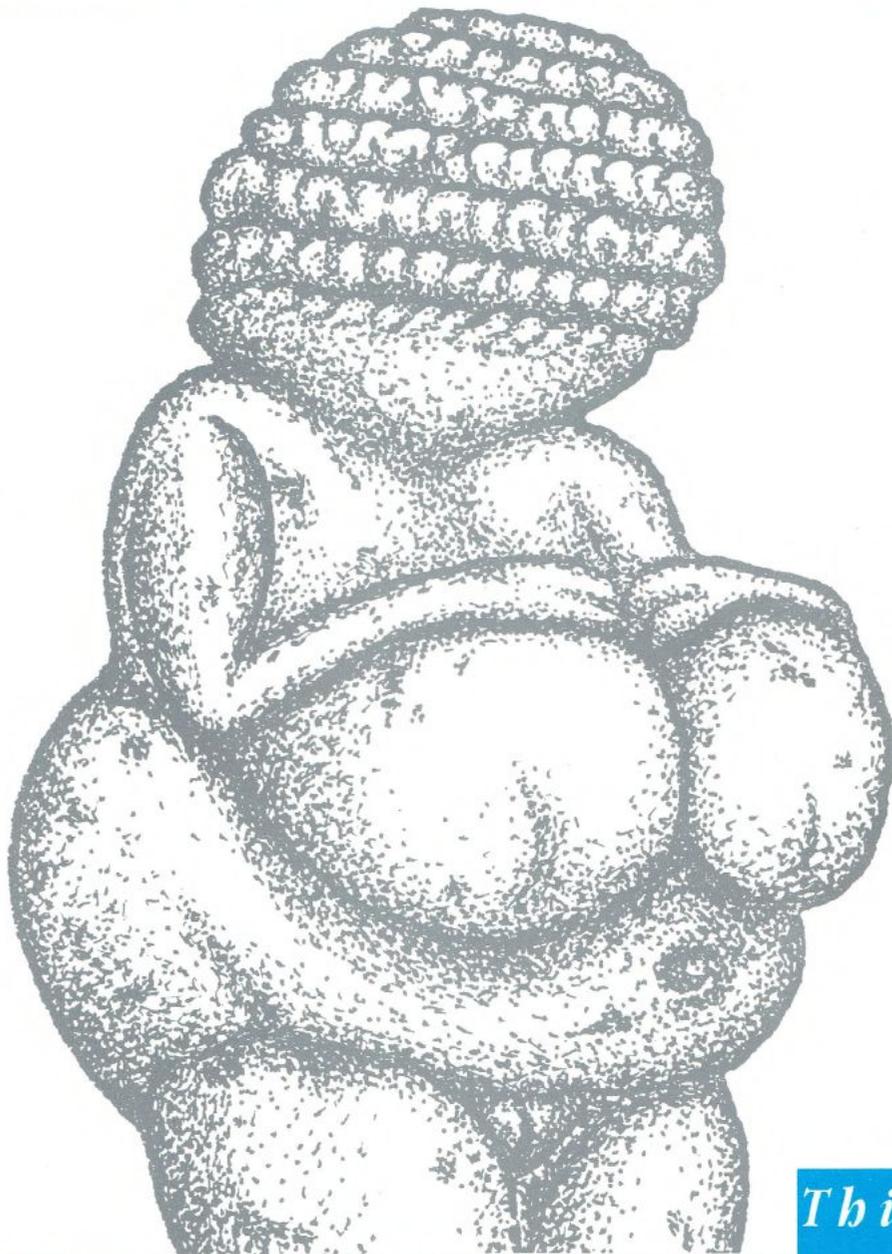


Chrysalis

Quarterly

Volume 1, No. 6 1993

\$9.00



This issue.....

*Transgender Perspectives
On the Return of the Goddess*

AIDS

When Problems

Are Ignored,

They Only

Get

Larger.

Transgendered persons are as susceptible to HIV and AIDS as anyone else.

A public service of AEGIS, The American Educational Gender Information Service, P.O. Box 33724, Decatur, GA 30033 Phone (404) 939-0244

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About this Issue

This issue of *Chrysalis Quarterly* is dedicated to *Rena Swifthawk*, who has been very special in the lives of many in the transgender community—including ours. *Holly Boswell* is guest editor. The theme is “Transgender Perspectives on the Return of the Goddess.” The cover features the most famous of the prehistoric “mother goddess” fertility figures, the *Venus of Willendorf*, an 11 cm tall carving found in Austria.

The public service advertisement on the inside front cover addresses the spectre of AIDS, a disease from which no one is exempt—least of all transgendered persons, who in their denial may engage in high-risk behavior. Unfortunately, HIV and AIDS are seldom mentioned in publications by and about transgendered persons.

Alas, denial can manifest itself in many ways.

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Upcoming in CQ:

Number 7

*Denial & Self-Destructive
Behavior in
Gender Dysphoria*

Number 8

*Mens' Issues
(Jason Cromwell, Editor)*

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Chrysalis Quarterly

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Mission: *Chrysalis Quarterly* is dedicated to the in-depth exploration of gender issues. Our focus will be on topics which have been ignored or only lightly touched upon in other forums. Our treatments will be intelligent and unbiased.

Submissions: We welcome your stories, articles, letters, editorials, news clippings, position statements, research reports, press releases, poems, and artwork.

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Authors will receive a free issue of CQ.

The opinions of the various contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editors or of AEGIS. The editors reserve the right to refuse submissions which do not meet our editorial or aesthetic standards.

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A major purpose of AEGIS, and so of *Chrysalis Quarterly*, is to foster communication and respectful interaction between caregivers and consumers. We have done that in these pages, and will continue to do so in a variety of ways.

This issue is a bit of a departure. The first five issues of *CQ* reflected my training as a behavioral scientist. The magazines and the articles in them were logical and sequential. But the world is not always logical and sequential. Science, as marvelous as it is, is but one way of seeing ourselves and our surroundings. There are other, more ancient, and equally valid ways of ordering reality.

This issue, which was edited by Holly Boswell, gives us a less sequential, less Aristotelian way of looking at transgender phenomena.

Those who have gender dysphoria often feel in their hearts, and will tell you, if you bother to ask, that despite the troubles their condition may have brought upon them, they feel they have been blessed with a duality of nature, a merging of masculine and feminine energies that they would not give up. They feel a spirituality and a pride in being transgendered that they sometimes do not have a name for, a connection with what we have called in this issue the Goddess.

— Dallas Denny
Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

Perhaps the most blatant and ludicrous example of sex discrimination in human history has been the claim

that God is exclusively male. This absurd premise is based on a polarized view of gender, where women embody the physical and emotional planes of being and men are imbued with the higher faculties of intellect and spiritual awareness. There is an overwhelming accumulation of evidence that the subjugation of the Feminine is directly linked with the exploitation of Nature. All living beings—including soil, water, and air—are suffering the devastating consequences of this profound imbalance.

I was blessed as a child to live next to an expanse of forest laced with creeks. Most of my free time was spent there, both as playground and as refuge. Over those years, I was infused with the sweet scent of damp mosses and rotting leaves, the delicate music of water's rush and gurgle over smooth sculpted rocks, and the dazzling flicker of warm sun through swaying trees in pulsing breezes. I came to feel her breeze through my own breathing, the splash of her creeks in my laughter, the total caress of her body surrounding my skin, and the sparkle of her life glowing through my smile and shining eyes. As I became aware of our oneness, I realized: it is our love that is divine and eternal. Who needs a church when this sacred union is naturally intact? Just before I went away to college to embark on the preordained path of my supposed "manhood," the bulldozers came.

So why is the Goddess returning, and what does it have to do with

.....
Those who have gender dysphoria often feel in their hearts, and will tell you, if you bother to ask, that despite the troubles their condition may have brought upon them, they feel they have been blessed with a duality of nature, a merging of masculine and feminine energies that they would not give up.
.....

Just as women are reclaiming their connection with the divine, transgendered people are beginning to reconnect with a rich spiritual heritage that extends back through all cultures throughout history.

being transgendered? It is important to understand that the ancient world-view and spiritual practices of the Goddess are Nature-based, being most akin to shamanism and Native American traditions. The purpose is not to replace the male godhead with a female one, but to celebrate the whole of gender and reverence for all life without hierarchies. To quote Starhawk, a major voice in the "Reclaiming" movement: "The Goddess, like nature, loves diversity. Oneness is attained not through losing the self, but through realizing it fully." There is no prescribed dogma. Access to the divine is achieved personally from within. The sacred and the secular are one, becoming "heaven on earth."

The transgender spirit transcends the simplistic cultural dictum that anatomical sex is synonymous with gender expression. Gender cannot be polarized. It is a rainbow that is far too splendid in its diversity. The expression of one's true gender is intuitive and ever-changing. There can be no rules.

Just as women are reclaiming their connection with the divine, transgendered people are beginning to reconnect with a rich spiritual heritage that extends back through all cultures throughout history. Traditions of alternative gender are diverse and have many names, but they also have a potent commonality. They form a strong foundation that speaks to us now, to inspire and empower us as visionaries, artists, mediators, healers, and spiritual leaders. We embody the Goddess' spirit of diversity and inclusiveness. We can be a bridge between polarities to help restore balance and wholeness. Our very

own gender liberation is a key. We must cultivate "whole gender" in order to meet the critical challenges of our time.

When the first Europeans came to America, they called us "berdache" and fed us to the dogs. Like gay men and lesbians, who are reclaiming the pejorative words "faggot," "dyke," and "queer," we can reclaim and cleanse our past through pride in who we are. Before we can help heal the planet, we must heal ourselves. We must tell our truth, refashion our myths, and reinvent the tools we need to operate in today's world with deep compassion and fresh relevance.

This anthology is largely the result of a collaboration of "new berdache." A circle of us from around the country recently converged in the southern Appalachians to revive our tradition and explore new potential. We are encouraging a ripple effect of widening circles. These are exciting times.

—Holly Boswell
Editor

This first-of-its-kind anthology is dedicated to our dear sister Rena Swifthawk, a Native American berdache who has empowered us with her wisdom, love, and laughter to live in balance with all things and offer all our words and deeds in a good way.

Thank you for the copy of the *Chrysalis Quarterly*. I found it very interesting and had to think how far we all have come since the 50's when we would meet in the old brownstone in Brooklyn Heights, where the home-printed copies of *Turnabout* were put together in the basement. They are certainly far removed from the days of Dr. Burou in Casablanca, so long ago. Keep up your good work.

—Renée Richards, MD
New York, NY

It's good to know that Dr. Richards is doing well. To those few readers who may not know who she is, Renée Richards' life was intruded upon by the news media after a reporter at a womens' tennis competition figured out that she had undergone sex reassignment. Her courage in the face of fire was an inspiration to those who came after.

First, I would like to compliment you and your staff at *Chrysalis Quarterly*. I am impressed with the quality of articles and contributions. I would also like to acknowledge the important role that AEGIS fulfills by being a responsive resource for the transgender community, including the clients of our Gender Dysphoria Program. I am pleased to be able to refer many of the transgendered persons contacting our clinic for information and resources to AEGIS. AEGIS also facilitates a dialogue between the transgender community and service providers such as our staff. I would like to sincerely thank you for these accomplishments, and to express my support.

I am writing specifically in response to your article "From the Publisher" in issue 4, calling for an enhanced cooperation between transgendered persons and service providers and a balancing of control between client and provider in the decision process regarding hormonal and/or surgical sex reassignment.

I agree wholeheartedly with your declaration of a need for balance of control and responsibilities between

service provider and client. In our program, the provider's role is to facilitate a process through which the client discovers the most effective way to manage his/her sexual identity. If the client is considering hormonal and/or surgical sex reassignment as an option to alleviate his/her gender dysphoria, a list of criteria based on the Harry Benjamin Standards of Care and our Program's treatment philosophy guides the decision process.

