

*CQ's Quotations from the Literature*

*How have we in the medical profession responded to Hamburger's legitimate plea? Empathically, with compassion and understanding? Hardly. Instead, we have driven these individuals into the hands of unscrupulous men because we hate them and have treated them accordingly, with contempt and disdain.*

— Baker, H.J. (Lt.). (1969).

*Transsexualism: Problems in Treatment.* American Journal of Psychiatry, 125(10), 118-124.

*A peculiar wet feeling was gathering around my legs. I pressed the button again and again to scream for help. Thinking about detaching myself from the bed, I propped myself up on one arm, but then fainted and fell back. When I woke up, some ten or fifteen minutes later, the blood had made its way down the side of the bed to the floor. I was weaker, now, and the pain didn't matter. I was bleeding to death... Bending my head, I looked once more at the side of the bed, half-covered with my life's liquid. I couldn't help thinking now how ironic it was that I had worked and saved all this time to pay for my own death. I would be my own executioner.*

— Canary Conn. (1974). Canary. Los Angeles, CA: Nash Publishing Co., pp. 314-315.

One young man stood up and said she was very attractive, but he wouldn't go in the same room with her because she had been a man. What he meant was: "I'm afraid of being near her because I might become sexually aroused by her, and I could never forgive myself if I had sexual relations with her because she was born a man." Psychologists call it the—Oh my God, Pa, I disgraced myself and was tricked into having sex with a homo— syndrome.

This young man's attitude needs to be taken seriously by transsexuals. It can't be written off by saying he's just another homophobic. This is reality in terms of most of society, and certainly with respect to those in power who make, judge, and enforce the laws of our country. The truth is that transsexuals have not been included in most of the civil rights legislation which grants rights and protections to homosexuals and other minorities. Transsexuals have lost case after case in the lower courts and in the appeals courts with respect to such matters as parental rights and job discrimination. Many of the official court opinions from appeals courts are in my files. I paint a rather grim picture, I'm afraid, but the reality is rather harsh.

Most transsexuals, long before they have surgery usually, realize that being a man or being a woman requires having a mind and a body that are compatible with each other. When they are not synchronized, nothing is ever quite right. Transsexuals are caught in between, with very little room to maneuver without creating pain and anxiety for themselves and for those they care about.

The fact that transsexuals want to renounce their genetic gender assignments is what seems to bother most people. This is primarily due to the fact that when transsexuals come forward, they are usually adults. They are making conscious decisions, as adults, with respect not only to their gender, but to their sexuality. This startling combination stirs the mud at the bottom, creating a direct challenge of society's perception of bipolar gender expectations and behavior. The desires and needs of transsexuals make these waters rather murky very quickly.

Religion and reality both contribute to and reinforce the confusion. The three major religions of the world, Judaism,

Islam, and Christianity, encompass a large share of the world's population, and all of these religions have strong concepts and beliefs of bipolar gender roles and sexual behavior. While it is true that there are societies on this planet that have expanded definitions of gender roles, they constitute a very small portion of the world's population.

The reality is that it does require the egg of a female and the sperm of a male to create human life, and human beings have always placed a high value on fecundity to perpetuate the human race. It is probably instinctive; however, unlike other forms of life, our human minds have the ability to conceptualize and verbalize our feelings, even though the feelings may arise from instinct. As civilization took root, it was certainly a logical step for societies to form rather rigid rules concerning gender role behavior and sexual behavior within the context of gender roles. The obvious reality of the need for an egg to be joined by a seed to perpetuate life, reinforced by spiritual beliefs that this was manifest destiny determined by a higher order, led societies to lay out strict modes of gender role and sexual behavior.

Although homosexual behavior violates a longstanding taboo of culture, it has been tolerated in varying degrees by many societies throughout history. Recently, our culture has provided a modicum of civil and human rights to homosexuals. The homosexual community deserves most of the credit for these changes, for they have banded together and applied political pressure on government to demand their rights. Although our society is still not very accepting of homosexuality, it has grudgingly given ground as the pressures have increased. Homosexuals have been willing to stand up and stand together to achieve their goals.

Transsexuals are faced with a somewhat different situation. They do not necessarily desire to be different from the rest of society. They want, for the most part, to conform to long-standing gender role patterns. Although some transsexuals may be homosexual in their chosen gender roles, transsexuality revolves around the issue of being accepted as men and women in society.

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