejection in the form of social rudeness or ridicule, discrimination, or even physical assault. Assault is clearly unlawful, and the victim may bring both criminal charges and a civil suit against the culprit (although such a right can hardly be reassuring to a victim afraid of family, community, and/or employment repercussions). Social disapproval, on the other hand, is disturbing but cannot be cured directly by the law. What then of discrimination? Among other possibilities, discrimination may take the form of a refusal to hire or to rent or sell housing. A number of court decisions have held that federal law prohibiting discrimination in hiring by sex does not apply to transsexuals in light of the Congressional intent to protect women rather than other categories of people. Another approach may be possible, however.

In *Blackwell vs. United States Department of the Treasury* (656 F.Supp. 713 [D.D.C. 1986]), the plaintiff Blackwell had lost his job at the Treasury through a reduction in force. He subsequently applied for another Treasury opening and was entitled to a priority in hiring due to his prior termination. Although a self-described homosexual and transvestite (639 F.Supp. 289), it appears likely that Blackwell was either a transgenderist or a transsexual. He had gone to work at the Treasury in a dress for eight years and had undergone breast augmentation surgery of some kind. When he was interviewed for the new position, he presented himself as a woman. The interviewer decided that Blackwell was a homosexual and was accordingly undesirable. The court found that he and others then arranged to abolish the job so that he would not have to justify rejecting Blackwell as a homosexual. Blackwell sued, claiming that he was "handicapped" within the meaning of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. Section 706[7][B]), which then defined a handicapped person as:

Any person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits such person's functioning or one or more such

person's major life activities, (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

The Court wrote: There is nothing to suggest that Mr. Strange (the interviewer) had any understanding one way or the other as to the difference between a homosexual and a transvestite or that he focused on the fact that plaintiff's dress was somewhat more feminine than that of many homosexuals. To make matters more difficult, some transvestites are homosexuals. Yet, as a matter of statutory analysis, while homosexuals are not handicapped it is clear that transvestites are, because many experience strong social rejection in the work place as a result of their mental ailment made blatantly apparent by their crossdressing lifestyle. That, however, did not end the matter.

The court continued: Plaintiff's handicap was not automatically apparent as is gender. In these circumstances one claiming under the Rehabilitation Act has a duty to inform a prospective employer of his handicap before being entitled to relief under that Act. Plaintiff did not do this, preferring to refer simply to his "lifestyle," which was clearly ambiguous. Thus, while the failure to employ plaintiff is highly reprehensible, plaintiff cannot recover and the complaint must be dismissed. Hopefully, wiser heads will correct the underlying injustice.

Accordingly, Blackwell lost and apparently never did obtain reemployment. Since the judge found that Blackwell had failed to meet a procedural requirement, the reasoning that a transvestite is handicapped was technically "dicta," that material not required of the judge and not legally binding.

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AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

by Cynthia Howard

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

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

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

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

The bill expressly stated "that Congress does not intend for transvestites to receive the benefits and protections that are provided for handicapped individuals." The author of the bill may or may not have been bigoted, but he unknowingly was working on behalf of our cause. Conversely, Mr. Cranston's statements to protect our rights were as follows:

"Mr. President, I rise in strong opposition to the pending amendment that would exclude from coverage under the Fair Housing Act a particular mental disorder, in this case transvestism. . . ."

Thank you, Mr. Cranston, for your support(?). Mental disorder? There is the problem right there. How many transsexuals or transvestites really feel that they have a mental disorder? Indeed, how many have been convinced by the psychiatric profession that they are mentally ill? The fact is we have a "personal preference," *not* a mental disorder. Let's read another part of the speech.

"Mr. President, in this case the Senator from North Carolina [Jesse Helms] has singled out for exclusion a disability that is considered by the American Psychiatric Association to be a mental disorder."

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

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

I have written a number of articles regarding psychiatry and its listing of transgenderism (transsexuality, transvestism, crossdressing, etc.) as a mental illness. One of the first things we need to do is to eradicate the idea that we are mentally ill from people's minds. What we are *not* is mentally ill. We do what we do because of personal preference, not because of a mental illness. What we do hurts no one.

I would like to quote Dr. Szasz, a noted and respected professor of psychiatry, who has laid bare the myth of "mental illness." In his book *The Myth of Mental Illness* (pp. 254, 255), he states:

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

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

But just as surely as men seem to need a Marilyn Monroe, or women a Clark Gable, *physicians need sick people!* I submit, therefore, that anyone who acts sick—impersonating, as it were, this role—and does so vis-*à*-*vis*—any behavior can be done compulsively. While I do not wish to imply that child molesters and rapists are free of pressing problems, I object to denominating those problems as addictions.

First of all, to do so is to raise the value of a transitory social ideology above the variety of ongoing human experience; second, it offers a simplistic explanation for an issue that deserves detailed attention. At one end of the psychological spectrum, compulsions may reflect a person's shame or guilt for having feelings—in this case for having sexual feelings specifically—at all. At the other end they may represent a single facet of a complex character disorder.

Perhaps the pathology that does not change with the winds of social reformation lies in the need some people have to meddle in other people's affairs. As Levine and Trolden write, there is nothing intrinsically pathological in the behaviors the *DSM* defines as psychosexual disorders, whether the definitions are taken from the category that prevailed in 1952, the category that prevailed in 1980, or the category that prevails in the revised *DSM-III-R* today.

Instead, sexual behaviors

are defined as pathological only because they violate prevailing erotic norms. Rather than referring to actual clinical entities, psychosexual disorders denote forms of stigmatized erotic conduct. In this sense they are value judgments cloaked as pseudoscientific diagnosis. By inventing and treating these "conditions," that is, by

"medicalizing" morality, mental health professionals and sexologists pathologize non-normative sexual practices; they function as social control agents, enforcing conformity to culturally hegemonic erotic standards. . . .

As used currently, the terms "sexual addiction" and "sexual compulsion" employ prevailing cultural standards as the basis for determining erotic control or deviance.

The Death of Sex

The man who put sex addiction on the map is psychologist Patrick Carnes. In the preface to his book *Out of the Shadows*, originally published in 1983 as *The Sexual Addiction*, Carnes explains how the book grew out of a paper he wrote in 1976, based on his experiences treating sex offenders for two years.

Although he reports that his paper was influential and circulated widely, he refrained from publishing his work for several reasons: Not everyone he regarded as a sex addict was a sex offender; he did not yet have adequate data to support his belief that sexual acting out could constitute an addiction; and there was no network of programs in place—no Sex Addicts Anonymous, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Sexoholics Anonymous, or the like—to help people troubled by their alternative sexual urges. "Most of all," however, Carnes explains, "I was afraid of the public reaction, which is always unpredictable in sexual matters. In short, it was an idea whose time had not come."

Indeed, in 1976 American society was still in the throes of a recreational sex script. By 1983, though we were not ready to resurrect the procreational scripts promulgated by foes of abortion, homosexuality, and extramarital intercourse, at least the time *had* come for a change. Before a relational script could dominate the scene, however, the ruling recreational scripts had to be overthrown. In the fine tradition of American clinical psychiatry, the simplest way to overthrow those scripts was to medicalize the behaviors that defined them.