In order to improve communication of our Program's criteria for sex reassignment, we have worked in the past six months with our clients and the local transgender community on revising our prerequisites for sex reassignment. I can attest to the benefit of input from clients and consumers, as suggested in your article. Feedback on a number of drafts of the prerequisites under revision clarified both parties' position, experiences, and needs. We discovered that the rationale for some of our prerequisites had not been clear; that there was basically little disagreement about the criteria themselves, but that the way in which they were communicated was perceived as patronizing and as undermining the client's self-control. Helpful suggestions resulted in a document that is far more consumer friendly. We also decided to develop an explicit written contract between client and provider, arranged through mutual negotiation. This contract reflects an individualized treatment plan incorporating both the client's personal goals and the recommendations of the Program's clinical staff. Criteria for hormonal and surgical sex reassignment now are clearly defined at the onset of treatment. Progress in meeting these criteria is reviewed on a quarterly basis.

In our program, recommendations for hormonal and/or surgical sex reassignment are made by a committee of psychologists, physicians, and a psychiatrist. The client who requests professional consultation on his/her decision to undergo sex

Concluded on page 7

P.O. BOX

Gender Happenings

The following appeared on 8/8/92 in Volume 21, Number 39 of San Diego's *The Reader*.

Holy Megabytes!

In Her Crusade against AIDS, a Social Justice Nun Goes On-Line to the World

by Abe Opincar

It's been a hell of a ride. Sister Mary Elizabeth, in her 54 years, has been both witness to and product of the passionate controversies that forged the latter half of the American Century. In 1957, as a stalwart Cold War-generation Southern Baptist, she went to Memphis, Tennessee to teach electronics at the Naval Air Technical Training Center, submarine warfare division, and saw first-hand the meanness of segregation and the birth of the civil rights movement. The year 1968 found her in Vietnam, flying missions into and out of Tan Son Nuit and Cam Ranh Bay. In '88 she was at the heart of a sexual politics scandal that capsized the Anglican order that she had founded, the Sisters of Elizabeth of Hungary. For the past three years she has worked with and served men and women held hostage to AIDS. Ultimately, her unique take on the world was formed by two matters at once personal and public: her steely devotion to Jesus Christ and her physical transformation via sex-reassignment surgery.

"Don't write about that," she says from her office in San Juan Capistrano. "Don't write about me—I'm not the story. My work is the story."

There is, however, no way of writing about her work without writing about her, about her technical talents, about how she believes the Almighty uses her as a singular vessel for His love. It is not every day, after all, that a transsexual Anglican nun who once served in Vietnam single-handedly launches and maintains the largest AIDS information computer bulletin board in the world.

"It all started in 1990," she says, "When I went to rural Missouri to tend a herd of cows that had been left to our order..."

While the area was isolated, its residents insular, she found people living there with AIDS, struggling on their own with the disease with little or no state-of-the-art information to help them. Television reception was very poor and newspapers scarce, but Sister Mary Elizabeth noticed that many of the area's residents had personal computers—and that, she says, started her to thinking. When she returned to California later that year, she began talking with friends about starting a free national AIDS information bulletin board.

"There are plenty out there, but most of them are expensive. They can run anywhere from \$45 to \$500 dollars an hour, and there's no way that your average person with AIDS can access that information at that cost. There are people out there who want to make money off this terrible disease. Something had to be done."

In late 1990, Sister Mary Elizabeth, a long-time computer afficianado, officially went on-line with an 80-megabyte IBM compatible and quickly ran out of space. She had more than 500 files of AIDS-related information, but there was much, much more. She knew she had to go to more than one phone line; she needed high-speed modems.

In June, 1991, a Japanese businessman made this possible. He donated \$21,000 to the HIV/AIDS Info BBS, which allowed Sister Mary Elizabeth to invest in a more powerful IBM-compatible with a 660-megabyte hard drive, eSoft TBBS software, two high-speed U.S. Robotics modems, and two incoming phone lines. With the expanded capacity, the database mushroomed to more than 1500 files.

The range of information is so vast, its quality so dependable, that national and international organizations such as AmFar and the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Disease have started logging on to the electronic bulletin board on a daily basis. So far this year, it has served close to 20,000 callers, some from as far afield as Australia, Spain, and the Netherlands. And the demand is growing. Sister Mary Elizabeth, her eyesight slowly failing, regularly works 11 hours a day keeping the files up to date, adding new data culled from 19 professional journals and scores of other sources.

"I don't understand," she says, "how we, as individuals created in the image of a loving God, could simply stand by in the face of this epidemic and do nothing. God loved us so much that he sent His son to die—not just for one person, but for all of us. Because of that love, we have a responsibility to others. Because of that love I can't see how we could oppress others or allow others to be oppressed."

HIV/AIDS BBS (714) 248-2836
8-N-1 24 hours

reassignment meets with this committee to seek its support. The therapist takes the role of an advocate for the client's self-interest. If sufficient information is available to determine that sex reassignment is potentially constructive for the client, the committee is able to assume professional responsibility for recommending reassignment. Our model is very much criterion-based, as opposed to exclusionary. If the committee is not able to support the client's decision to undergo sex reassignment at the time of review, the rationale for this is explained and the client and therapist are given directions to further progress toward meeting the criteria. If agreement cannot be achieved, referrals to other specialized providers are facilitated. We remind clients repeatedly of the freedom to choose other providers.

Contrary to the statement in your article, the Program in Human Sexuality's Gender Dysphoria Program has not and does not require a period of cross-living before hormones are prescribed. We do, however, suggest some experimentation with the desired gender role before hormone therapy, which involves taking calculated risks with socializing in public situations.

Hormone therapy and surgical sex reassignment are very much considered separately. We have definitely moved away from subscribing to a bipolar view of gender. We respect and even encourage clients to explore options along the gender spectrum, and support a variety of transgender identities. For example, our research into homosexual identity development in female-to-male transsexualism has challenged the genital criterion as the most salient and defining characteristic of gender. These studies demonstrated that without a phalloplasty, the female-to-male transsexuals we interviewed were perceived as men and were able to have satisfying sexual relationships with other gay men.

In conclusion, I am pleased to find that changes in our program corre-

spond with most of the needs expressed in your article. I look forward to a continued ongoing dialogue between the transgender community and service providers, and to working together to enhance the quality of care. The mission of our academically based program is to provide quality services; to educate the transgender community and service providers, as well as the general public, about transgender issues; and to conduct research that directly benefits transgendered people and their communities. We appreciate the community's input and support in continuing to enhance the quality of our services.

—Walter O. Bockting, Drs., L.P.
Gender Dysphoria Program
Program in Human Sexuality
University MN Medical School

Dr. Bockting is correct in his statement that the Minnesota program has never had a blanket requirement for real-life test before hormonal therapy. We were, quite simply, misinformed. Other clinics, however, still have this requirement, including the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry in Toronto, Canada and the Rosenberg Clinic in Galveston, Texas.

We applaud Dr. Bockting for his efforts to improve the Minnesota program. However, there has been a great deal of recent controversy about the Program in Human Sexuality, and it is unlikely that the changes would have occurred without pressure from consumers, some of whom claim that the changes Dr. Bockting reports are merely window dressing. In the next issue of CQ, we will look in depth at the controversy in Minnesota —Ed.

In the letters column of the last issue of CQ, we printed a letter from Robyn Ellis of the Ingersoll Gender Center in Seattle, Washington; she took us to task for our use of the words "The Brussels Experience" and "The Trinidad Experience," which were subtitles of articles in CQ #4. We duly apologized.

Recently, one of our subscribers sent us a letter to the Ingersoll Center which was printed in issue #25 of The Canadian Crossdresser. The author is Michelle Hunt, RN, who discovered Dr. Michel Seghers in Brussels, Belgium as a resource for male-to-female sex reassignment surgery for Americans. Michelle has an excellent reputation, and we must take her allegations seriously. We reprint her letter in part below, and Ingersoll's initial reaction on page 56—Ed.

Although I have been told before that your brochure closely resembled the one I wrote in 1985 and provided FOR FREE to those planning the trip to Brussels, I didn't realize HOW close to my original information package your brochure really WAS. Perhaps I should have investigated these charges before, but I was satisfied to think the information I had so thoughtfully written some years ago was still being disseminated... While your circular "The Brussels Experience" proposes to be a composite of the experience of 10 people who had their surgery in Brussels in 1988 and 1989, an alarming amount of the information appears to have been taken DIRECTLY and WITHOUT CHANGE from my original work. To compound matters, you have not AT ANY POINT given me credit for WRITING YOUR BROCHURE, and to make matters worse, you have then copyrighted MY MATERIAL as being your own. If yours was a commercial venture, I think there is little doubt as to what my actions against you would be.

... your brochure has been, and still is, causing needless suffering by those who use it. The changes are so great between what YOU say the conditions are and what is ACTUALLY being done, that anyone who is attempting to use it for a guide is being set up for a bad experience.

—Michelle Hunt, RN
Pensacola, FL

A Virginal

by Ezra Pound

No, no! Go from me. I have left her lately,
 I will not spoil my sheath with lesser brightness,
 For my surrounding air hath a new lightness;
 Slight are her arms, yet they have bound me straitly
 And left me cloaked as with a gauze of aether;
 As with sweet leaves; as with subtle clearness.
 Oh, I have picked up magic in her nearness
 To sheathe me half in half the things that sheathe her.
 No, no! Go from me. I have still the flavour,
 Soft as spring wind that's come from birchen bowers.
 Green come the shoots, aye April in the branches,
 As winter's wound with her slight hand she staunches,
 Hath of the trees a likeness of the savour:
 As white their bark, so white this lady's hours.

Turquoise Matrix

by Alison Laing

(Dedicated to Rena Swifthawk)

To He who soars like a Hawk,
 To She who runs Swift as a Deer,
 To One who embodies the strength of them both,
 Your Message of Peace and Love abides in Us all.

To He who showed Eagle Humility,
 To She who taught Coyote Truth,
 To One who gives Love and Peace to Us all,
 Your Lessons will last forever.

To He who hunts on the Bountiful Grounds,
 To She who dances in the Sacred Circle,
 To One who has brought Us all to the Earth,
 The Spirit of Your Love will endure.

To He who is the Fair Blue of Father Sky,
 To She who is the Rich Red-brown of Mother Earth,
 To One who Brings all things Together,
 Your Dream of Harmony and Peace Shall be Our Creed.

A man wooing: a woman

by Holly Boswell

Escaping stale breath of talk to reach
 the gladed mossy mouth of a spring,
 where a goddess, wavering in silks,
 barely lilt in humble, ancient elegance,
 rustles from audible seas the creekbed lullaby:
 "Will you with me sleep? as tenderly we might,
 if thirst were slowed to sip the nectar of this night."
 Lyrical. Liquid. Sloshed—ah, what
 logic lost when tongues wag out of touch!

"Wrenched from your... idyllic drift,
 enbazed aloft my... dizzying wake,
 my veiled speech, my muted figure,
 my lightest touch, cloaking you entire,
 the lattice lung in your skull
 blooming in wafts from my irises—"
 I choke down the drench.

"Even hymns intoned invoke enfolded selves."
 There are ringings of your words in mine.
 —are "words", you are not... rooted in my mouth.
 "They're out wringing of our words from mind."

Don't sound like me. Not my voice...
 "Come, bring me some blossoms,
 sing in to me, the night,"
 too flowing, too... flowery—
 "some ring of sun-blossoms,
 sing me into the night."
 Soft! I was about to breathe your name.

"Singing, through each other,
 becoming, the softest voice we hear..."
 The ear sings. The voice refrains.
 "Closure wooing, our wont is whole.
 Let us wear this beauty everywhere."

