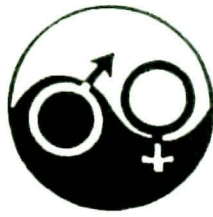


OUTREACH



NEWSLETTER

VOLUME XI NUMBER 1

WINTER 1987

CROSSGENDER BEHAVIORS AND COUNSELING

BY R. E. PEO

(This article appeared in a recent edition of a paraculture newsletter. We thought it of interest to our readership and hence our printing its contents.)

Americans are perhaps the most goal-oriented people I know. We are always going somewhere. Thus, it is no surprise that crossgender behaviors are viewed in a similar fashion. I have heard many crossdressers, transsexuals and professionals discuss whether or not crossdressing and transsexualism are two different situations, or simply different aspects of the same phenomena.

Crossgender behaviors are very complex. Researchers have investigated about every aspect, yet no one has evolved any theory that explains the variety of different forms of these behaviors. The researchers and theorists are probably right about the people they have investigated, but each study only looked at a specific kind of behavior or set of people.

At a recent conference that I attended one professional couple discussed their results on arresting the progression of "transvestism" to "transsexualism". They reported that about twenty per cent of the clients, who came to them for reassignment surgery, described a progression in their crossdressing that led to their desire for reassignment surgery. These researchers found that such a progression was driven by psychological and relationship problems in the person's life.

I have talked with many crossdressers and I recall many saying, "When I am crossdressed I feel much more relaxed." Assuming this is true, then it can follow that the crossdressed state of existence appears to provide escape from a person's "male problems." This escape may seem so desirable that the person wants to make it permanent. It also seems possible that persons who are classified as transsexuals are unaware

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THE BASIC ISSUES FOR THIS PARACULTURE

by A. Kane

During the past decade plus in my involvement with the Institute and the paraculture it has occurred to me that there are several basic questions that crossdressers, transsexuals, and androgynes should be looking at in order to provide a reasonable structure of a reality basis for achieving happiness in a chosen gender pathway. Some of these questions are obvious and involve rather simplistic answers. Others require of the reader to ponder the issue before giving an appropriate response.

Here then, are the questions I have found to be most in need of exploration by each discerning person in search of a comfortable gender life pathway.

1. Is there a distinction in my life between a sex role and a gender role?
2. How can I distinguish between behavior that is clearly of a gender role as opposed to a sex role nature?
3. In what ways are generalized psyche characteristics different for men than for women in North American culture?
4. What is my personal gender role inventory? In other words, what are the set of characteristics that clearly label my gender as either masculine, feminine, or androgynous?
5. How do I relate to other women in the culture as a person with a preferred feminine gender role?
6. How do I relate as a man to women with a preferred gender role?

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The Human Outreach and Achievement Institute is a not-for-profit, educational corporation of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It serves as a resource for helping professionals, transsexuals, cross-dressers, and androgynes.

Editor - A. Kane
Associate Editor - H. Marshall

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A POEM

LOST

by Keith McUmbur

Little boy lost,
Little girl gone.
World in flux
Nowhere a silent sound.

Shadows of a new life,
Sing a new song.
Caverns of the past
Moldy and gray, -there rots
The old life.
All the yesterday's.

Emerge from a chrysalis
Into a malestorm.
Standing in a new life,
Standing in a new form.
Fear solid as a wall
Greets each day
Always afraid of a fall
Unsure of the new way.

Prison chains hold tight
Biting my flesh
Mind flies apart,
Dying small deaths.

God, will I ever be born?

Dear Editor,

As always, it is a pleasure to peruse your Outreach Newsletter. Your first review of Gender Dysphoria: Development, Research, Management has prompted me to send the enclosed check and order a copy of the book. I am a bit worried about the way that all of your reviews seem to be so favorable that it may be difficult to know where the chaff is among all this wheat. Particularly so, after I read H. Marshall's review of Dr. Robert Stoller's latest works. I have always considered Dr. Stoller to be so imbued with the Freudian tradition, that he finds it impossible to look at the problems of the transsexual in a dispassionate, impartial manner. As a result, I suggest to the patients in our clinic that they not read any of his works, so as to keep them from being any more mixed-up than they are from the problems that life has already given them.

As a former book review and periodical editor, I understand the problem in knocking books received for review. But, if we are to have any believability, it must be based on the public having faith, and how can there be any faith when all manners of work are white-washed with the same brush? Of course, there is always the possibility that the reviewer actually agrees with the reviewee and therefore what I see as a gross misjudgement of the work may merely be a favorable viewpoint. Seriously though, I feel very strongly that where an author has shown prejudice or misunderstanding, it is imperative that this matter be brought out in a very concise review.

Sincerely,

James B. Tracton, J.D., Ph. D.

Reviewer's Response:

Dr. Tracton is accurate in his assessment of Dr. Stoller's Freudian perspective. A closer reading of the review will reveal that it was not completely favorable, although it aimed for impartial accuracy.

For instance, Dr. Stoller was quoted:

"Though gender disorder rarely remits with psychotherapy some patients find themselves and, in doing so, become aware that 'sex change' will not suit their gender identity."

To quote my review in response to Dr. Stoller:

"What percentage is 'some'? How big is the sampling? What is 'finding oneself'? Does it include happiness?"