No one person can redefine entries for so Biblical an opus as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. So far, each revision has required a huge committee and more than a decade of debate. But one influential person can spearhead a movement that redefines a social ideal, and can thereby profoundly alter the context in which a *DSM* committee sits.

Carnes and his followers attribute addiction to behavior. This revisionist judgment is not written in stone, and it is not written in biochemistry, but it

may be written in a future *DSM*, as oral sex and masturbation were in *DSMs* of the not-so-distant past.

Carnes does not claim that every person who engages in any behavior represented in his schema is a sex addict in need of rehabilitation. As he writes, "behavior by itself does not make an addict." It is Carnes' contention that "addicts are people who cannot stop their behavior which is crippling them and those around them," and that, by implication, behaviors that are damaging and out of the actor's control are addictions.

The script Carnes would put in place lays the ground for a social ideology that dictates which erotic pleasures you may take tonight and which you had best forswear; and if you do not like the limits of that tolerance, Carnes warns, your discomfort or rebellion itself suggests that you may be the new sex addict on your block.

Addiction to the Myth

Perhaps we should start to contemplate the meaning of our society's "addiction" to addiction terminology. Psychological health is advanced through increased awareness of personal responsibility for one's feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors. By couching sexual behavior in terms of addiction, the psychological meaning of a person's erotic experience is diminished and his or her personal responsibility for that experience is demeaned.

On an individual basis, the lack of personal responsibility that is thus encouraged, formalized by organizational structures, and given credence by professional caregivers with a great deal to gain by identifying a whole new bailiwick of illness, encourages people who are distressed or confused by their sexuality to think of themselves as impotent in the face of their own problems.

Socially, rapists and other sexually abusive individuals are provided with a sanctioned legal defense for their dangerous practices—"I couldn't help it, I'm an addict"—while people who read erotic literature or watch erotic theater are stigmatized for their harmless ones. Thus, the safety, psychological health, and civil liberties of us all are jeopardized by a cultural ideal that encourages both the suppression and the repression not only of people's behaviors, but of their thoughts and feelings as well, in private and in public, in the names of social service and our own good.

If we accept the idea of sex addiction we give up the rights to our own erotic processes. If we relinquish the rights to suffer our own pains and ignominies, we give away the rights to learn from them and to grow into increasingly responsible adult human beings. And as history shows, if we do

not embrace our own responsibilities, others will readily do so for us.

Laws are already in place regarding sexual activities that clearly have victims; activities, in brief, that are nonconsensual. Whether those laws are adequate, whether they are appropriately enforced, and whether their enforcement is or can be effective are all questions beyond the purview of this essay. Here, the question boils down to whether the food is to be blamed if I overeat.

After 20 years of relative freedom, it has once again become the vogue to legislate morality and to usurp individual rights, sexual and otherwise. But it is precisely those processes by which sexual freedom among consenting adults is denied that the life of one person and the life of a whole society is suppressed, because it is precisely those processes that infantilize a person and a people; first by relieving them of hard choices, next by withholding their responsibilities for making those choices, and finally by taking away their power to make them altogether.

This is why the debate about sexual addiction is not a debate about whether sex is good or not. It is a debate about who shall determine which of us shall be free.

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



SEXUALITY IN ISLAM

by N. McCormick, T. Zandi, and V. Bullough

The following article provides a basis for understanding diverse gender behaviors and lifestyles in cultures where Islam is the major religious and social institution. It is presented in JGS to the readership to give insight into the various gender diversities and social customs in such cultures.

Sexual literacy, in part, is an appreciation for the cultural and historical context of human sexual behavior. Unfortunately, North American sexual scientists have assumed an uncompromisingly Western and contemporary perspective. In 1987, only one of 35 articles in the *Journal of Sex Research* and one of 29 articles in *Archives of Sexual Behavior* considered historic or cross-cultural issues associated with sexual beliefs and behavior.

Insofar as religious dogma programs the faithful to hold particular beliefs about women's and men's place in the world and the appropriateness of sexual expression, it is valuable to study religions, such as Islam, which contradict both Christian theology and Western sexology. Islamic theology is especially relevant because an increasing number of Middle Eastern peoples perceive strict adherence to their religion as the best means of rediscovering their cultural uniqueness and rejecting their colonial past.

The panel members, a historian (Vern Bullough) and two psychologists (Naomi McCormick and Taher Zandi), share their beliefs regarding the relationship between Islam and both the sexual division of labor and sexual practices in Middle Eastern cultures. Taking advantage of the Iranian background of one member of the panel (Taher Zandi), Shiite beliefs receive somewhat more attention than Sunni beliefs.

Islam originally had a quite different outlook on sexuality than did Christianity. In the 19th century, such Western experts as Krafft-Ebing were shocked by what they regarded as the immorality of Islam. Key to the differing attitudes is the character of the prophet Muhammed himself who in the *Quran* is portrayed as a very sexual person. Even Allah is said to have used his own semen in creating humans and the world they live in, which makes Allah much more sexual than the Christian God. This inevitably led to an acceptance of sexuality that was contained in the "hadith," or traditions of Islam, and that

ultimately was found in the "shari'ah," or the various legal systems that owed more to the Talmudic writers than to the Christian ones. Although Shiite Muslims had somewhat different traditions than the Sunni majority, they remained strongly influenced by the attitudes of the rest of the Islamic world.

Middle Eastern women are expected to be virgins at marriage and learn everything they need to know about sex from their husbands. At the same time, women are viewed as more sexually insatiable than men and are therefore subjected to strict family supervision, lest they lose control over their bodies and bring dishonor and economic ruin to their families.

Islamic religious literature suggests cultural ambivalence about sex. On the one hand, matrimony is a holy bond and sexual intercourse with a spouse is depicted as a form of prayer. In contrast with the staid Christian Heaven, legend depicts Islamic Paradise as a place of limitless sensuality where "houris," transparent, fragrant women with silk hair who are eternally young, beautiful virgins, satisfy the chosen one whose penis never slackens. On the other hand, Islamic theologians view bodily by-products such as urine, feces, mucus, semen, vaginal discharge, and blood as contaminants. Strict Muslims and women in particular are expected to undergo purification rites before they are permitted to engage in daily prayer.

In contrast with their Sunni counterparts, Shiite theologians are especially likely to demonstrate an obsessive preoccupation with sexuality. Historically through the present times, Shiite "mullahs" or religious leaders have written more about sex than any other topic. Conceptualizing sex as an abstract issue, mullahs address the legal implications of highly speculative sexual problems. For example, one mullah asked his followers to imagine sleeping on a kitchen counter while an aunt is sleeping on another higher counter. Next, an earthquake occurs such that the aunt falls on top of her nephew and the couple has sexual intercourse by accident. Should impregnation take place, the mullah shares his legal opinions regarding who should be responsible for the child.

Religious preoccupation with sexuality confirms the mullah's control over his followers. Both sexes bear the costs of such preoccupation. Orthodox Muslim women cannot work or socialize with men outside of their families. The cult of virginity is such that depending on their economic circumstances, the few women who were sexually active before marriage get a midwife's help in feigning bleeding at first intercourse with their husbands or have their hymens surgically reconstructed before the wedding night. Men, in contrast, cannot talk about sexual concerns with their wives or seek their friends' advice

on how to improve marital sexuality. Sexual talk between men is limited to discussions of prostitutes and their specialties; intimate discussions about marriage would be interpreted as an indication that the man was acting as a pimp for his wife.