Rachel Pollack is a prolific writer of science fiction and one of the most gentle people I have ever known. She is author of DC Comics' groundbreaking Doom Patrol, and she designed and drew the Shining Woman Tarot deck. The Shining Woman images derive from prehistoric and tribal art from around the world—Ed.

For Christine

A Ritual in Denmark, 40 Years After

by Rachel Pollack

Learning to Speak

*We are the names we name ourselves
We are the bodies grown out of hope
We are learning to speak*

*Daughters of Artemis
Run through the streets
Shouting and singing
The birth of a life
Opening tunnels
With knives and old prayers
With sterilized scalpels
And slow rising dreams
We are learning to speak
We are learning to speak*

*We are the countries
Of rain and bright noise
We are the branches
Of long buried roots
We are the secrets
In hidden compartments
We are the dead
Who come back forever
We are learning to speak*

*Aphrodite's daughters
Rise from the sea
Born on the foam
Skimming waves of desire
Remember our stories
Remember our past
We are learning to speak
We are learning to speak*

—Rachel Pollack

Near the end of 1952, Christine Jorgensen returned from Copenhagen, Denmark to announce to the world that she had undergone surgery to transform her physically from a man into a woman. Since hearing of this anniversary at the New Woman Conference in September, 1992, I had been thinking of the importance of Christine in all our lives, and of the need somehow to commemorate her. I thought of a woman I knew who told me of her discovery that sex reassignment surgery was possible. She had been in the Korean War, struggling to suppress her feelings of femaleness, to live life “properly” as a man, and had returned to civilian life as miserable and desperate as before. She was walking on Broadway in the Upper West Side of New York City, when she glanced at the newspapers lying in a kiosk. “Ex-GI turned into woman” the headline read. When she bought the paper, she was shaking so hard she could read it only by bracing herself against a lamppost. For the first time in her life, she discovered that what she wanted most in the world was possible.

I wanted to mark this event with a party, or even a public reading or speakout. At the same time, I was arranging to visit an old friend in Denmark over Thanksgiving weekend. It was only a few days before my trip that I realized the perfect match of these two circumstances. When I arrived in Copenhagen, and my friend asked what I wanted to do during my visit, I told her I wanted to go to the sea and perform a ritual in honor of Christine Jorgensen.

On Sunday, November 29, Helle Agathe Beierholm and I traveled to a beach at the bottom of a 300-foot chalk cliff on the south coast of Denmark. The day was cold, with a hard wind, and bright sun shining through the forest on the top of the cliffs. In Denmark, the forest service culls trees as a way of harvesting wood without cutting down whole sections of forest. Walking through the woods, one sees every tree individually, as in a dream. Often, the oldest trees are left. We saw branches and roots suggesting strange forms, including one where the roots resembled a human couple about to make love. The constant damp encourages moss on the trees, giving them a green coating which glows almost golden in the sun.

The day before the ritual, we had asked the Shining Woman Tarot to give us images of what we might do. The first card that came up was the High Priestess, an endorsement of the very idea of performing such a ceremony. The second card was even more significant. Called the Three of Rivers, it symbolizes the idea of women menstruating together as a sharing of their lives. One year before, this card had come up in a similar situation. Janis Walworth had asked me to take part in a workshop for transsexual and non-transsexual lesbians, and when we asked, in a reading of the night before,

"What can we make together?" we received the Three of Rivers. At that time I felt this image signified something very deep, and that I would not know what it meant for some time. For several months, I continued to receive it in virtually every reading. When it returned, a year later, it seemed to come as a fulfillment of its promise.

The Three of Rivers had in fact appeared again, two months before, when I asked about another ritual, the "welcoming" ceremony at the second New Woman's Conference. In this ceremony, the women who have had surgery at least 12 months earlier welcome the women who have made this passage in the previous year. To fulfill the idea of "menstrual synchrony," we borrowed a practice from contemporary womens' rituals for a girl's first period. We took a long cord of red silk and wound it around each of our wrists to bind us together in the blood rite of surgery.

Now, in Denmark, I asked my friend if she had a red cord or ribbon in the house. Significantly, she found a sash made from braiding two red cords together, a symbol of our two experiences of womanhood joined as one.

Three more cards from the Tarot reading deserve mention. The first was the Star, which in Shining Woman Tarot shows the Greek Goddess Persephone, who returns each year from the Land of the Dead to restore life to the Earth. Persephone has special meaning for me. The festival held in Her honor was called the Eleusinian Mysteries. Two years ago, when I visited Greece, I and another woman celebrated these mysteries at Persephone's sacred place, Eleusis, arriving there, without plan, on the first day. Exactly one year later, I found myself leading the first welcoming at the first New Woman's Conference.

In the myth of Persephone, the young goddess is kidnapped into the Land of the Dead. According to some accounts, she marries Dionysus, the God of ecstasy. When she returns to the living, she comes back as a queen, powerful in Her own truth.

Persephone seems to me to be a true model for New Women. To go through transition, we must allow our old selves to die. We must descend to a darkness of confusion, of joy, but also fear. There we "marry" the ecstasy of our new lives. Indeed, Dionysus was the God of transgendered people, who

crossed the rigid lines of identity in a wild leap. And for many of us, we do not return fully to the world of the living until we pass through the ritual of surgery, which occurs in the darkness of anesthesia.

To honor Persephone, Helle Agathe and I brought biscuits and fruit, for, according to myth, the Goddess's return marked the beginnings of agriculture. For other tools, we simply collected stones as we walked, finding some that resembled the carved stone Goddesses found in prehistoric caves, and others whose markings suggested human faces or eyes. I chose five stones, for another card in the reading, the Five of Stones, which speaks of deep inner truth.

The final card to mention is the Lovers, which in the Shining Woman Tarot shows a human and an angel in a wild kiss. To me, this card reminded me that SRS is an act of passion, and that for many of us it liberates our sexuality. It reminded me as well that surgery, as Dallas Denny has said, is a "religious experience," touching something very spiritual within us and uniting it to our needs and lives as ordinary women. Finally, the Lovers invoked Aphrodite, the Goddess of Love, whose myth links us to the practices of "transsexuals" in the prehistoric and ancient worlds. According to the story, Aphrodite was created when the God Kronos severed the genitals of the oppressive Sky God, Ouranos, and threw his male members into the sea. The action stirred up a foam on the waves, and from this foam rose Aphrodite, the perfect female. Now, we know that in Canaan, Turkey, and other places, anatomical males would sever their male organs and take on female identities in the service of the Goddess. And around the world, shamans cross gender lines as part of their initiations. The story of Aphrodite suggests a link to these archaic traditions.

We began our journey of initiation with a walk through the woods to the top of the cliffs, and then a steep climb down flights of stairs to the beach. After walking by the water for about fifteen minutes, we came to a place where several fallen branches formed a semicircle opening out to the waves. We decided that this Moon shape offered the perfect site for our ceremony. I laid down the five stones in the form of a star. Earlier, on the train, I had written the names of five friends whom I had told about the ritual: "Ann,

Rachel, Dallas, Denise, Angela." I realized that the first initials spelled ARDDA, one of the names of the Northern European Earth Goddess. So as well as the five stones for the community of New Women, I set down a large stone suggestive of the Goddess. Helle Agathe then put down a stone whose form resembled an elegant sculpture of the lower part of a woman's body. With each stone, we called on Ardda to give the strength of the Earth to the individual women and to all women.

We then wound the cord around our wrists, letting the ends hang loose so that all women, past and present, transsexual and non-transsexual, might join us in celebrating the Goddess and Her daughters. Joining hands, we raised our arms to the ocean—in Helle Agathe's words, "To praise the Sea from whence we came." I offered a short prayer to Aphrodite.

*Mother of Passion, Mother of Change,
Golden with the light of desire.
Rising and falling in the sea blood of
women.*

We asked Her to bless our ritual and the path of New Women everywhere. I spoke of Christine Jorgensen, of what she had meant to all her "daughters," and Helle Agathe said how Christine had made it possible for so many to become the women they were always meant to be, and that this had added to the lives of all women.

We then asked the Goddess for gifts—not for ourselves, but for others. We asked for such things as joy, healing, and fulfillment for each other, for lovers, and for friends. Finally, we asked the Goddess to bless the spirit of Christine Jorgensen.

The idea of gifts led us to Persephone, who returned to the world of light with gifts of food and new life. As we shared the food we'd brought, we thanked Persephone for showing women the way of courage and transformation. Finally, we stood once more before the sea and offered a final prayer before ceremonially opening our circle. Leaving the stones behind as witnesses, we walked back along the beach and climbed the stairs to the top of the cliff. As we followed the path, Helle Agathe commented to me that the Goddess was never remote or distant, but always present, always accessible, in the many sides of nature and in our own lives. ☽

*A woman now, I
have been man,
youth, and boy.*

—*Catallus* (ca 84-54 b.c.e.)

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The Gallae of the Magna Mater

by Margaret Dierdre O'Hartigan

Imagine, if you can, what it might be like to live in a culture that worships the Eternal Feminine. Imagine an entire religion based upon that worship. Imagine that the highest honor is to serve the Goddess as her priestess and that those who do so are held in awe and respect because they who once were men have changed their sex and forever after live as women to serve the Mother of the Gods. Imagine, if you can, that the greatest act of devotion is a sex-change operation.

What you've just imagined is no fantasy, but history—our history and an integral part of the history of Western civilization.

Surprised? You should be. Perhaps what is most surprising about all of this is that the knowledge of the Magna Mater and her transsexual priestesses is the result of neither recent archaeological discovery nor the application of space-age technology to the shattered remnants of ancient civilizations. This knowledge is part of the legacy of Western culture bequeathed us from the glory that was Rome. All of this has been known for centuries. Indeed, most of it has never been lost.

The worship of the Great Mother and her priestesses is the most completely known of all the ancient mystery religions—and we have the priestesses of the Mother themselves to thank for this. Their rite of self-castration and subsequent change of sex was so fascinating to the Roman mind that some of the most famous of the Classical writers saw fit to leave accounts of it, among them Livy in his *History of Rome*, Lucretius, and the most renowned of Roman poets, Catallus. Even the early Christian church could not refrain from commenting on the gallae, as the priestesses were called, and their Goddess.

The Goddess in question is Cybele; in Greek, she is called Kybeleia or Kybele. Her worship began back in the Neolithic era in Anatolia (part of Ancient-day Turkey), where the Phrygians called her Matar Kubleya. The Romans called her Mater Magna Deum Idaea, but she is more commonly known as Magna Mater—the Great Mother.

Her arrival in Rome was credited with the salvation of the Eternal City. Near the end of the third century before the present era, the fortunes of Rome were at their lowest. Hannibal had invaded Italy in 217 b.c.e., and controlled much of southeast Italy; if he chose to march on Rome, he would

undoubtedly take the city. In desperation, the Sibylline Books were consulted and, according to Livy, promised that the invader "could be driven from Italy and conquered if the Idaean mother were carried to Rome." As a result, the small black stone which represented the deity was brought from the Phrygian city of Pessinus, and with Her, the first gallae to serve in Rome.

Under protection of the Magna Mater, Rome flourished. The harvest that year in Her presence in Rome was phenomenal, while in the very next year, Hannibal was driven from the peninsula.

Over the centuries, Her standing within first the Republic and subsequently the Empire grew greater—yet despite the increasing inroads of the religion, Rome forbade its citizens the sex-changing role of the gallae, requiring the importation of priestesses from Asia, until the Emperor Claudius removed all restrictions on participation. However, many other Eastern religions were also making their way to Rome, among them, Christianity.

The amount of information that has come to us from that time is truly amazing. The very words spoken during various rituals of the Mother's honor are preserved for us: *I have eaten from the drum/ I have drunk from the cymbal/ I have carried the sacred dish/ I have stolen into the inner chamber.*

There exist detailed accounts of the seven-day festival held at the vernal equinox in honor of the Goddess. Extensive archaeological evidence has come from many parts of the ancient world; there even exist contemporary portraits of the gallae themselves.

