



Trans-  
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*1996*



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A Collection of Stories, Poems  
and Artwork by, for & about the  
Transgendered Community,  
So that you may know us.

Published by The



1996

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# FOREWORD

## The Gender Revolution

by Dallas Denny

The assumptions we make about the world cause us to organize our experiences and construct hypotheses accordingly. If we believe that the Earth is the center of the universe, then the fact that the sun and moon cross the sky makes perfect sense to us; they are revolving around us, and we are happy about that. But then along comes a Copernicus, who makes us all very uncomfortable by claiming that the Earth is not anything special in the greater scheme of things, and revolves around the sun. To make matters worse, his theory explains existing data better than the old one. We have a tumultuous century, during which we attempt to delay the inevitable by placing Galileo and his telescope under house arrest, but to little avail. Eventually, the old order falls and is replaced by the new.

The Copernican Revolution made possible further discoveries about the nature of the universe and led, eventually, to American astronauts hitting golf balls on the moon. No one yet knows what the outcome of the Gender Revolution will be.

Yes, we are having a Gender Revolution. We have been in the midst of this revolution for more than a hundred years; it began, perhaps, when women claimed the right to wear pants. But lately, the revolution has stepped up its pace. Everywhere, it seems, people are questioning what it means to be a man, and what it means to be a woman. Gender roles are changing. Women are discovering their strengths, and men are finding the joys of expressing emotions and of being nurturing. Our stereotypes are being challenged by films like *The Crying Game*, and by those who claim their right to free expression of gender by crossdressing, or by having sex reassignment, and by those who, in a thousand ways, simply refuse to conform to the stereotypes.



Kate Bornstein is one of the leaders in this Gender Revolution. She is taking the discourse to a new level, in which she questions the notion that there are two sexes, and two sexes only. In her book, Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women and the Rest of Us (1994, Routledge), Kate proclaims that she is definitely not a man, and probably not a woman and wonders: "What, then, am I?"

The answer to that question has not been an easy one for Kate. Born with a male body and raised as a boy and then as a man, Kate eventually rid herself of her beard via electrolysis, sculpted her body with hormones, and, with the help of a plastic surgeon, had her external sexual organs rearranged. But although she now looks and sounds much like other women, she has not subscribed to the "man trapped in a woman's body" theory of transsexualism. She does not claim man's space, nor woman's space, but Kate space, whatever that is. And by searching for that space, she liberates us all from the notion that there are but two sexes, two genders.

In Gender Outlaw, Kate tells us that there are millions of genders. The gender we wake up with in the morning may not be the one we go to bed with. We are free to try on one gender after another, as if they were coats at the consignment shop. "Here's a nice gender. And at only \$19.95! Won't it look good at the symphony tonight!"

For too long, we have been needlessly hung up by our notions that sex and gender are the same, and that they are based in biological reality. You know the drill: males make sperm, females make eggs; males have penises, females have vaginas; males have testes, women have ovaries; males have an XY chromosomal pattern, females XX; males make testosterone, females make estrogen; men father children, women bear them; women have breasts, men have pattern baldness; cave women stayed at home while cave men went out to get meat; women ask for directions, men prefer to drive until they run out of gas.

It's a nice, neat view of the world, but it never was reality. Scientists estimate that three of every one hundred babies are born with genitalia which are intermediate between those of male and females. There are women with XY chromosomes who have borne children, and XX men who have fathered children. There are women with facial hair and deep voices, and men with gynecomastia (breast development). And to make matters more confusing, medical technology has allowed us to transform our bodies via hormones and surgery, and it has given us reproductive freedom which is independent of our bodies. We can donate sperm or eggs which can result in babies grown outside our bodies. Male baboons have borne babies which

grew from fertilized eggs implanted in their abdominal cavities. A physician in China has transplanted testicles into human females, and ovaries into human males. Your neighbor has had both his ears pierced, and sometimes wears skirts. It goes on and on.

For too long, rigid bipolar notions of sex and gender have exerted a tyranny over us. Author Martine Rothblatt calls it an "apartheid of sex." The toys we play with as children, our careers when we grow up, and even our choice of sex partners have been artificially constrained. Boys have been and continue to be punished for crying or for playing with dolls, and encouraged to be competitive, and told to "be a man." Girls have been told, "No, you can't be a doctor, but you can be a nurse," and have been informed that the expected outcome of their lives is that they will marry and have children.

The tragedy of all this is that it erodes human potential, and in many cases, wastes lives. Imagine being a feminine young boy, having to run a gamut of bullies every evening on the way home from school because parents and school authorities think it is somehow good for you to be victimized and beaten. Imagine being given the message as a young girl that you are little more than a baby machine, and that you must subjugate your interests to those of a husband you don't even want. Imagine being told that you cannot be a mathematician because, "girls are not good at math." Imagine being beaten and left for dead on the street because you are wearing clothing which does not conform to gender "norms." Imagine being abandoned by your family because, for your own sanity and well-being, you chose to live your life as a member of the "other" gender. Imagine having to resort to sex work because no one will hire you because of the way you look. Imagine that your love for another human being is declared invalid because you wear the same type of clothes. Imagine that the police who are sworn to protect you, instead harass you and make sexual advances because of the clothing you wear.

All of these things still occur, but they need not--and perhaps, in a hundred years, when the full effect of the gender revolution has been felt, they will not occur. Perhaps rather than being expected to be boys and girls, or women and men, or sperm machines or egg machines, we will be allowed to be that most wonderful of all things: what we really are.

Viva la Revolution!