Consistent with their subservient role, it would be unthinkable for a good Muslim woman to make sexual demands on her husband, although she would be expected to be attractive and compliant with any of his sexual desires. In Islamic countries, sexual intercourse means that the *man is doing something to the woman*. The missionary position is the politically correct way of having sex, because it confirms that the man rules the woman. Because saliva, semen, and vaginal discharges are regarded as pollution requiring "tahara," or ritual purification, before prayer can take place, wet kisses and oral sex are prohibited in marriage. Ironically, condoms, which on the surface would appear to prevent pollution, are used with prostitutes but not wives. In Persian, "condom" is an obscene word which would be used only by a man when joking with male friends.

The little empirical research that exists indicates that Shiite Muslims are much more sexually conservative and frustrated than their Western counterparts. These findings are especially important because the data were collected before the Islamic fundamentalist revolution in Iran and were based on the responses of educated, affluent, young Iranians, those who could be expected to be more liberal than the typical member of their culture.

No consideration of sexuality in Islamic nations would be complete without an examination of sex roles and the international women's liberation movement. Women played and continue to play an active role in revolutionary movements that have had the goal of overthrowing colonial and oppressive regimes. During the Iranian Revolution in the late 1970s, educated and westernized women joined orthodox Muslims in wearing the "chadur," or headcovering, as a protest against the dictatorial Pahlavi dynasty. In some countries, women's revolutionary fervor has been rewarded by increasing their educational and occupational opportunities. The opposite has been the case in Iran where Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers have destroyed legal and occupational gains made on behalf of women during the Shah's reign.

Likely to live in crushing poverty, the typical woman in an Islamic nation marries early, has many children, receives less education than the typical man, and is entirely dependent on her husband and extended family for economic survival. However, she may be more liberated than the typical Western woman in some ways. In contrast with Western fashion, conservative Islamic dress can protect the working woman from sexual harassment. Finally, North American women

might question just how much freedom they have to move about freely. In addition to being threatened by the possibility of rape from both male strangers and acquaintances, young women are reluctant to attend social functions without a boyfriend or male companion. Taking a humorous perspective, Middle Eastern feminists have described the boyfriend as serving the same function for North American women as does the chador, or veil. Both the boyfriend and the chador increase the woman's self-confidence and enable her to appear in public.

Vern L. Bullough is Dean of Arts and Sciences at SUNY Buffalo (New York) and past president of the Society for the Scientific Study of Sex. He is a published author and expert on the historical aspects of sexology.



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TOWARD THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REAL GENDER EQUALITY

The following piece was sent to us from the Movement for the Establishment of Real Gender Equality (MERGE), an organization of men and women from Western Canada. This article sets out its purpose and some guidelines to achieving its goals. It is presented to our readership for serious comment and response.

We stand for the principle of equal rights and equal dignity for all persons, and in particular for members of both sexes. Recent changes have moved society toward equality in areas where women have long been discriminated against, though much remains to be done in this regard. But men have also suffered various kinds of discrimination because of their gender, and these are no less harmful to their well-being. There cannot be real equality until both sexes are freed from oppressive stereotypes and unfair treatment. The purpose of this organization is to work in public and private for greater understanding and equality between the sexes. All of our official pronouncements will affirm our commitment to full equality, and on any issue where either "side" is not being given adequate consideration, we will attempt to promote a more balanced view. All men and women who share these views and goals are cordially invited to join with us.

Resolution on Gender Roles

Whatever value they may once have had, in today's technological and overpopulated world, rigid gender roles are obsolete. In fact, strict role expectations have done vast amounts of harm to men and women alike. Individuals differ greatly from one another in their needs, tastes, and abilities; hence moral equality demands that each person have the freedom to be different.

Be it therefore resolved that neither of the traditional sex roles, nor a single "androgynous" one, be enforced by law or social pressure; all three, and others as well, are worthy of respect if freely chosen.

Resolution on Social Rights and Responsibilities

Both sexes have suffered under traditional social restrictions, and both have special needs and problems. Moreover, individuals of both sexes have important abilities needed by society, and all are indebted to society for what they have received from it.

Be it therefore resolved that all the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, such as public office and military service, be regarded as belonging equally to both sexes, on the basis of individual ability to carry them out.

Be it further resolved that there be legal and educational programs to discover the needs and ameliorate the special problems of both sexes, e.g., government councils on both men's and women's issues, both women's and men's studies in universities.

Resolution on Economic Equality in Employment

The principles of equal access to jobs and equal pay for equal work are a matter of simple justice. Women have historically been denied rightful opportunities in employment, though many efforts are under way to eliminate this problem. Not only women will benefit from the change, however: The burden of being sole provider for women and children has often been very harmful to the physical and emotional health of men.

Be it therefore resolved that continuing efforts be made to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex in employment.

Be it further resolved that in economic matters where burdens or benefits are statistical, one single method of determining premiums be applied to both sexes. For example, if men pay the same amounts as women toward (and receive the same monthly benefits from) pensions, even though on average they don't live as long, they should pay the same amounts as women for life or automobile insurance.

Resolution on Economic Equality in Marriage

The traditional undervaluation of unpaid labor in the home and the absence of laws governing shared labor between spouses have often in the past cheated

wives of what was rightfully theirs. Similarly, the traditional attitudes that it is a man's job to provide and that he must pay for a woman's companionship have also led to countless injustices.

Be it therefore resolved that childbearing and childrearing activities in a marriage be considered of equal importance to working outside the home.

Be it further resolved that all divorce settlements be based on a realistic assessment of actual contributions of money and labor in each individual case, rather than on economic need or on an automatic assumption of equal contributions.

Resolution on Equality in Parenting

The traditional social roles of man as provider and woman as nurturer have caused great injustice regarding both the rights and the responsibilities of both mothers and fathers. In particular, men have to varying degrees been denied the opportunity and the obligation to nurture their children.

Be it therefore resolved that continuing efforts be made to change social attitudes in regard to this vital concern.

Be it further resolved that any arrangements made for parental care leave, day care, and government support to single parents be equally available to members of both sexes.

Traditional attitudes concerning divorce have resulted in a situation where women are left with the sole burden of childrearing, men are denied the rewards of parenting and left with only its financial burdens, and children are denied the right to be nurtured by both parents.

Be it therefore resolved that there be a legal presumption in favor of joint custody, and social means employed to help it work. And, where this is not possible, that there be no discrimination on the basis of sex regarding the opportunity to gain sole custody or the responsibility to provide child support, and that there be humane and reasonable enforcement of support payments, of access to the children by noncustodial parents, and of accountability in the use of support monies by custodial parents.

In cases of unwed pregnancy, a special biological burden falls on the woman. But under traditional laws, unwed fathers have no legal rights, only legal obligations.

Be it therefore resolved that unmarried fathers have a responsibility to share the burdens of accidental pregnancy, with emotional and financial support wherever possible.