So why haven't you heard any of this before, you ask? Well, for one thing, although priestesses of the Magna Mater still walked the streets of ancient cities as late as Augustine's time, the increasingly powerful Christian church did not appreciate the competition. Worship of the Mother, along with other beliefs, was under constant attack by the Church.

After a protracted period of Christian rule, no less a personage than the Emperor Julian restored the Mother to Her place of honor; fascinated by the

priestesses, Julian wrote theological tracts on the meaning their transformation held for non-gallae. But Christianity was a rising tide, and the last public performance of the Mother's rites was held in the last decade of the fourth century—over 600 years after Her arrival in Rome. The Christians interpreted the sacred meal of bread and wine served from Her sacred tympanum and cymbal to be but a demonic parody of the Christian Eucharist. The site of Her main sanctuary in Rome bears the weight of the Basilica of Saint Peter today.

Probably the greatest blow of the Christians to the worship of Cybele, however, was their prohibition against Her priestesses. Without them, there could be no celebration of the rites of Attis at the vernal equinox; without them, there could be no individual worship of the Mother at Her shrines.

The suppression of one religion by another is not the only explanation why the gallae have been invisible to us for so long. At the base of their invisibility lies a case of mistaken identity.

Writers such as Catallus had no problem with the concept of a change of sex and made a point of referring to Mother's chosen in the feminine form *gallae*, rather than the masculine *galli*. "He cut off his testicles with a sharp flint. She, then, aware of her limbs without the man..." Writers critical of the gallae, however, from Church fathers to modern-day historians, make a point of labeling these priests "eunuchs" and persist in the use of the masculine *galli*.

This tendency to denigrate who and what the Mater's priestesses really were should come as no surprise. Like the temple of Diana at Ephesus or of Astarte at Heirapolis, many near-Eastern and Mediterranean fertility goddesses were served by priestesses for whom one criteria of holding office was that they undergo a change of sex. It is for this reason that those religions implacably opposed to the existence of a goddess, Judaism and Christianity, prohibited any actions related to the creations of these priestesses. Deuteronomy's vehement proscription, "A woman shall not wear that which

pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whosoever doeth these things is an abomination unto the Lord thy God" was as a direct result of such religious practices going on around the Jews and subsequently the Christians.

There are people even today—rude people to be sure—who insist I am nothing more than a eunuch myself, and make a point of referring to people like me as "he." So it is with the gallae of the Magna Mater. There are too many examples of eunuchs in the pages of history for us not to recognize them when we see them, from the court of the Chinese emperors to the Seraglio of the Ottoman Empire and the castrati of the Catholic Church choirs and Italian opera. Eunuchs are men who have been castrated. Nonetheless, they remain men. Above all, eunuchs are victims, for they are invariably altered against their will for the purposes of someone else. That is a far cry from the likes of the gallae, who chose to change sex to honor and serve their Goddess.

The usual rationale given for the self-castration of the gallae is that they were impersonating Attis' self-castration under the pine tree sacred to the Mother; then again, the explanation is sometimes offered that they were so ordered by their Goddess to spread awe among men. The explanations given by historians as to who was so chosen is that individuals within the crowd of onlookers at the public rites were, in the words of sir James Frazer, writing in *The Golden Bough*, so moved that "many a one did that which he little thought to do when he came as a holiday spectator." Lucian says, "Men who have come simply to watch subsequently perform this act." Frazer explains, "When the tumult of emotion had subsided and the man had come to himself again, the irrevocable sacrifice must often have been followed by passionate sorrow and lifelong regret."

Frazer has no grounds for such supposition, for there exist no records of what the gallae themselves thought of their transformations. Nor does his conclusion explain why a man filled

with regret would nonetheless continue the transformation by taking up womens' clothes and habits. It is quite apparent that Frazer and the other historians are resistant to the notion that there could be people who, far from mourning castration, would welcome it and the ensuing feminization it would engender. I suspect there was just as much self-selection amongst the gallae as is the case with both modern-day transsexuals and the hijra in India. There would still be every reason for working oneself into a fever pitch of excitement in order to go through with a self-castration already decided upon. How much easier to have had the benefit of a supportive environment complete with music, chanting, and the presence of others who had already undergone the process! What contemporary observers of the incipient gallae took for sudden impulse could very well simply reflect the observers' lack of knowledge of both the procedure and the participants' prior intent, while still accurately describing the necessity for quick action.

After the surgery, the neophyte was fed a diet consisting solely of milk, symbolizing the new-born babe. This is similar to the hijra of India, who traditionally undergo castration in their transformation from men into vehicles of the divine power of the Mata, the Mother Goddess. The term for the Indian surgery, "nirvan," translates to "rebirth." The recipient is fed the diet given women after childbirth—sugared tea only for three days, and then the gradual reintroduction of solid foods.

It is a mistake to attempt to rationalize the priestesses' changing as but an imitation of Attis; this ignores that fact that Attis, who was merely human, did not survive his own castration, let alone go on to become a woman. It is the Magna Mater Herself who changed sex, becoming Agdistis in order to impregnate Attis' mother and so "sire" Attis.

Changing sex is the prerogative of the supernatural; any number of gods and goddesses from all times and places have changed sex when it suited their purposes. It is the act of sex-changing itself, and not the fact of

being female, which qualified the gallae to serve the Mother. The gallae represented the divine aspect because they had become, in a sense, supernatural themselves, accomplishing that which most mortals cannot do: transforming themselves from one form of humanity to another.

Time and again, in various cultures and times around the globe, it is the places where worlds meet—twilight, the strand, the new year, the intersexed—which are believed to be in touch with the body. Sadly, the concept of the gallae is one aspect of ancient religion against which prejudice and misinformation have been allowed to run rampant and often even encouraged in the mistaken belief that to be anti-gallae and anti-sex change is to be pro-feminist. Nothing could be further from the truth. Despite feminist writers such as Merlin Stone portraying the gallae as an example of men usurping functions and positions traditionally held by women in the course of the rise of patriarchy, there is no archaeological or historical evidence that a usurpation of this priestly role occurred. The role of the gallae extends back into the shadow of pre-history; far from being the precursor to a patriarchal religion, or the remnant of a matriarchal one, the worship of Cybele and her son Attis was egalitarian in nature, initiating both men and women into the mysteries, whereas those faiths with a masculine god and priesthood, such as Mithraism, Judaism, and Christianity are also those most indisposed towards both women and the possibility of changing sex.

Mainstream historians are dedicated to the status quo, and one method of supporting that status quo is to perpetrate the myth that those of us the state disapproves of have no history or traditions of our own. Especially, it is to be kept from common knowledge that what today's society disapproves of could have ever been looked upon with approval and appreciation.

Sex changing is erroneously believed to have begun in this century, in large part because of a medical establishment eager to discover new

"disorders" to diagnose. One reason the Native American concept of the berdache has found such favor with transsexual and transvestic people of European descent is that we imagine ourselves bereft of a tradition of our own beyond the medical model of transsexualism. As I hope I have shown here, such is not the case. This is not to say we need to longer identify with people like us from other cultures, but we need to do so aware of our own birthright; as equals, not as beggars.

The same forces within the Church and academia that have denied the historical evidence of our existence have also worked to destroy the indigenous people like us in other lands. Perhaps now we can let them know who we are and stand in solidarity with them in their own struggle without feeling the need to appropriate their past or speak for them. The past we need to appropriate is our own, and the people we need to speak for are our own, for if there is one thing that being both male and then female has taught me, it is that no one who has not gone through a similar transformation can be trusted to explain or speak for us. Our experience of the human condition encompasses and extends so far beyond most people's lives that surely the ancients were correct in ascribing to us the highest honor of serving the Great Mother.

When I look upon the image of a galla carved in stone and taken from the Appian Way, I'm gazing upon the image of a woman in whose features I recognize my own and whose life more closely resembled mine than do either of ours to the majority of our contemporaries. In that instant I sense that although 1700 years may separate us, she is my sister and I am hers, and in that sense we are both priestesses of the Great Mother, for we have both been male and become female, servants of the Eternal Feminine. Although her voice has long been still, I know what she would say and I will say it for her, for I, too, have the right to say: *I have stolen into the inner chamber.*

And so have you.
Imagine that. ♀♂

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Interview with Anne Bolin, Ph.D.

by Dallas Denny

Dr. Anne Bolin is an anthropologist who teaches at North Carolina's Elon College and does research in women's bodybuilding, which she categorizes as a frontier in which women are redefining what it means to be a woman. In the spirit of participant-observation, Anne herself is a bodybuilder.

Anne's doctoral research was also a participant-observation study. She attended meetings of the "Berdache Society," a fictional name for a male-to-female transsexual support group in an undisclosed Midwestern city. Her dissertation was published by Bergin and Garvey in 1988 with the title *In Search of Eve: Transsexual Rites of Passage*.

Anne brought a new and important perspective to transsexualism. Because she is not a clinician, her interactions with transsexual people took place in the real world rather than in the artificial and highly structured treatment setting which had previously generated the majority of the literature of transsexualism. She discovered that many of the clinical "truisms" of transsexualism were not supported by her observations. For instance, just as in any other diverse group of women, the members of the Berdache Society had a wide variety of personal styles, modes of dress, and feminine presentations ranging from ingenu to matron to seductress to business executive to earth mother. She did not find the exaggerated feminine characteristics and stereotyped modes of dress so often reported in the clinical literature.

In fact, when Anne looked at the interactions between caregivers and transsexual persons, she discovered that each party had objectives which affected the relationship. Caregivers served as "gatekeepers," and transsexual persons had to convince the caregivers to open the gates. For this, they used a variety of tactics, including the stereotyped feminine presentations which have been so often written up in medical journals and which their caregivers expected. The caregivers seemed to have "clinical blinders" which kept them from seeing what was actually happening. In fact, transsexual persons themselves often looked through the same blinders.

The importance of *In Search of Eve* is that it reframed gender dysphoria, enabling those who bothered to look to see that transsexualism is much more than a phenomenon of patients sitting in waiting rooms in doctors' offices. Transsexual persons come in all shapes and sizes and they need not conform to the expectations placed on them by psychologists and physicians.

We interviewed Anne in the summer of 1991 at her home in Burlington, North Carolina. We began by asking a question which had been on our mind for some time.

CQ: Anne Bolyn was one of the wives of Henry the Eighth. Are people always remarking on the similarities of your names?

Bolin: Yes they are, and there is an interesting story behind my name. My mother gave it to me on purpose. She's Italian. During World War II, she emigrated to England, where she worked for the BBC. She met my father there, and must have been impressed with his name, which was George, the same as Anne Bolyn's brother, with whom Anne was accused of having incest. So she named me Anne on purpose. I have a picture of Anne Bolyn on my office door.

CQ: Who were your biggest influences in the field of anthropology?

Bolin: Oh, strong women figures! Ruth Benedict, who was truly a pioneer. She never really fit in with her culture or her society. And her very close friend, who also is a very famous woman anthropologist, Margaret Mead. Both have influenced me a great deal, and they've influenced the field as well. They stood outside their time. Margaret Mead went off in 1928 to Samoa, when women just did not do things like that. Benedict and Mead are truly pioneering women—lineage elders. They had the kind of perspective that comes from being able to stand outside your own culture.

CQ: As you did when you were working on your doctoral dissertation, which later became your book, *In Search of Eve*. You did a participant-observation study with male-to-female

transsexual people. You studied another culture without having to leave the country. I know you talk about it in your book, but tell us again: how did you get interested in working with transgendered people?

Bolin: In the early '70s, I wrote my master's thesis, which was entitled *God Save the Queen: A Study of a Homosexual Community*. In 1972, it was not particularly popular to write about this subject. But it was the most incredible of times. I had the opportunity to be the token heterosexual in the gay liberation front. I was, I think, the only heterosexual in the front. It was the result of having a friend in anthropology. He would take me out on weekends. We would go to the gay bars. He assured me that he was not gay, but he had gay friends he was sure I would like; maybe I could do one of my anthropology papers on them. Later, he revealed to me that he was gay.