THE BASIC ISSUES

BOOK REVIEW by A. Kane

The Spirit and The Flesh, Sexual Diversity in The American Indian Culture by W. L Williams

This is the first full-length study of the American Indian berdache. Documents how tribal cultures have venerated these androgynous people. In the Spirit and the Flesh, Dr. Williams combines historical documentation with his own important and controversial field work to explore all facets of the berdache tradition. He is the first outside observer to participate in both the public rituals and the private lives of berdaches in various tribes.

What is a berdache? Berdaches are males who do not conform to a society's normative expectations for masculine behavior and dress. Many American Indian societies accepted that certain individuals were neither strictly men nor women but belonged to an alternative gender; their spirit or character was seen more important than their sex in determining their social identity. In contrast to western society where such people might be derided as "drag queens" Native Americans often respected berdaches as sacred people, honoring them with special ceremonial roles as healers, shamans, and seers. Berdaches held important economic and social positions as well and their homosexuality flourished without stigma.

The Spirit and The Flesh also examines the devastating effect of European colonization on the berdache tradition - from Spanish persecution in Latin America to forced assimilation of native peoples in North America. As a result of European influences berdaches lost their prestige and the tradition went underground. Only today, because of a cultural renaissance among modern Indians and as a consequence of the rise of gay liberation, has the berdache tradition been experiencing a rebirth.

Concluding with a discussion of the lesser-known Amazon and the warrior woman traditions as well as a cross-cultural survey of berdachism in society's around the world this book brings into sharp focus the fact that people cannot be neatly categorized on the basis of their biological sex. Studying the berdache can help us reshape our attitudes about sexual diversity in our culture, love between persons of the same sex, and flexibility in gender roles.

It is the considered opinion of this reviewer that this book will certainly become a landmark not only in modern anthropological studies of American Indian culture but also will serve as a

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7. How do I relate to my family as a gender specific person?
8. What kind of image do I realistically want to present in public?
9. Which environments are preferable for me to explore gender alternatives?
10. If I am currently engaged in a meaningful relationship with someone, how do I relate my gender shift to that person?
11. Is it necessary for me to work and be gainfully employed in a preferred gender role?
12. Could one choose a bigenderal option in American culture and be content with that option?
13. How do my religious and moral values interact with my choice of gender role preference?
14. In what ways can I communicate effectively my gender role choice to significant others?
15. What kind of sexual options are available to me in my preferred gender role?
16. How can I integrate my preferred gender role within a cultural context that I currently live in?
17. What methods and techniques are available to modify my body image and produce a desired body form that reflects my preferred gender image?
18. What avenues are available, realistically, to achieve a desired gender role body image?
19. What are the options, in realistically assessing my current crossgender behavior and to find ways to make my gender role preference realistically sound?
20. Can I cross the gender boundary toward a preferred gender role and do so with dignity and self-respect?

These are a sampling of questions that we have been asked time and time again over the past twelve years. We do not profess to have answers to all of them, nor do we assert that any answers we have thus far found are generalized to all elements of this paraculture.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

CD BEHAVIORS

of these feelings for a variety of reasons. They may crossdress and exhibit all the characteristics of a crossdresser. Later, as they find time to explore, they uncover other feelings and inquire about reassignment surgery.

For any individual the specific cause of their crossdressing is probably an interweaving of biology and psychology. I do not believe that all (or even very many) crossdressers will ultimately progress to reassignment surgery. Some will become good at "passing" as women. This does not imply that they will progress to reassignment surgery.

Because the feelings experienced while crossdressed are often very pleasurable there can be fantasy of remaining in that state forever. Developing the ability to "pass" allows a longer time and a wider variety of environments for the crossdresser. However, I have heard many crossdressers say that they were ready to change back to their masculine attire after an extended period, cross-dressed.

A helping professional can provide the objectivity necessary to sort out these feelings. For the crossdresser who wants to use reassignment surgery as an escape the counselor should uncover this and help the client to see it. While this is not an easy task, anything less than a sincere exploration of this behavior could have disastrous long term effects.

For the true transsexual the counselor has the responsibility to assist in the process of reassignment. In either case, this process is neither simple nor short. Whether or not sex reassignment surgery is ever performed, the counselor has the task of helping the client come to terms with his gender feelings and issues and help him to cope with his or her life pattern as much as is possible.

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*	Announcing the 13th Annual	*
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REVIEWER'S RESPONSE

My point was that "some" of Dr. Stoller's conclusions are based on questionable samplings. And his conclusions are sometimes worded so as to mislead a less than fine reading.

This reviewer's personal belief is that in matters of sexual and gender preference, all should be able to lead a life of their choosing and be able to obtain support to do so. While Dr. Stoller opposes reassignment surgery, I am a proponent.

It should be pointed out that the Outreach Institute does not carry Dr. Stoller's books in its book and reprint catalog. However, because the Institute believes in the open expression of ideas, the books are available by special order. We wish to thank Dr. Tracton for keeping the issue alive, and hope others will respond similarly to this or other issues.

H. Marshall, Associate Editor

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BOOK REVIEW

benchmark in efforts to push back frontiers of ignorance and misinformation about some time-honored universal gender traditions. We whole-heartedly recommend this book for your reading pleasure and information.

(This book is available from the Outreach Institute for \$24.95 plus \$2.00 postage and handling.)

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