Be it further resolved that whatever rights unmarried women are to have to claim legal parenthood, or to renounce it (through abortion or adoption by others), shall be matched by corresponding rights for unmarried men.

Resolution on Sexuality and Personal Relationships

Many differences between the two genders in regard to sex and love are merely the product of social conditioning and social expectations. Some of these differences cause conflicts and misunderstandings, which can best be overcome by eliminating the social differentiation. But equality doesn't always mean sameness. There is evidence of biological differences between the sexes, on average, in regard to sex-related desires. For example, female erotic response is evidently less easily aroused; this may be due in part to its lesser susceptibility to visual stimuli, in contrast to the strong male response to the sight or suggestion of female sex organs. Similarly, women may on average have a greater natural tendency to need love and affection. These differences also make it hard for men and women to understand each other, and have long led to serious conflicts. But the differences are not the fault of either group, and neither set of needs is more noble than the other.

Be it therefore resolved that there be greater efforts toward tolerance and understanding between the sexes in regard to these matters, and equal acceptance of the needs of both in all laws and social conventions.

Resolution on Harm and Harmful Behavior

One person's safety and dignity are as important as another's, and no one should suffer the stigma of harmful behavior by others who happen to be of the same race or gender.

Be it therefore resolved that there be equal public concern for harm suffered by a woman or a man, either real or in fictional portrayals, be it over sexual assault (suffered more often by women), or nonsexual assault (suffered more often by men), or any other kind of physical or emotional harm.

Be it further resolved that there be equal abhorrence of and punishment for comparable crimes committed by men and women, be they cases of sexual assault (committed more often by men), or child battery (committed more often by women), or assault on a spouse (committed equally often by men and women), or any other antisocial behavior.

Be it finally resolved that there be equal protection of the rights of those accused of wrongful behavior, be they men or women.

Resolution on Stereotyping and Sexist Attitudes

Gender stereotypes are harmful to both sexes, and neither gender is immune to having sexist attitudes. Furthermore, neither sex has received all the benefits or all the burdens of the traditional social system. Finally, no individuals alive today are to blame for creating the gender inequalities we have inherited -- though all must be encouraged to help end them. In solving the problems that face them both, men and women are basically interdependent, not adversaries.

Be it therefore resolved that all men and women renounce stereotypes and sexist attitudes, self-seeking policies and simple-minded blaming, in favor of good will, mutual concern, and cooperation in the task of eliminating sexism.



THE ROOTS OF PORNOGRAPHY

by David Steinberg

It is striking to me that in the midst of so much vehement debate, there is so little discussion of, or attempt to simply understand, the nature of the pornographic phenomenon itself. The *Hite Report on Male Sexuality* notes that 89% of its respondents report some involvement with pornography. Something basic is going on here.

What is it that makes pornography so popular among American men and, increasingly, among American women? Why does it sell? What does pornography accomplish, or seem to accomplish, for the tens of millions of people that are its market?

For myself, and for virtually all of the men I talked to, pornography is essentially a tool for masturbation, a fantasy enhancer. This is important to remember. Pornography is not about partner sex, not about sexual reality, not about our real lovers and mates, not about our real selves. I think the vast majority of men who use pornography know and understand this, and are able to maintain clear distinctions, day by day, between fantasy and reality.

Women I have talked to consistently fear that their male lovers expect them to look and act like *Playboy* models or porn stars. But the men, fortunately, seem to be clear on the difference between images and real people, between archetypes and human beings, between jet-setters and the rest of us.

To be effective, then, pornography must be good masturbation material. It must address our longings, our unfulfilled desires, the sexual feelings that have power in fantasy and masturbation precisely because they are unsatisfied in our real lives. So what are some of these unresolved sexual issues addressed by men through pornography?

From my point of view, the most important single issue that welds men so forcefully to pornography is that of sexual scarcity. Although attitudes are changing, most heterosexual men still experience sex from the point of view of scarcity. Men seem to want sex more than women. Men try to get women to have sex with them. Or, more subtly, men respect sexual desire more than women do. Men feel resistance to sexual desire from women expressed as fear, reluctance, disinterest, even revulsion.

Women, sadly, have been handed (and generally accepted) the cultural role of being the final defenders of puritan antisex. Sexual desire is evil, or at least low. Men desire. Women—higher, more spiritual beings than men—are to distrust and defend themselves against male desire, and will be severely punished if they do not. Women are not to enjoy being the focus of male desire and certainly ought not desire sex for its own sake.

Women are taught to experience sexual desire only in the context of emotional commitment or expression of affection, not as simple bodily hunger. Lust is, by definition, unwomanly. To be a lusty woman—especially a lusty young woman—still carries slutty connotations that no woman wants to endure.

I am in no way blaming women for this situation. Nor am I trying to invalidate the many reasons women are protective of themselves sexually—ranging from fear of pregnancy, to fear of rape, to fear of mother, to fear of losing the respect of women friends. I am just noting that we live in a sex economy that results in an ongoing pool of surplus male desire, in a culture that fears and disrespects even the best of male desire, a world that gives men precious little opportunity to feel desired, feel desirable, or feel attractive and appreciated for our sexual natures.

A closely related issue, one that is perhaps even more significant emotionally, is the issue of rejection. Men still carry the burden of being the sexual initiators, the desirers, and thus, inevitably, the rejected ones. A difficult, dangerous, and painful job, but as they say, someone has to do it.

We are only beginning to understand the significance of the emotional work men must do to express sexual interest and initiative to those who are being taught to reject us. Warren Farrell has suggested that men's attempts to deal psychologically with rejection may have a lot to do with our need to objectify women) that it feels better to be rejected by an object than by a thinking, feeling human being. I think he's right.

In any case, fear of rejection and the resulting negative feelings about our sexual desirability are difficult and painful aspects of sexual manhood we all grapple with, usually with only partial success. It is the residue we take to porn.

These issues—sexual scarcity, desire for appreciation and reciprocation of male desire, and fear of being sexually undesirable—are the central issues that draw men to pornography. Violent imagery, by various estimates, accounts for somewhere between 3% and 8% of all pornography. Images that address scarcity, female lust, and female expression of male desirability, on the other hand, account for at least 75% of the imagery in porn.

Pornography is a vehicle we use to help us fantasize sexual situations to heal these wounds: available, lusty sex focused on *our* desirability, with archetypal images of the women who most represent our undesirability in real life. When we buy the magazines, take them to the safety and privacy of our bedrooms, and masturbate to their images (or when we masturbate to the images of these women on screen), we vent the frustrations born of scarcity, the sexual fears born of rejection, and the sexual insecurity born of being so seldom appreciated by women for our specifically sexual existence.

And which images most effectively accomplish this for us? Images of women who are openly desirous of sex, who look out at us from the page with all the yearning that we know so well yet so rarely receive from others. Images of women hungry for sex *with us*, possessed by desire *for us*. Women hungry to get their hands on our bodies or to get our hands on theirs. Receptive women who greet our sexual desire not with fear and loathing but with appreciation, even gratitude. And glamorous women whose mere bestowal of sexual attention mythically proves our sexual worth.