So I ended up doing my honors paper in anthropology on the gay community as I came to know it through participant observation. It was his friendship which led me to pursue it for a master's thesis.

By that time, I was getting interested in gender in anthropology, and I noticed that there was not a lot of information available. It turned out that one of my mentors, the late Dr. Omar Stewart, who was the expert on peyotism in the United States, had written an article on homosexuality. He had looked at the cross-cultural record on the expression of homosexuality. I also ran across a little book called *Mother Camp* by Esther Newton, who reported on the phenomenon of transgendered people in the gay community—gay male crossdressers. It was a fascinating account, and it started me thinking about gender identity.

I got into the literature, and found that there were some real definitional problems. Our labels emerge from psychiatric traditions, which are firmly rooted in bipolar Western notions of gender. There are two genders—male and female—and those are the only two choices. In other cultures, there are other, supernumary

genders—alternative genders. There were gender options out there in the world besides just two.

I began to think that it would be a good dissertation topic to study those who were expressed their gender in alternative ways in the gay community. I was originally going to go to Hawaii to study ethnic variations through a gender clinic there. There is a native indigenous role, the Mahu, in which a person, usually a male, takes on the characteristics of another sex. I thought I might find the Hawaiian tradition of the Mahu overlaid with Western conceptions of homosexuality and transsexualism. And in Hawaii, there are other cultural traditions as well—for instance, a large Asian population, and a Caucasian population. I thought Hawaii had fascinating research populations. I still think so. I think one of the things missing in this field is cross-cultural data. In terms of those who get sex reassignment surgery, there seems to be a definite white, middle-class bias—the people who can afford to get it, get it. What about our Hispanic population, the Native American population, the Black population? Where do they fit in?

The Native Americans are particularly interesting, because they have a berdache tradition, in which a person can become the other sex, when there are two, or a third or fourth sex, depending upon how many categories the culture has. How do our psychiatric categories work in such a situation? We need to consider cultural variations.

CQ: Do you think transsexualism is becoming a cultural institution in the Western world?

Bolin: How are you defining cultural institution? Are you asking if transsexualism might becoming a third gender category for humans?

CQ: Yes. Certainly, the term is of relatively recent origin, but most Americans have by now at least seen transgendered persons on television. Many have had some personal contact with one or more transsexual persons. Do we now have a new category, with a new set of social expectations?

Bolin: That is an absolutely fascinating question! It even relates to the

issue of our stereotyped conceptualization of gays and lesbians. Are they also considered transgendered populations? Because the stereotypes—and the stereotypes are not dead—are associated with gendered kinds of behaviors: how people look. On the other hand, peoples' histories, and how we perceive them, are important. So—do we have another gender category, or are transsexual people and homosexuals perceived to be “sick” people of their gender? Is there becoming an alternative gender category, or are these people continuing to be stigmatized members of the two categories we acknowledge?

If there was another category out there, that would be a very interesting kind of thing. We have only two categories. It makes absolute sense that there be a surgical option for someone who feels conflicted enough to want sex reassignment surgery in order to have the full experience as we define it in the American culture, to be a woman—which is to be a person with a vagina, or a man, which is to be a person with a penis. I'm just saying that people with vaginas are considered women, and the surgery sustains our two category system. But could we in fact have a new category, or categories? We could have a third gender, or two alternative genders—another way of being a man, so that people would not necessarily go so far as to have the surgery. They could be social men with clitorises and vaginas. And could we not have another category of social women with penises? Could that be a possibility in our culture? I think not at this point, because we are so biocentric—that is, permeated with our belief in biology and genitalia as the sine quo non of gender. But I do see murmurings of this in the transgender approach and in androgyny.

CQ: Here's a related question: Women's roles in American society have changed. If you were to take today's woman in her manner of expression and dress and compare her to a woman of 1920's America, she would seem highly transgendered. Largely, the change in female gender role has been attributed to economics—the Rosie the

Riveter phenomenon of World War II, when American women first entered the work force in large numbers. Do you see this kind of slippage occurring for men, and could it be done outside an economic context? In other words, with a sufficient number of gender pioneers and gender activists, do you think a change could be brought to the perception of what men are like in America?

Is the feminist movement a threat? You'd better believe it. It's a big threat. When my male students get concerned in my classes on gender and sex, I tell them. "You bet it's a threat. It's going to change everything."

Bolin: The Changing Men movement is a very interesting movement. The men's movement is not really a political movement. It is very different from the feminist movement. It is not concerned with dominance and power. These are men who are working from the inside. Their primary focus seems to be on the kind of emotional crippling that has occurred as a result of the more rigid stereotypes about expressing themselves emotionally. From my perspective, men and women have the same sets of emotions, but we learn to express them differently. What the men's movement seems to be addressing is in fact this very issue of the denial of expression of men's nurturing qualities. I think that a political statement needs to be made here. Right now, from what I understand, this incipient movement is composed of small groups of men who are learning to express themselves, exploring their relationships with women, getting in touch with the “natural” pasts.

Have we made headway? I think things are changing. We are seeing paternity leave. But are men taking advantage of it? We've made some steps forward, but it does seem that we have also taken steps back. There is a lot of regional variation in the United

States, so far as men's roles are concerned. I don't want to engage in regional stereotypes here, but I do think we need to be aware of local climates, where we find pockets with less sex role disparity between males and females, and areas where there is greater sex role disparity. We have to look at these differences according to class and status.

I do see it is very difficult on a personal level. It is a constant struggle to have an egalitarian relationship and not slip into sex role stereotypes. An example is the Cinderella complex, where one waits for one's knight to come and rescue one—no matter how professional one is as a woman. Those are things that many in the baby boomer population have grown up with. I think that for male persons, no matter how egalitarian they are trying to be, it is easy to slip into traditional male roles as well. Males have more to lose, in terms of power, and women have a whole lot more to gain as they proceed.

Is the feminist movement a threat? You'd better believe it. It's a big threat. When my male students get concerned in my classes on gender and sex, I tell them. “You bet it's a threat. It's going to change everything.” But what do you get from it? You get partnerships in life. You're both on equal footing. You can work it out with your partner according to your different likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses. But to break roles down just because of some gender script is not the way to achieve egalitarian status. I do think that ultimately, for women to achieve equal status, we're going to have to get equal pay. And in a capitalist society like ours, when women have achieved economic equality, then we will be a long way towards achieving equality in other areas. I think we're in the process of achieving economic parity. We're a long way from achieving political parity, but we're making inroads. And as far as our somatic selves, that is the last area. It's where my present research is going. It's the ultimate area for change. We are denied what physical efficacy. We are on our way to achieving some economic, and hopefully political equality, but

we're still denied our physical selves, our bodies, and our ability to feel ourselves in the universe.

CQ: Much of your current research has to do with women bodybuilders, and you're a bodybuilder yourself. How did you get interested in that? Why women bodybuilders? How did you get interested in that, and what is the significance of bodybuilding for the expression of gender?

Bolin: My experience working on *In Search of Eve* was the most wonderful experience in any endeavor. I have never learned so much in my life. I stopped taking gender for granted. I mean, you can talk all you want in theory about gender as a learned and constructed process, about gender as cultural, but nothing brings it home like living it. The people who helped me understand it the way they did created a whole new set of questions for me, about gender, and about the limits of gender, and about taking it in the direction of the physical self, and the relationship of the biological to the cultural. About how we construct the biological in our society, and the meaning we give to biology, and the meaning we give to bodies. So when I saw this movie called *Pumping Iron II: The Women*, I found it very interesting, because in it was a woman bodybuilder, Bev Francis, who is the strongest woman in the world. They zoom in on her, and when you look at her physique, the first response—and I've shown this to numerous students—their first response to her is horror. She has the muscles of a man. In fact, my students will say, "She looks like a man." She looks like a man as we in our society picture men with large muscles to look. She was a former power lifter, so she has very big muscles. So she seriously challenges our notion of femininity in this movie.

At first you're horrified by her, because she looks like a quote "freak". And of course the issue of steroids always comes up. Some of my students said, "She certainly looks like she did steroids. She's a female taking male hormones."

I thought, "Well, I know a little bit about that."

I don't know if Bev took male hormones, but her physique was definitely the kind of physique that a pre-operative female-to-male might think would be one way to be a man, would definitely be desirable. And yet, as I listened to this woman talk, she was talking about just seeing how much she could subject her body to. And I thought, "This is very alien. I'm a woman, and I've always been taught to stop when it hurts. I've always been taught not to push myself physically. To get out of physical education class. To use my period as an excuse." I had always been taught this, and here I was listening to these words. And rather than alienate me, Bev Francis really intrigued me. And I know she alienates my students at first, but as they listen to her story, they begin to develop an empathy for her. She is truly challenged by pushing herself to the limit. That's where she has really excelled. And she was punished for being a freaky-looking bodybuilder. In fact, in the show in the movie, she came in last place. We are also presented with several other archetype women, one of whom is Rachel McLish, who has muscles, but is very quote "feminine." If you see the movie, you will really see some gender stereotypes being enacted here. I thought, "That's anthropology."

I had never in my life been in a gym. But I thought, "This is a very intriguing idea. Here we have women who want to get muscles. Some of them want to get muscles as long as they are 'feminine' muscles. But what are feminine muscles? What does that say? How far is too far? We have these two archetypes. Bev Francis has gone 'too far.' Rachel McLish hasn't." I decided I would like to explore this.

CQ: But back when you were a graduate student, you didn't go to Hawaii. You stayed where you were and studied transsexual people.

Bolin: Yes, I stayed in the United States, in a large midwestern city.

CQ: Because transsexual people were there?

Bolin: Yes. Because I found them. It was wonderful. I was still working on my Ph.D. I was teaching sex and gender

courses at a university, and I called up the gay community one day, and I put in my order. You'll like this. I said, "Well, I would like some speakers. I would like a lesbian woman, a gay male. Can you help? I would like an S&M person. And do you happen to have a transsexual?" And they said, "Oh, yes, we have all of those. And we have a therapist who works with transsexuals. And we have some transvestites. We'll send some people over to you." And sure enough, in the course of two lectures, I had gays and lesbians, I had an S&M practitioner, and they sent me over—I'll never forget that day. I describe it in the book. They sent me over a therapist, and a pre-operative transsexual, and a transvestite, and I had no idea who was who. I had never ever met a transsexual before in my life. In fact, I kind of pictured the therapist as one of the cultural women, even though she was the one who had been born and raised as a female.

I told them I was interested in doing my dissertation research on transsexual people. So they invited me to their group. It was incredible. I was terrified. I had no idea what to expect. I was sitting out in my little Volkswagen. It was freezing cold. I had on my bold slingback high heels, had to walk in them in the snow. Everything was so vivid that night. I hadn't known what to expect, whether or not to look like an anthropologist nerd. I expected something quiet, subdued, and I walked into this Christmas party. And there they were. A whole group of people who identified themselves as transsexuals and transvestites, and they were warm to me, and invited me in. I told them I was an anthropologist, and I said, "I'd really like to know what this is all about. Who are you?" I mean, the basic anthropological question: "Who are you? What are you up to? What is this all about?"

They took a vote to see whether they accepted me to come into the group to study with them.

In this group, there were two identity options—transsexual and crossdresser. In this culture, we have transvestites and transsexuals. Harry Benjamin's model of a continuum I think is a good concept, despite its Western psychiatric bias. When you

study other cultures, you see that there are many kinds of options out there. In fact, different cultures don't even define the self in the same way. In many cultures, genitals will serve as your original designation as a male or female, but in terms of whether you are going to be a man or woman, the work you choose to do may be far more

My experience working on In Search of Eve was the most wonderful experience in my life. I have never learned so much in my life. I stopped taking gender for granted. I mean, you can talk all you want in theory about gender as a learned and constructed process, about gender as cultural, but nothing brings it home like living it.

important a determiner of gender than what genitals you have. For example, there is a wonderful tradition called woman marriage—and I like to use terms like wonderful liberally, because I'm so absolutely impressed with human diversity that I like to celebrate it all the time. There's a great capacity for variation by human beings. Woman marriage is well-known in African cultures like the Nuer. It serves as a recruitment strategy. A barren woman—and don't forget the name of the evolution game is of course reproduction and kinship and lineage—so a barren Nuer woman who cannot have children may take a woman for her wife, and she will become a social male and husband. The woman husband will make arrangements for her wife to have children, and she will become the social father of those children. So what we have is an opportunity for a woman to become not just a social male, but a father as well. How does an option such as woman marriage affect an individual? These women husbands are considered very good husbands. There needs to be more research in terms of what the relationships are like in the marriage. In terms of gender identity—what does it mean to be a social male? I mean, it's very nice that our researchers say, "So this is an opportunity for a Nuer woman to be a social male." But what does that mean? How do the Nuer construct gender as a category and how is sexuality expressed within these kinds of mar-

riages? Those questions are still not answered.

And there are some other options as well. They show us the multiplicity and complexity of gender and how cultures provide social identities. Into such options are squeezed a pantheon. Serena Nanda gives a fascinating account of the hijras of India. The

hijras show us these multiple layers of social identity and personal identity, of nature being shaped by culture.

The hijra caste originated from the hermaphroditic status of its members. For us in the West, a hermaphrodite is someone who is born with physical characteristics of both sexes. The genitalia are very ambiguous. The hijra are a caste of people born with ambiguous genitalia. However, there is an alternate route so that non-hermaphrodites may have surgery to become like hijras. These people are not born hijras, but they too can achieve a hermaphrodite-type status. Other avenues allow for hijra pretenders.

The Navajo nadle also challenge our bipolar gender paradigm. They have a hermaphroditic status that is valued by the culture. The Navajo people have a recessive gene in which some people are born with ambiguous genitalia. These people become nadle. But both biological males and biological females can also assume the status of nadle without modifying their genitalia. If you are born into the category, it's on the basis of what the genitalia look like. However, one can become a nadle, even though the genitalia are not hermaphroditic. Biological males and females can become nadle pretenders

CQ: How do they become nadle?

Bolin: Nadle is a very special role that has certain behaviors and tasks associated with it.

CQ: So it's not a physical process, like it is for the hijras, who undergo surgery of the genitals?

Bolin: Absolutely not. It's a cultural process of behaving in ways in which nadle behave. Nadle are considered to be really good at babysitting, very good at economic tasks that traditionally are associated with females. They're allowed to do some tasks, but denied others. They're not allowed to go to war, as I recall. So it isn't a role where nadle take on the behaviors of the other sex, but rather a blended status. It has some characteristics from the male gender repertoire, and some from the female repertoire, and some unique to nadle. But it isn't based solely on genitalia.

Now what's really interesting is that nadle can marry and have relationships with either males or females, but they cannot have relationships with other nadle.

So what have we here? Five categories of people. We've got nadle, which is your hermaphrodite. Male nadle pretenders, female nadle pretenders, females, and males. But the nadle and nadle pretenders are really one category of personhood. They have the option of intimate relations with anyone but another nadle. The Navajo culture does not allow homosexuality. That is, they do not allow women to have sex with women, or men to have sex with men. But nadle are not considered women or men. Nadle are nadle. Thus a physically male nadle who has a sexual relationship with a non-nadle male is not in a homosexual relationship. So I hope this begins to show us that our concept of homosexuality as we know it is really inappropriate cross-culturally. When we begin to think, "Well, what do you mean, the same sex?" I'm sorry; nadle are not the same sex. Nadle are something else. They are nadle. And some of them may have the same genitalia as you, but they're not the same sex.

I think that should give us all a little bit more relativistic perspective on the world, to not be judgmental in our terms. So when you go to other cultures, you can't even use the term

homosexual in the same way. It's a completely different kind of thing. So Gilbert Herdt goes up to New Guinea—and these highland New Guinea types are known for hypermasculinity. We are talking about machismo culture par excellence.

CQ: With penis sheaths—

Bolin: —and institutionalized homosexuality. Where, in fact, every male in that society will go through a fairly long process at some stage in his life, where at one point he will become a fellator, and then later a fellatee, or the fellated upon. Are these men homosexual? We can't assume that. It is such a different experience for them. It is what all men do. Sperm is an important substance, and boys must acquire it from other men, since they aren't born with it. Therefore, young boys must ingest it, so that they can continue to have it. They believe that later in life, women diminish the sperm. Sounds like football coaches, doesn't it?

So here again, we have the ethnographic spectrum showing us that we have to really be careful with our assumptions. Even though our clinical terms are really meant to help us be scientific and impartial, they are bound up in our own Euro-American gender paradigm and don't apply cross-culturally because other cultures define sexuality and self differently.

CQ: Speaking of Euro-American notions of gender, what did you think when you started discovering things that weren't reported in the clinical literature? You found that a lot of these things in the clinical literature just weren't holding for your subject population. What were your reactions then?

Bolin: What I thought was going on was that clinicians are in a very special kind of relationship with the quote "treatment community." As an anthropologist, I'm not in a relationship with the treatment community. I was in a relationship with people who became my friends, or I wouldn't have been given the kind of information I put in my book. Although I maintained my scientific objectivity, I myself was transformed.

I necessarily had a very different type of relationship with transsexual persons than did clinicians. My field is anthropology. It's a very critical and self-aware discipline. We are critical of ourselves as anthropologists and cautious about other peoples' stories. We don't want to create exotic others. We want the diversity of voices to be heard in our accounts. But clinicians can also take the position of being self-aware and self-critical and stepping outside their own professions to analyze themselves and their discourses. That's the only way we're really going to begin to get a real feel and a real understanding for the humanistic attributes of science.

How do we tell other peoples' stories? Is it better for me to take somebody's narrative, translate it totally into my own scientific anthropology jargon, or is it better for me to intersperse throughout my story peoples' own words so that the reader has their vision and can hear their words? Is that better, or shall I just translate scientifically? Well, a little bit of both is what I have chosen. Caregivers could begin to be self-aware of their own circumstances—and I'm not being critical—but it would be interesting for therapists, who are incredibly self-aware people, to begin to look at themselves as part of the culture of the interaction patterns that occur between caregiver and patient. I think it would be really revealing. And this is occurring in the clinical literature. The reason I took such a different perspective is that I was an anthropologist. No one had to prove their gender identity to me. I simply accepted the group members for what they were. They were not my clients looking to me for guidance or a recommendation for surgery. It's not my position to decide to what degree someone is conflicted or whether the surgery is warranted. If you tell me you're a woman, I accept you for who you are, just as you accept me for who I am.

The transgendered people I worked with gave me my Ph.D. That's how I see it. So what can I give them? Well, hopefully, I can give them a book that will help other people who are in

a similar position by telling their stories in a way that is meaningful to the reader. I wanted their voices to be heard. When they were transsexual, their transsexual words are there, and as they become women, then their womens' words were there, too. They gave me so much. What could I do in return? I helped them with a history they hadn't experienced. I was happy to tell them what it was like from my perspective as a woman and an anthropologist.

CQ: When you got into the literature of transgender, what was your first impression? And as you continued to get into it, what was your evaluation of this literature?

Bolin: As I got into it, I thought that there was going to be some sort of model in which Mommies did it. A Mommy model, as it were. For example, the literature of homosexuality claimed that mothers smothered their little boys and made them homosexuals.

I discovered that transsexualism also had this theory attached to its etiology. Mother blame theories are based on traditional notions of parenting, including absentee fathers and over-protective mothers who violated their respective roles. The mothers are blamed for smothering and over-protecting their little boys, turning them into transsexuals with nurturance and love. And so I looked at those models. I saw a lot of them in the literature. And then I ran across Richard Green's work, and I was really impressed with his approach, because what he did was to look at behavioral patterns that went beyond the immediate family dynamics. He incorporated a contextual approach which included culture and society.

I finally centered on a social learning model—and you have to understand—I arrived at this from my examination of the literature. I had never met any transsexual persons at that point. I hypothesized that some are born with physically feminine characteristics which made them appear effeminate. I just didn't realize how much variability there was. I still think people get channeled into certain social careers. For example, if a male

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Gender Diversity in the Wiccan Community

by Winterhawk (Da'nelle)

The Wiccan community in general understands that we, as humans, are made up of diverse qualities both male and female, and that there are endless combinations of these quantities manifest in the human condition. Wiccans also see these qualities as being reflected throughout the Universe from the Godhead down to the smallest particle. Starhawk, in the 10th Anniversary edition of *The Spiral Dance*, writes that in the original text she considered people to have a male self and a female self. Now she considers the self to be a blending of both male and female qualities.

In the sense of the Cabalist, those who are considered transgendered are traveling the Path of the Middle Pillar; that is to say they are traveling the road between male and female. The creation myths of Wicca state that She was first and everything came forth from Her and returns to Her. Taking this further, we can extrapolate that since we start out female in the womb, it is a direct link to Her—hence the saying, “As above, so below” (see sidebar on page 22—Ed.).

Across the U.S., there are covens that are strictly for women, gay men, gay women, or even transsexual people, but when the circles convene at a large gathering, all are welcomed with open arms. Several of the larger Wiccan gatherings have lately made a point of including lesbian, gay, bisexual, and “others” in addition to heterosexual participants.

There are some who contend that true “majikal” work in a circle cannot take place without the balance of one person being female and another being male. I personally would have to argue with that, seeing that we are all a blending of both male and female. I believe, as do many other Wiccans, that one can pull the God or the Goddess down on to a person regardless of his or her physical sex.

If you are transgendered and looking for a coven or group that will allow you to crossdress at a Sabbath, don't get your hopes up. Wiccan people, although very accepting of individual rights (“And it harm none, do as thou wilt”) are quite closed about the private workings of their individual circles and covens.

Invoking the Goddess

Try some majik for yourself. I have developed a ritual that will bring down the Goddess on any person performing it. The ritual is as follows;

Preparation: Put on nice perfume and, if you do not want to do this sky clad, a nighty or something that makes you feel feminine.

You will need:

One small bowl one-third filled with salt

One small bowl one-third filled with water

One 6" white taper candle in a candleholder

Something heat-proof in which to burn incense

One dram of Moon Oil, and Moon incense

(If you haven't got a good Wicca shop near you, you can get it from the shop listed below).

This ritual is to be done on a full moon.

Take the salt and, sticking the first two fingers of your right hand into the salt, say, "Creature of Earth, awaken ye into life. I banish all negativity from you so that it may harm none. As I Do Say So Mote it Be!" Then take three pinches of salt and drop them into the water, saying, "Creature of water, awaken ye unto life. I banish all negativity from you so that it may harm none. As I Do Say So Mote It Be!"

Take whatever you are using for a candleholder in your left hand and, using the fingers of the right hand, dip them into the water and touch the top of the candle, saying, "Creature of Light, awaken ye unto life. I banish all negativity from you so that it may harm none. As I Do Say So Mote It Be!" Do the same with whatever you are using for an incense burner, substituting the words "Creature of Fire" for "Creature of Light." (*For the beginner:* We now have Earth, Water, and Fire. The Air elemental is the Moon Oil you will use on the candle.)

Hold the candle in the middle. Dab some of the Moon Oil on your finger and touch the top of the candle, saying, "As Above." Then touch the bottom, saying, "So Below." Still holding the candle in the middle, dab some more Moon Oil on your finger and, in one movement from the middle, stroke the candle toward the tip. (Do not rub back and forth!) Do this three times. Then, from the middle to the base, the same way three times: once for each Goddess' name you will be calling out. Place the candle in the holder.