Is it any wonder that such a sexual world is attractive to so many men? The problem is that although the pornographic fantasies may be soothing in the moment, they may themselves contribute to our bad feelings about ourselves over time. This depends on the specific images, what we do with them, and how we feel about ourselves to begin with.

But one general guideline does come to mind: the more the imagery of pornography seems to confirm who we really are as sexual people, the better we will probably feel about our sexual energies after its use; the more we are told that to be sexually desirable we need to be other than who we really are, the worse we will feel.

From this point of view, much of pornography is likely to affect us negatively (although, again, not all—and we *do* get to pick and choose among the offerings). Michael Castleman, in his book *Sexual Solutions*, notes how seldom pornography includes "any kissing, hand-holding, caressing, massage, reciprocal undressing, tenderness, or discussion of lovemaking preferences." It is sad that pornography speaks so little about softness, vulnerability, uncertainty, and intimacy—all of which we know to be part of our sexual realities.

But the likelihood that pornography alienates us from our sexual selves or that it fails to offer more than temporary relief from our sexual wounds should not blind us to the very real and valid feelings that attract us to the medium in the first place.

Besides, not all our attraction to pornography is rooted in pain and fear, and not all of its effects are negative. Pornography is still the medium that most vociferously advocates free and diverse sexual expressiveness, a radical stance in our culture, which is still essentially sex-negative. Pornography still serves as an arena for adolescents to get validation and approval for their emerging sexual feelings, whose power far exceeds what society is willing to endorse as proper. Pornography is still an ally for those of us who choose to fight for the full recognition and admiration of our sexual natures in the face of the growing forces of sexual repression and domestication.

Pornography is the one arena that is not afraid of the penis, even when erect, that does not find sperm disgusting, that shows pictures of men ejaculating in slow motion, even as other films emphasize the beauty of birds flying or of dolphins leaping. And it is in the world of pornography—not feminist art—where much of traditional male hatred and fear of vaginas has been redirected toward vagina appreciation, through what Michael Hill calls "graphic and realistic depictions of the cunt as beautiful, tasty, wonderful to smell and touch."

In addition, pornography, for all its *misinformation*, is still an important source of real and useful sexual information as well. The Grafenburg spot and the normalcy of female ejaculation have been introduced to mass culture not by sex therapists, but by the porn network. Dozens of magazines and now a feature-length film have taught men these important aspects of *female pleasure*.

Mass acceptance of oral and anal sex as normal sexual practices has been speeded by the repeated, indeed casual, depictions of these acts in hundreds of porn films. Porn films still offer real learn-by-watching information (the information we should all receive as emerging adults, but don't) on all kinds of sexual practice—as long as you bring a critical eye to tell the fake from the real (there's plenty of both) and the friendly from the nasty (also both well represented).

And if you want to encourage your sexual imagination, going to see a variety of sex loops will give you plenty of food for thought and plenty of support for what you may feel to be your unique desire.

Finally, I think it is important to acknowledge that pornography provides a victimless outlet for the basic sexual rage that seems to sit within so many men, whether we like it or not. This is the rage that sadly gets vented at specific women through rape and other forms of sexual assault. It will not go away from the social psyche, pornography or no pornography.

To my mind, this rage has at its core a righteous anger: the anger at having our naturally exuberant, lively, pleasurable sexual feelings twisted, stunted, denied, and used against us. This anger needs to be acknowledged, respected and redirected toward proper targets: the churches, the sex-phobics, and the complex of social institutions intent on denying us the natural exploration of one of life's greatest wonders.

We are painfully aware of the hurt that results from this anger when it is improperly directed toward specific women. Respecting the roots of such anger is as uncomfortable as respecting the roots of our attraction to pornography. But both are important for us to own and affirm. If we can respect the core of what attracts us to pornography, we can begin to find ways to have that core more effectively addressed by the sexual materials we use.

On the other hand, if we think that every time we are drawn to pornography we are expressing the worst of ourselves as men, we will both hate ourselves and become trapped in repeating cycles of guilt and rebellion.

What is needed, in my opinion, is not an attempt to drive pornography underground, socially or psychically. If pornography becomes outlawed (again), it, like prostitution, will come to represent the notion that sex is dirty much more strongly than it does today. What is needed is the development of sexual materials that take the best of the pornographic tradition—sexual openness, exploration, and celebration—and add egalitarian values, imagination, artfulness, respect for ourselves, and respect for the power and beauty of sex itself.

We need sexual materials that more fully address our real sexual needs and feelings, materials that help us to feel better about ourselves and enable us to resist the antisexual insanity we must endure day to day. We need material with which we can identify without contradicting our best sexual intuitions—photographs and stories whose beauty affirms our own sexual worth and power.

Happily, we can now point to the beginning creation of some such materials. In the past year and a half, a small group of us in Santa Cruz has developed an erotic theater show, *Celebration of Eros*, a dramatic presentation of poetry and prose with music and an exceptional slide show, to celebrate the best of our erotic natures, of life, of love, and of our wonderful bodies. We are also collecting material for a book of conscious, explicit erotica, *The Pan-Erotic Review*, which will demonstrate that such material can be sexy, powerful, arousing, and energizing without being stale, manipulative of men's and women's sexual frustrations, or male-dominant.

Yellow Silk, a journal of erotic arts whose motto is "all persuasions, no brutality," is in its fourth year of publication. *Eidos*, another alternative erotic publication directed to women, is published in Boston. And *On Our Backs*, a lesbian magazine published in San Francisco, is to my knowledge the first explicitly feminist sex magazine anywhere.

We need more. We need what Paula Webster calls "a truly radical feminist pornography-erotica." Recent thinking and writing among the sex radicals of the feminist movement (*Powers of Desire, Pleasure and Danger*) are an encouraging start toward understanding what such a feminist pornography might look like. Hopefully before too long, when we and our sons and daughters go out to buy some sexual stimulation, we'll all be able to feel good about what we bring home.

David Steinberg, M.S.W., is a sex educator and therapist practicing in Santa Cruz, California. He is also an active contributor to the Bay Area Professional Men's Guild of San Francisco.



CROSSDRESSING AND THE WORLD OF ART

A Tempest in a Portrait:
Was That Lady A Lord?

by Eric Pace

For 38 years, an old portrait of a jowly person in women's garb has reposed in the collection of the New York Historical Society, serene in the decidedly unconventional wisdom about its subject.

Now, a New York University professor, Patricia U. Bonomi, has ignited a trans-Atlantic tempest by challenging the traditional view: that the portrait depicts Viscount Cornbury, Royal Governor of the British Colonies of New York and New Jersey from 1702 to 1708 and a man long said to have liked wearing women's clothes in public now and then.

The professor, who is writing the Viscount's biography, said in a recent interview and in a letter published in a British literary weekly, that her research indicated that he would not have gone in for that sort of thing and that the anonymous undated portrait was "not of Cornbury at all."

Openly Unhappy

Arguing against her is Dr. Philip Davenport-Hines, a fellow of the Royal Historical Society who has written a new book of social history that accepts the traditional identification of the painting. He writes in the book that "we begin to find people who are openly unhappy with some of the social expectations of their gender—for example, Viscount Cornbury"—in that historical period.