Set your candle and the incense burner facing north. (If you are not a beginner, a self-blessing ritual would help).

Light the incense and candle, and, holding the fullness of the moon in your thoughts, say:

*Oh Goddess of Bright Shining Light,
My deepest wish on this Your night,
Is to fill me with Your deep desire,
That I may light the feminine fire.*

*Aphrodite, Isis, Arianrod,
Take me down the path You trod.
Let me see the shining light
That is the woman's sacred rite.
By all the powers of land and sea,
As I do say, so mote it be.*

Let the candle burn all the way down. You should feel the power of the Goddess and have a dream or vision of the feminine. Blessed be!

*Moon Oil and Moon Incense can be purchased for \$8.00 total cost from
Adriel's Alchemy, 3140 S. Parker Rd., Aurora, CO 80014 (Phone 303-369-9451).*

When I first came to Denver, it took the better part of a year to gain entry into the Wiccan community, much less to be accepted as a woman. The coven I am now associated with knows that I am transsexual. The coven does its rites "sky clad," and all who have sampled my energy say that it really is female. Telling the coven my story and the coven's acceptance of me goes along with one of the Wiccan Reads: "Thou shalt not enter the Circle without perfect love and perfect trust." So by this read, I had to tell them that I am a "New Woman."

The first two people who had to know were the High Priestess and Priest. They suggested that I not tell the other coveners until they found out from the others if I would be accepted on an individual basis. As it turned out, there was not a problem.

Some of the covens and groups that do not go sky clad may be easier for the transgendered person, but the Perfect Love and Perfect Trust thing comes into play. You'd have to tell them, even if you were post-operative. If you didn't tell, it would greatly affect the majik being produced.

Finding a particular group that will accept the transgendered person may take time. One may have to start his or her own tradition with regard to the crossdresser. The New Woman or New Man will have a better time of it simply because of the many physical changes which have taken place. This isn't to say that a man cannot experience the Goddess for himself. As Starhawk says, "It will invoke a very powerful change." ☪

Hermaphrodite's Love

by Jessa Bryan

The term hermaphrodite doesn't have much popularity amongst those outside our community. Usually, it has been used to ridicule us or to associate us with carnival freak shows. Sometimes, the word smacks of scientific labeling, as if for a butterfly pinned inside a display case. In early accounts of contact with Native American tribes, berdaches, in an attempt to describe their social role of "man-woman," were called hermaphrodites by anthropologists. Now the term has been appropriated by the medical profession to describe someone with the genitalia of both sexes. Unfortunately, the marvelous origin in Greek mythology of Hermaphrodite, a tale of merging of the sexes and a rebirth into a new way of being, goes unsung.

In searching out the tale of Hermaphrodite, the primary literary source is *The Metamorphoses*, written in 8 A.D. by Ovid, a poet of Augustan Rome. His narrative relates how the son of Hermes and Aphrodite was joined, against his will, with the nymph Salmacis after bathing in her pool. Yet Ovid only rendered his version from a much older oral tradition connected to a variety of ritual practices that still existed throughout the Mediterranean. In many instances, Hermaphrodite was seen as a result of a birth between Hermes (the Guide of Souls and the Trickster) and Aphrodite (The Goddess of Passion and Mother of Love). Ovid turns it into a tale of transformation. Perhaps he realized that one cannot be born in union, that there must be a process of joining, a *coming together* of male and female. Hermaphrodite starts out male, but merges with a female to become one being.

The archaic world visualized Hermaphrodite as a transgendered essence, as a woman who is also male. Various statues show Hermaphrodite as full-breasted and womanly, but with male genitalia. Artists portrayed her unique beauty, but within the spectrum of their spiritual imaginations. Many households at that time kept a small statue of Hermaphrodite inside the home, garlanded with flowers, as a blessing of sexual harmony (Delcourt, 1961).

The story of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis contains a myth told and retold from different perspectives for thousands of years, yet its core material remains potent even today. Those who tell the story shape it in their own way, sometimes with distortions, and sometimes with insightful enhancements. Ovid makes of it a personal tragedy of lost virility and woeful weirdness. For all of Ovid's charm and literary grace, he reduces the myth to an ironic fable.

Female energy overwhelms a resistant male, and he bemoans the change. In this version, merging is seen as weakening, and Hermaphroditus becomes less than a man. Ovid's story reflects his patriarchal biases. I love his book, but I believe the original tradition reflects a mutual desire and calling toward fulfillment, rather than Ovid's disapproving attitude.

James Hillman has said that for the Greeks, the Gods and Goddesses were not merely images inside the mind, but rather "living patterns" or "modes of being" which existed out in the world. Stories about their exploits were poetic dramas that contained meanings which penetrated the souls of those who, by necessity, were ready to receive the message. Even today, the patterns of the gods and goddesses enter us and shape our lives; a greater dynamic is at work. These patterns were active for our ancestors thousands of years ago, and will continue to be active generations hence.

Myths are not merely artifacts of personal psychology, but products of humanity at a more general and impersonal level. They are "a teaching concerning gods which is also a teaching concerning human beings" (Kerenyi, 1951). A myth is a traditional story which elucidates life experiences, and reflects both historical and metaphysical truths (Debrida, 1982). Myths are tellings and retellings, which contain seed images—*archetypes*—that provide revelations about the sources of who we two-leggeds are. *Arche* comes from the Greek root for origin and *type* means the making of a model. Archetype thus means the primary pattern from which those like it first originated (Downing, 1982).

This shouldn't be taken as something lost in the past. Archetypes exist as part of a "living system of interactions" where the potentials in Nature meet our personal experience. This is a belief in the *anima mundi*, the soul of the world, in which we exist and which lives in us. To know this soul we must engage the imagination and recover our sense of beauty. In this case, beauty refers to seeing particular things or processes in their essential

reality, as integral manifestations of Creation. As Hillman writes, "Beauty is the manifest *anima mundi*—it is neither transcendent to the manifest or hiddenly immanent within, but refers to appearances as such, created as they are, in the forms with which they are given, sense data, bare facts, Venus Nudata. Aphrodite's beauty refers to the luster of each particular event; its clarity, its particular brightness, that particular things appear at all and in the form in which they appear" (Hillman, 1981).

The Greek cosmos found meaning in an ordered arrangement of the universe, an aesthetic sensibility where everything fits in its own way. The passions that move the soul have their reason, and sensitize each of us to an intimacy with our particular place in the world. Archetypes put us in touch with a sense of self-identity beyond our own singularity. "We enact many myths in the course of our lives. We feel deeply the configurations of many stories. We are the playground of a veritable theater full of Gods and Goddesses. What do the Gods and Goddesses want with us? Our task is to incarnate them, become aware of their presence, acknowledge and celebrate their forms" (Miller, 1981).

From our transgendered community, one of the most profoundly healing moments is always that simple and newfound awareness that others like ourselves exist, and not just a few—but many, all across the globe. We never suspected this as we were growing up and thought we were merely failures, unable to conform to the social norm. As we have come to know of our collective situation, we have felt the deeper bond which connects us all. We share a way of life that is archetypal; our lives give form to a unique aspect of Gods and Goddesses. I feel we are pioneers in renewing this particular transgendered experience. Perhaps our era has modern tastes, but the experience is ancient and enduring.

We are learning how to value our lives, find wholeness, and remove the stigma of entrenched social prejudices. As a community we are looking

for clues to a heritage, to the beginnings of an honored tradition—our mode of being. As we work together, a sense of purpose inspires our community to shift the perspective from feeling "cursed" to feeling "blessed." Our healing will continue as we inquire into the particular beauty and celebrate our aspect in Nature's diverse spectrum.

The root-myth of Hermaphrodite conveys an experience of fusion where male and female join in unity, without losing either energy, and the spark of their union produces a sense of delight (Danielou, 1992). In its poetic drama, fundamental energies interact and ultimately transform into a new wholeness. A possibility is born where male and female enter each other and exist mutually in the soul, yet as one consciousness. Hermaphrodite incarnates our common fate, to be a union of sexes. We know the male, but we love the female—so much so that we don't just venerate—we try to embody femaleness. Our lives become *tuned into* the essence of femaleness, not merely an abstracted state of "femininity." The passion in our soul directs us toward the female world with all of its many experiences. This differs from talking about gender as a sex role inventory of masculine and feminine attributes. I believe that being transgendered is a soul process distinct from current cultural behaviors.

We dedicate ourselves to living in the female world as much as possible, in order to *be who we are*. Fulfillment resides in this quest which reveals our true character. This is the hero-heroine's journey that releases inborn potential and shapes the content of each life (Campbell, 1988). Our adventurer leaves the male world and travels into the female experience. No one does this unless they possess a particular character, and we happen to be the ones compelled to take this journey. If we resist its calling, we suffer or get twisted by our avoidance. Perhaps our Grail is a femininity which shines from the soul's happiness. By surrendering to that which we love, we grow to find our true story and its own real beauty.

The Story of Hermaphrodite & Salmacis

(With a curtsy to Ovid)

It has been said that a son was born of Hermes, Guide of Souls, and Aphrodite, Mistress of Passion. In his qualities shone the light of both his parents, and so he was called Hermaphroditus. He was raised on Crete by the nymphs of Mt. Ida, and grew to love mountains and places of water.

Though happy, Hermaphroditus sensed there to be a special calling for his life. When he turned fifteen, he decided to leave his native land and find his destiny.

In his travels throughout Asia Minor, a very ancient land, Hermaphroditus' enthusiasm took him to many shrines and sanctuaries by hidden streams and rivers. He never tired of honoring these beautiful places. He loved the company of their nymphs, and they loved his playful spirit.

After exploring Lycia, Hermaphroditus' adventures brought him to the southern coast of Caria, near Halicarnossos, where he learned about the beauty of the nymph Salmacis.

The pool of Salmacis was a most luxurious place. No swamp weeds or unkempt marshlands grew there. Instead, a lush garden and sweet grass thrived around its soothing waters. Salmacis loved to bathe in leisure and comb her hair with a boxwood comb; she loved to make herself pretty. Often, she would put on her silk gown, stretch her limbs, and look into her pool's mirror-like depths. She was not vain, but she enjoyed her voluptuous body.

All the other nymphs loved Salmacis and the enchanting beauty of her garden. Often, they would ask her to take up her arrows and painted quiver and go running in the hills. They said Artemis missed her kindly company. Salmacis loved the Maiden Huntress, but preferred to stay by her spring and weave garlands of flowers for her companions. She loved to make beautiful things for those she loved.

Then one day Salmacis saw Hermaphroditus walking toward her, full of grace and cheerful vigor. She sensed his profound appreciation of her beautiful waters and she wanted him to know her own spirit and to become her companion.

When he saw the beauty of the waters of Salmacis, Hermaphroditus instantly felt he had found the place of his heart's desire. Her garden seemed like home. He fell in love with the place and with her spirit.

And so they spent time together, delighting in their mutual friendship. They spent many a day tending to the flowers and exploring nearby mountains. As they swam in the beautiful waters, they saw themselves sparkling in each others' reflection. Oh, how they loved each other!

They were so moved by their happiness that they asked the powers of Heaven and Earth to allow that they might never be separated—that they might live together as one. They embraced, and the wish was granted; like vines entwining completely into one strong branch, they united their male and female spirits: no longer two, not one nor the other, but both as one. The garden surrounding them quickened from the joining of their souls, as if music flowed within the fiber of every plant. New life grew out of the old, a gift of love.

Artemis blessed the transformation. She asked that the waters be a magical place where the gift of "coming into life" would find its spirit. She gave to the spirit of the waters the power to call forth and guide.