In a later letter in the weekly *New York Times* Literary Supplement, Dr. Davenport-Hines said that the professor's argument was "inconclusive" and ignored some important evidence and that he was still inclined to believe the portrait was of Lord Cornbury.



The New York Historical Society

His book, *Sex, Death and Punishment: Attitudes to Sex and Sexuality in Britain Since the Renaissance*, was put out by Collins Publishers, a British concern.

Of the dispute that came after the weekly reviewed the book, a Collins editor, Philip Gwyn Jones, said: "It seems a very English exchange. It's funny to see an American coming to the defense of such a distant and rather peculiar historical figure -- with such dispatch and in the grand British manner."

Not only that, but the New York Historical Society is keeping a stiff upper lip. A senior curator there, Dr. Annette Blaugrund, said: "I have some questions about the painting. We will have someone here this summer to do some research in addition to Professor Bonomi's. We would love to have some of her input as well."

In the meantime, the portrait remains prominently displayed in the society's museum headquarters on Central Park West, and Dr. Blaugrund said she had no plans to change the labels that say flatly that the Viscount was the subject of the painting.

In her letter, Professor Bonomi, an expert on early American history, said the portrait, which the society bought from a British family named Pakington in 1952, "has tickled the fancy of viewers for 200 years." It was being kept on a Pakington estate in England, she adds, when in 1796 it was first said to portray Lord Cornbury, who died in 1723 after inheriting the higher title of Earl of Clarendon.

Floated in Derision

The professor writes that a "tale that when in America Governor Cornbury had dressed as a woman to show his resemblance to his cousin Queen Anne" was "originally floated in derision" by his opponents in the colonies.

"Given the spleen of Governor Cornbury's colonial opposition, the transvestism charge was in all likelihood a slander," she contends.

Yet accounts of his crossdressing have proven highly durable. In a 1989 book, Louis Auchincloss wrote unreservedly that the Viscount was "a notorious transvestite." But Mr. Auchincloss, who is president of the Museum of the City of New York, said it was only a "dubious legend" that the Governor "used to wear women's robes in presiding over the City Council to represent more appropriately his royal female relative."

Professor Bonomi said that in the past she had not questioned the conventional wisdom that Lord Cornbury had crossdressed and had also been corrupt. But in more recent research, she said, she found that contemporary "English officials and Church of England clergymen seemed to think quite highly of Governor Cornbury."

"They disputed the stories about corruption," she said. "No one among British officials ever mentioned the crossdressing specifically, but there are letters from British officials in the colonies in which they said Cornbury had been slandered viciously." And the mysterious painting, she said, "is the most frustrating aspect of this whole story."

In *Sex, Death and Punishment*, the author asserts that Lord Cornbury "was undeniably a man who felt false when he dressed and behaved as men were expected to do," and that "it was probably relevant to the acting out of his fantasy that the Queen whom he imitated was his first cousin, to whom he bore some facial resemblance."

Reprinted from the New York Times, May 1990. Professor Senelick is a member of the Department of Drama and Dance at Tufts University of Massachusetts.



Outreach Book Service announces the publication of

Transformations

Crossdressers and Those Who Love Them

by Mariette Pathy Allen

Recently published, this book of photographs and interviews with men who crossdress focuses on males who depend on feminine imagery to reach full personality expression. It includes 16 pages of color, 100 black-and-white images, and 32 interviews.

"Transformations is a sensitive and empathetic portrayal of men whose lives are involved with this form of expression of the feminine."
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"An absolutely splendid photographic job in capturing moments of truth, esthetic and empathetic, in the lives of men whose destiny it is to mime women."
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BOOK REVIEW

Crossdressers & Those Who Love Them, by M. P. Allen

Reviewed by W. A. Henkin

Every spring in a major American city such as San Francisco, Boston, Chicago, or Denver; every autumn in Provincetown, Massachusetts; and periodically throughout the year in Pittsburgh, San Antonio, and elsewhere, several hundred genetically male human beings gather to spend anywhere from a couple of days to a couple of weeks dressing and acting like cultural females.

Made up, often expertly; stylishly coiffed; variously turned out in stockings and heels, sweaters and skirts, dresses and scarves, and party gowns shimmering with seed pearls and sequins, these self-proclaimed ladies are among the most articulate, politically active, and economically advantaged members of the American crossdressing community. During their days and weeks together they attend lectures and seminars whose topics range from scarf-tying and voice modulation to the politics of sex discrimination and the impact of female hormones on the development of cancer in male reproductive organs; they attend committee meetings aimed at supporting the health, education, and welfare of crossdressers around the world; and they party with the joy and relief members of all subcultures feel when they are finally free to be themselves among others of their kind.

Photographer Mariette Pathy Allen met her first crossdresser in less formal circumstances in 1978, in New Orleans, on the last day of Mardi Gras. She looked at Vicky West through her camera lens, and West "looked back at me, calmly and directly. It was as if I were seeing into someone's soul, unburdened by masculinity or femininity, as if in covering her male anatomy with a beautiful dress, her full humanity was present."

Her meetings with West started Allen on a ten-year odyssey into a world where sex is between the legs, gender is between the ears, and there is no necessary correlation between the two. The people she met "don't fit the old pictures of lonely figures in murky bars, back streets, and rundown hotel rooms." Instead, they belong "in the daylight of daily life, rich in relationships with spouses, children, siblings, parents and friends. . . ." Allen decided to document these lives, and *Transformations* is the result of her mission.

In several of her 32 interviews, Allen captures the pain and confusion many crossdressers experience when—typically in early childhood and almost al-

ways by puberty—they discover the depth and passion associated with their inclinations, as well as the difficulties. For example, Gwen reports that as a child "every night I'd go to bed and pray that when I woke up I'd be transformed. I couldn't understand why my prayers went unanswered." For Cindy, "it is difficult to describe how overwhelmingly awful you feel when you know, absolutely know, that you are fundamentally different from the people all around you. . . . Unable to talk to your parents, your siblings, or friends because you are crazy. I grew up believing this."

Allen also captures the elation crossdressers may experience when they learn they are neither crazy nor alone. "Even more difficult to describe," Cindy continues, "is how I felt in 1966 while a freshman in college when I read Havelock Ellis's description of what he called eonism: a condition which involved the desire of heterosexual males to dress as women. The volume at the university may still have the pages stuck together with my tears. That moved me out of the freak category and into a subset of humanity."

The community also includes people like Elizabeth Anne, whose mother knew about her crossdressing "from the beginning," and whose photograph shows her being primped by Mom. "Wearing women's clothes is an art form, and my association with women has allowed my creativity to reach its full potential," Elizabeth Anne explains.

Communicating the truth about themselves to other people, and even living full-time as women, has helped some of Allen's subjects to move toward personal liberation. Suzy feels "like a new person since I came out." Yvonne's "life has been successful by just being me. My day is worth every minute, because I'm happy with myself and those around me." For Dee, "it has taken many years to understand what happened to me. I'm glad I did it. I've had a lot of fun."

Illuminating as the interviews are, however, photography is the heart of *Transformations*. In some 100 black-and-white pictures and 16 pages of color portraits, Allen allows the ladies to show themselves both as women and as men, alone and with each other, with their wives, lovers, children, and parents. When we watch Bob become Malinda, we see the question in her eyes, reflecting what she says in her interview: "When I was growing up, often I would stare deeply into the mirror and ask, 'Why?' Thirty years later I look into the mirror and ask the same question." Paul's daughter sips a soda while, dressed in a slip and wig cap, he brushes make-up on his chin; she tries his wig on herself and on her doll, then stands for a portrait with her father, Paula.

When "Joe—Artist and Mechanic" is pictured side by side with "Joe as Diahanna" it is possible to see that the face is the same chiefly because the text says so. Some of Allen's subjects, like Terisa, Kay, and the 79-year-old

Felicity, could easily pass for genetic women on the street. As Rita observes, "being taken for a real woman is very exciting. You get treated differently." Other people who might pass just as easily, such as Valerie, "don't have that much interest in passing publicly as a woman. I would prefer to have people know that I am a man in women's clothing. I would like to be accepted for who I am. . . ."

Though no one has reliable figures, best estimates are that 15 million American men crossdress part or all the way, part or all of the time. The ones pictured in *Transformations* include a banker, a couple of physicians, a college professor, a factory worker, a retired police officer, a former captain in the British Royal Navy, artists, a science fiction writer, an aviator. "From corporation presidents to construction workers," Allen writes, "they represent the full range of American society. They live in the fanciest suburbs and the toughest barrios. They teach Sunday school, lead Boy Scout troops, and are members of Kiwanis clubs. The great majority are heterosexuals and are husbands, fathers, and grandfathers. Theories for transgendered behavior range from genetic predisposition and in utero hormonal imbalance to frustration with male role constrictions, environmental influences, and boredom with the limitations of men's clothing. But no one knows the reasons for sure. . . ."

As, indeed, no one knows the reasons for sure about very much of human behavior. Like Michael Rosen's *Sexual Magic: The SM Photographs*, another fine book investigating a vibrant fringe of American society, *Transformations* is more than reportage of photojournalism in the ordinary sense of the term. It is a deeply felt, empathically rendered, and beautifully present portrait of a community, made by an artist who was able to immerse herself in a world most people never even see.

In *Forbidden Fantasies*, published in 1980, Mike Phillips, Barry Shapiro, and Mark Joseph also endeavored to cover the subject of crossdressers in photographs and interviews; but back then there were only local crossdressing clubs scattered about the country. There was nothing like the current social organization Ariadne Kane has called the gender "paraculture." Perhaps as a consequence, most of the crossdressers Phillips, Shapiro, and Joseph included in their book lived much farther out on society's edge than most of Allen's subjects do. They were drag strippers, street hustlers, a chauffeur, a leatherman, and a professional Upstairs Maid.

If I have any complaint about *Transformations*, it is that the book portrays crossdressers as largely white middle-class professionals whose lives are fundamentally in order, however discombobulated they once may have been. People of color, the poor, the disabled, and the otherwise disenfranchised—who number among their ranks plenty of crossdressers, as Phillips, Shapiro,

and Joseph showed—make almost no appearance here; and when they do, both Allen's photography and the book's slick production leave them seeming as clean and brushed as their managerial counterparts. Then again, the people pictured in *Transformations* are often deeply thoughtful about their lives in a way the subjects in *Forbidden Fantasies* rarely are. Perhaps in the decade that separates the publication of these two books, crossdressing really has come some important way out of its closet. Perhaps what once was most obviously—though by no means exclusively—the province of street culture has finally reached the level of acceptance at which it may be understood in the abstract as well as in the particular, and where Ariadne Kane, who helped to found the local Boston area crossdressers' club, the annual Fantasia Fair, and the gender counseling Outreach Institute, can claim, "My God! It is humanity that makes sense, not the clothes that anyone wears!"

Allen's documentary begins, as this report might just as well end, with an appreciation for the brave and lovely people she photographed. In the last part of her own dedication for her book she says: "To the gender community who welcomed me into a private world. You have shown me that there are few limits, just unexplored options."

William Henkin, M.F.C. (Marriage and Family Counselor), is a sex educator and therapist practicing in the San Francisco Bay area. He is a frequent writer for the Spectator and the Samutopia Journal.



BOOK REVIEW

Deceptive Distinctions: Sex, Gender, and the Social Order,
by C. F. Epstein

Reviewed by Dr. N. Ledins

Culminating 20 years of research, Dr. Epstein has not only received glowing accolades from her sociology peers and feminists, but has presented a gasping array of material to bolster her main thesis: much of the so-called research of the past on sex and gender has perpetuated distinctions based on mainstream male cultural viewpoints, all of which are biased.

Dr. Epstein's approach is both noble and gigantic. Her review of the sociological, psychosocial, and biological "research" is monumental. Her volume contains, bar none, some of the best overview material and insightful commentary to date on sex, gender, and assumptions/confusions about these areas.

She is firm in her perspective that "scientists have been active agents (along with men in church and governments) perpetuating distinctions based on false premises and unacceptable clarifications." In sum, as she notes on pages 8–11: "because men in church and in governments have, as far back as we can recall, held greater resources than women, it is their version of human nature that has been most evident . . . [so that] the hierarchy of men over women is kept in place more subtly by the insistence that people behave as society's opinion molders say they should." "This model," she notes, "casts men as the norm and women as the 'other' . . . (p. 11).

Epstein clearly asserts that the biased research of the past, focusing on the small differences between genders, falsely concludes that men and women are essentially different. This error, she maintains, has led to faulty assumptions: feminine/masculine distinctions have empirical reality, and these distinctions can be ranked. She presents ample evidence that this accumulated baggage from the past is due primarily to social construction and that the division of the world by sex has become an "ideal" construct, albeit one that is false. As a minimalist, she believes that the two sexes are essentially similar and that differences linked to sexual functions are not related to social roles or psychological traits. In short, she concludes, most gender or sexual differences are not as deeply rooted or immutable as has been believed.

Moving into the chicken-and-egg arena, Epstein scorns those who make the mistake of surmising that "sex causes certain behavior merely because variables are found in association with each other" (p. 37). She maintains that such an assumption (i.e., sex is responsible for behavior) creates a dichotomous perspective that obscures similarities in behavior. Using sex, she says, "generates invidious comparison and reinforces splintered thinking that recasts a world into male-female categories" (p. 37).

Such puffery and illegitimate "research" only stands as an edifice to grand explorations based on limited and often contradictory evidence.

A word that continues to crop up throughout her book is "stereotype." She reserves this word especially for those who hold to "socialization" as the main avenue whereby people acquire traits through internalization. This, she concludes, is "verbal magic . . . only resulting in a set of stereotypes which are . . . flawed" (p. 76).

For those involved in the areas of sex and gender, she offers the thought that there is much support developing for an alternative view, one espousing the premise that people are more malleable than we have believed and that, as the destinies of groups change, so can the destinies of individuals (p. 98).

She steadfastly maintains that the social ordering of males and females occurs and is maintained through the interplay between social constraints and individual choices. In short, Epstein clearly enunciates the view that individuals make choices from among socially constructed alternatives in patterned ways, and while individuals make choices, institutional patterns shape the alternatives and make one choice more likely than another (p. 99).