But men cannot remain in Artemis' realm, except by living like Salmacis, a sister to one's companions and a daughter of the Great Mother. One must come to Artemis as She is. In Her realm all share the same love for Her wonders. Males who felt such love and sought this beauty would find fulfillment only as they lived as women. They, too, could become sisters to the Earth. Spring would be the time of their celebration. The Great Mother's love would be a garland of flowers around their hearts.

When the male and female came together out of love, then delight was born. The beauty of their delight would be felt everywhere, for delight was their purpose.

And this is how the pool of the nymph Hermaphrodite came to have its enchantment. ☽☽

The archetype of Hermaphrodite reveals a love so strong that it yearns to be one with what is loved. The lover joins with the beloved as the beloved also joins the lover. This simultaneous act is motivated by irresistible attraction which transforms the lovers naturally. The joining of male and female gives both entities happiness. As males we move into a femaleness, while at the same time, a female spirit lovingly enters us.

In its earliest oral forms, this narrative was told around campfires, kitchen tables, temple steps, or sacred groves. I would like to see many new versions, loaded with details from our own revelations. We are reinventing our tradition from our own visions. It is our turn now to reclaim the mystery. I believe we need to connect to a spiritual story rather than merely arguing with psychotherapists. How can we talk about ourselves adequately unless we have historical precedents? Can we speak confidently of our origins? I happen to think we've been around for a very long time, seeking the pleasure that comes from affiliation with female experience. I have written several possible accounts of Hermaphrodite and Salmacis in order to see how it might look from a subjective perspective (*see sidebar on page 25 for one such version—Ed.*).

The story of Hermaphrodite tells us not merely of a magic change, but that two spirits become one soul in an embrace of mutual attraction. This isn't about stealing power from one sex or the other, but an enhancement *from* both, an interaction of equal desires. A transgendered mode of being is to feel this meeting at a crossroads of the male world and the female world, a center place where we can see many directions as possible and viable. Our beauty shines as a particular possibility made manifest. Duality disappears within this merging. In fact, our archetype may well be the process of change itself. Whether or not we achieve our dreams, don't most of us feel irrevocably drawn toward shaping our lives in a new way?

Hermaphrodite's love speaks to transformation in Nature—the genera-

tive processes of Spring's blossoming, of seed growing to fruit, of root emerging as flower, and the consequent joy in this becoming.

In archaic celebrations, the Maybough symbolized Hermaphrodite's power as a symbol of vegetative life. Objects of abundance, such as cakes, wine, and honey, were offered at shrines. Hermaphrodite was not seen as a deity of the harvest, but of that moment of "coming into life," the spirit of new growth in the world (Delcourt, 1961). Knowing intimately of change, Hermaphrodite represents rebirth as a beneficial power.

We transform our bodies and we change our lives. Our phenomenon, whose truth we can only begin to explain, proves that many possibilities do exist while mainstream culture still argues to maintain a strict dichotomy of difference. Being transgendered exemplifies a way of bridging differences and removing boundaries, enabling shared understandings between the sexes. Ours is a path of singularity moving into a plural, and then on into a unified congruency. As we have begun to examine and describe our own lives, we simply prove that some males love to live as women. This would not be considered wrong unless women are seen as a lesser value in the first place. Much of our dialogue has been about overcoming the stigma of shame imposed on us by a world where our identification with females is seen as a weakness and defined as perversity. Transgendered people have to overcome not just stigma, but must awaken a consciousness that has been denied existence in society. Hopefully, we can begin to define our own virtues based on personal insight. We are at the point of working through old judgments, ready to reclaim a natural sensibility. But it will be we who define, out of our heartfelt knowledge, what feels natural.

Our common fate seems to be that of a change agent in a society of rigidly defined roles. Unfortunately, an asymmetry of power still governs the relationship between males and females and maintains a privileged sta-

tus for men. An entrenched male view still sees the world only on its own terms, and this male centrality creates a dominant-subordinate order throughout society. Women's reality doesn't figure equally in society, and female experience is seen as irrelevant to the goals of the power structure. A male who desires to live a female experience is seen as traitorous, as a betrayal of an idea, a social order, a collective identification (Carlin, 1992).

Ridicule and sensationalism are used to maintain the status quo. Hermaphrodite becomes another talk show oddity instead of an accepted life choice. We struggle to get a positive image out to the general public. Perhaps, unwanted as we are, we are really harbingers of a new vision toward a complimentary human experience. Perhaps our being male but identifying with the female is part of a greater purpose to break through long-standing cultural barriers. Perhaps our passion inspires us to help revitalize an awareness of both equality and diversity within Creation's interdependence. Somehow we help bring back the balance, to offer an honorable model of possible being. The flesh and blood lives we are leading will be the guideposts for those not yet born. Our speculations and solutions can help remove the obstacles from their own journeys.

The story of Hermaphrodite reveals the archetype of male love for a female spirit, and a merging with that spirit. We must also see that Salmacis indeed wishes to merge with Hermaphrodite. Salmacis is she who offers the Goddess to a male. She wishes to integrate with someone receptive to her, someone who desires her presence in him. Ovid depicted Salmacis as the one, crazy in love, who makes the transformation happen. In our own lives, doesn't it seem as if a female energy beckons us to join her—what is "out there" wishes to come inside. We love what is female, and I believe there is a female energy, the Goddess, who loves us in return. We are special. She urges us to reflect her, yet express our own unique femininity, our own beauty.

Concluded on page 47

Phaedra spends much time and energy traveling to the far corners of the earth, seeking out transgendered persons. Here, she relates her discovery of a Turkish Goddess legend.

The Goddess in Turkey

by Phaedra Kelly

The history of Islam, spread across the East, Africa, and Asia, is reflected in the history of the Christian crusades. The two faiths parallel in their violence against each other, and toward other faiths in their respective paths which both labeled animist, but which are properly called Shamanic and tribal.

When Islam could not evangelize, it took and held by the sword, as has Christendom. From their earliest history to the present, both religions have been equal in their genocide and massacre of other peoples, faiths, and philosophies which they deem competitive or obstructive to their own.

The Turkish Goddess was first identified in an interim period when Islam and native Turkish Shamanism were coexisting, their myths and demons overlaying, in the area now defined as Asian Turkey. A tribe of woman warriors, kindred in description to the legendary Amazons of ancient Greece, are said to have existed there, and their monarch was a woman of extraordinary beauty. A warrior king took her captive in battle and fell in love with her, and she, apparently, with him. They pledged their devotion and arranged their marriage.

But because she was still a captive, he had built for her a high tower in his castle, exclusive prison quarters fit for a queen. It was a royal house arrest. Towards the time of the planned marriage, the Amazon queen, yearning to be free and with her tribe, plunged from the top of the tower into the river below. She presumably drowned or died from the fall, although no body was found.

Before she leapt, she pledged her love for the king, and vowed that whenever his armies found themselves against the odds in battle, her spirit would return to protect them and guide them to victory.

Her vow was proven, in that when his forces next saw battle, they were indeed against the odds, and the queen did return to fight for them, but vanished again as quickly once the victory was won.

So profound is this legend that throughout Turkish military history, there have been actual reports of a vision of this warrior queen/Goddess of the Hunt, running with a deer at her side and carrying a bow. Her left breast is missing, sacrificed to her own Goddess, or removed to better aim with a

bow. The motif can be found in some of the most extraordinary places. I found it in a mural in a modern Istanbul fish restaurant. One night in the Yeşil Bizans, the story was told to me by a Turkish archaeologist and historian.

Where Diana of Greece was used as a Goddess in her own right, the Turkish version was clearly based on a Goddess which came before her. The Greek Diana became entangled by Greco-Roman movement and history of invasion, and cults emerged based on her. One such was the Sybil, in which there was an annual orgy or trance, and women would cut away their breast as devotion (in statuary, the Goddess has row upon row of these grisly tokens). Men would run wildly, entranced, and would emasculate themselves and hurl their genitals through the nearest window, which obliged the woman of that house to provide them the female raiment which they would ever after wear.

Such cults can be found at the base origin of the Christian cult throughout Russia and the Skoptsi, in which protest is shown by men disrobing in public and emasculating themselves—not for Diana, but for the Christian God. In ancient Rome, it became an embarrassment when military leaders joined the cult of the Sybil. Likewise, Skoptsi in Russia was frowned upon because it seemed to convert a lot of young military officers to its cause.

It may offend purists of Greco-Roman history, but the Turkish Goddess defied history of invasion and movement, and was not diluted by cultist branches, thus suggesting that it was and is the origin of Diana. It also promotes all the more, in its raw state, the theory that the queen was not a woman or a man, but an androgyne, able to captivate the mind and soul of a king with love of her ambiguous beauty and certain bravery, but unable to sacrifice her asexuality to make any human union with him, preferring instead to state her love through a power of the soul in another life beyond the earthly.

Parallels seem obvious with the

later history of the Russian woman Roxilana, who became a Sultana on the demise of her husband, Suliaman the Magnificent, who had married her monogamously. She reverted to her Shamanic roots with his funeral, having him cremated and drinking his ashes in her wine in ceremonial cannibalism. Such was her love. But her rule returned too much of Turkey's captured land to her original Russian people for them to accept her kindly. Her mausoleum is kept locked to this day.

Androgyny in Turkey has ancient roots. The Sultans kept harem boys who were considered to be and were treated as women from an early age. Murals of them in the famous Topkapi Palace are off limits to tourists. The Goddess does exist, but has been denied to the modern day Turkish Travesty (*transvestites—or, more properly, transgenderists—Ed.*), who have chosen instead to become agnostic, and adopt a needful involvement with the Green Party and all other minority groups.

The word Genius is derived from Genie, or properly, Djinn, who, like Satan, disdained to bow to God, and were thus set aside, placed between Man and Angel. Djinn are popular myths throughout Islam, but more so in Turkey, whereas in the legend of Christian Angels and their fallen counterpart, the Djinn are androgynous.

Our Travesty sisters are today treated more like Djinn, who play tricks on humans, than the Goddess of their Shamanic roots. In Pakistan, and within recent years in the Asian community in the United Kingdom, holy religious Moslem leaders have appointed exorcists to households to rid families of the Djinn within. These Djinn, in human form, have been starved, beaten, and tortured to death by the exorcist and their own families, who believe that the punishment is directed not at their suffering loved one, but at the spirit of the Djinn within, which is the one feeling the pain. Authorities have a hard time in the West in combating this menace, but several cases have come to court in England alone.

The Travesty situation, more than the transsexuals, who are accept-

ed post-operatively as women in Turkey, is a bone of contention with Moslem fundamentalism, but perhaps more so, because Travesty, as agnostics, represent a threat to the spread of Islamic faith. As they have no obvious cultural identities beyond their being Travesty, they are lost in a nether world of illegal vice. Islam cannot live with them as what they are, or without them as what it wants them to be, so instead it continues to attack them.

Had they a faith which was defined as a culture, philosophy, and way of being that involved what they are as a working part of itself—such as Shamanism—then they would assimilate into the myriad other cultures. Adoption by a Shamanic world temple might make one major change easier: the legal employ of Travesty in any kind of legitimate work. That, in turn, would elevate them out of the rut of their present vulgar proletarian suffering.

I have suggested in the past that transgendered people should form a religion. If Travesty were registered as a religious group, then their torture would become religious and racial persecution, since to be Travesty/TV/TS would then be a part of a minority identity of a nation among other nations. But our community is only now teetering on the brink of its own awareness, playing with word associations in seminars, without once considering practical application.

If, as the legend dictates, there was an Amazonian tribe in existence in Asian Turkey, then they must have an approximate location to which archaeologists could go to find what evidence there might be for their existence. Social anthropologists record how the legend has been passed from one to another, down through the ages. We might, in proving that the Amazons existed, also prove them to have been androgynes in the sense of the original Greek word: man/woman.

Thus might our sisters in Turkey enjoy inheriting their own God/ess, and a possibly better future from it, instead of suffering the torture of the curse of the Djinn. ☞