She accuses many of her colleagues, not only of shoddy, biased research, but of fostering the "Salieri phenomenon." (Salieri, Mozart's jealous colleague and contemporary, under the guise of helping Mozart, actually sought to keep him in an inferior position.) So too, notes Epstein, the faulty research models present a "persistent sentiment that women express different values, focus on different issues, and are motivated by different ambitions than men. Research on this topic, however, contradicts these perceptions" (p. 182).

Even the so-called gender gap, she muses, has proven ephemeral. There are no fundamental attitudinal differences in men and women, but there are differences in the opportunity structure and social position -- especially by those in a position to control women's access to power (p. 186).

In summary, Epstein's position is clearly outlined on page 231: "Differences tend to be superficial, and they are often linked to power differences . . . and they are situation-specific . . . [so that] there are more similarities in men's and women's behavior than is commonly believed. . . . Gender differences are socially created and may be socially altered."

Unfortunately, she concludes, many women participate in the conspiracy by protecting men and helping maintain the myths. The mounting evidence, she notes, makes it increasingly difficult to obscure the overwhelming similarities between men and women.

Phyllis Schafley, take notice!

Nancy S. Ledins, Ph.D. is an author and lecturer and has spoken about various topics of importance to the CD/CG community. She also serves as educational advisor/consultant to the American Electrology Association.



Venus Castina by C.J. Bulliet

Announcing the re-publication of the classic

This title, first published in 1928, includes a roster of famous men, from renowned men of letters to heroes and statesmen, who have been crossdressers. It is fully illustrated with satirical drawings by Alexander King.

Available from Outreach Book Service, Ltd., 126 Western Ave., Suite 222, Augusta, ME 04330. \$27.50 + 3.50 P&H. Enclose a check or money order for the full amount (\$31.00) in US funds payable to Outreach Book Service, Ltd.

GENDER AWARENESS AND INFORMATION NETWORK (GAIN)

By Ari Kane, Director

GAIN is an organization for professionals who serve clients that seek counseling and guidance on issues related to gender conflict and gender dysphoria.

GAIN, formerly OPERN, is an organization that provides referral services and educational resources for healthcare givers who serve clients who seek counseling on issues related to gender conflict and gender dysphoria. Membership includes 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 Outreach and Achievement Institute. The Institute sponsors educational, personal growth, and social activities for the community of crossdressers, transsexuals, and androgynes.

The education and referral services and resources provided by GAIN for healthcare professionals include:

Seminars that present an overview of unconventional gender behaviors such as transsexualism, fetish crossdressing, "gender blending" (androgynes), and medically determined hermaphroditism. Having a clear idea of the gender conflict involved in particular gender behaviors is of help to healthcare givers in determining appropriate counseling or therapy strategies. Seminars are offered to mental health centers, graduate programs in schools of social work, sexuality clinics, or other professional therapy or counseling groups. Write to GAIN for the time and place of scheduled seminars or to arrange for a seminar in your geographical area.

Workshops designed to provide healthcare givers with models of gender role other than the traditional male and female configurations and the subsequent patterns of behavior. Gender is viewed as a social construct. Gender "exercises" and "games" are introduced that are useful in helping a healthcare

giver discern how a gender-conflicted person perceives his or her own gender role. This is especially helpful for the professional when mapping out a program of conflict resolution for a client. Workshops designed to last from one-half day to an entire weekend are available. Write to GAIN for the time and place of scheduled workshops or to arrange for a workshop in your geographical area.

Presentations on other issues are also available. Recent presentations have included "Gender Issues for the '90s," "CD/CG/AN Issues and Lifestyles," "Social Dynamics of Gender Shift," and "Counseling Strategies for Helping Professionals Working with the Gender Conflicted."

Professional supervision for healthcare givers working with gender-conflicted people and who may occasionally want a consultation regarding clients who present especially complex gender issues. Telephone consultations with the Director of GAIN may be obtained by calling the Boston office. Members are entitled to two free consultations a year.

Journal of Gender Studies (formerly the Outreach Beacon) is the official publication of GAIN. It includes professional articles of gender-related issues received from the clinical and academic communities. The content of a single issue may range from an article on gender in the theater arts to notes on the feelings and experiences immediately following sex reassignment surgery (SRS) in a major hospital. Contributions from GAIN members are welcome. Reviews of important books on gender issues are also included. A subscription to the Journal is included in the GAIN membership fee. The subscription rate for non-GAIN members is \$16.00 annually.

Information packets are collections of materials on topics important to the professional working with gender-conflicted people. Materials in the packets are of interest to clients as well as to professionals. Two packets are available on gender shift and/or SRS. Packet I addresses the needs of the male-to-female transsexual, while Packet II focuses on the female-to-male transsexual. Currently three other packets are available: Packet III—Wives/Partners/Significant Others of CD/TV/TS Persons; Packet IV—Crossdressing and Transvestism for CDs and TVs; Packet V—The World of Androgyny and Androgynes. Each packet contains reprints of informative and professional articles and a recent book. GAIN members are entitled to two packets free. Additional packets are \$30.00 each. Packets are available to nonmembers for \$30.00.

Book resources. GAIN works with a book distribution service in making available current titles on gender issues. A list of available books may be obtained from GAIN.

Evaluation and referral network. The Director of GAIN receives requests for professional referrals from persons who are gender conflicted. After a brief but thorough clarification of the issues, the Director usually refers the person to a GAIN member within a 200-mile radius of the client's home. GAIN members who want to participate in this referral network should indicate their interest on their membership applications. Interested members will be sent a brief form to complete describing their training and experience in counseling and in the area of gender dysphoria.



The Transsexual Phenomenon

by Harry Benjamin

The Outreach Institute announces the reprinting of this classic publication on gender issues. This major work on transsexualism, which includes 16 pages of photos associated with important case histories, and the well-known Benjamin Scale of Gender Shift, is available in limited numbers.

The antique cover edition is priced at \$39.95 and the standard edition costs \$35.95. Please add \$3.50 for postage and handling. Make check or money order payable to:

Outreach Institute
405 Western Ave., Suite 345
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Please complete and return with your \$75.00 remittance to Outreach Institute, 405 Western Ave., Suite 345, South Portland, ME 04106. Make checks payable to Outreach Institute.

Name _____

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Membership includes one year's subscription to the *Journal of Gender Studies*, your choice of two information packets, and two consultations regarding clients with the Director of GAIN.

Circle the two packets you wish to receive as part of your membership:

- I The Needs of the Male-to-Female Transsexual
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- III Wives/Partners/Significant Others of CD/TV/TS Persons
- IV Crossdressing and Transvestism for CDs and TVs
- V The World of Androgyny and Androgynes

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Cover artist—A resident of Ashby, Massachusetts, Mariana Furtney Fyfe has exhibited her works regularly at the Fitchburg Art Museum. She holds a degree in Commercial Art and teaches classes in drawing and painting. An extremely versatile artist, she uses oil paint, water-colors, and mixed media to produce paintings, murals, stage sets and, most recently, illustrations for a book of poetry. The cover illustration is a sketch of her husband ironing, which she drew in 1978.