

# Polare Edition 23

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## Editorial

by Craig Andrews, Polare Editor

**Y**ou'll notice Elizabeth has been hard at work again. The "Goals Groups" she plans to organise this year looks really promising - keep your diaries poised for that one. There is a "Science" section over on page 5 in place of the "Letters to the Editor" this time round.

This issue features a number of individuals from the community contributing a variety of articles. Firstly, our very own Jill Hooley (transgender academic extraordinaire) has written her Mardi Gras Memories as a 78'er. Alison Cook has written about her experience of coming-out to her fellow workmates and the letter format she used in the process. Lana Barlow (from South Australia) contributes a piece from the Health in Difference conference on "Stress and the Transgendered Community". Lisa and Eila contribute fairly positive accounts of their stories and lastly, you'll find poetry by Eva Eva throughout these pages.

"Transmen" - a page devoted to the guys, continues this issue - with a transman writing about his personal experience in "Love Agenda".

After some feedback, the advertising supplement has been moved to the back pages, preceding the "Directory Assistance".

There's a Gender Centre barbecue on Sunday 3rd May from noon to 4:00pm. It's a great help if you can R.S.V.P. before the 26th April and we hope to see you there.

## Manager's Report

by Elizabeth Riley, Gender Centre Manager

**I** recently delivered training to most of the staff at the Health Care Complaints Commission on issues confronting transgender people with health and medical services. The training was provided at their invitation and was warmly received. Their staff are keen to ensure that all members of the community feel comfortable in accessing their services.

In the past we have tended to focus on the A.D.B. when we have had complaints. The H.C.C.C. provides a viable, friendly and receptive alternative. If you have issues with doctors, hospital staff or other medical services, whether they relate to your being transgender or not, then I recommend you take your complaints to the H.C.C.C. They can be contacted on 9219 7444.

I am also holding talks with the Commissioner in regard to a number of general medical issues that concern us all. I am optimistic of some positive outcomes and I will keep you informed in future publications.

We received the following letter from Merrilyn Walton,

## Feature Articles



**In the eyes of the general community, a person changing gender is coped with rather easily as long as they have the model-like appearance of one of "Carlotta's Beautiful Boys".**

### Stress & the Transgendered Community

*Stress and the Transgendered Community* was a paper presented at the first National L.G.B.T. Health Conference, Health in Difference in 1996. In this paper, Lana Barlow focuses on the combination of a trans person's psychological and medical health and their lifestyle.

### What You See is Not What You Get

Phil was what his family considered a tomboy, a passing phase they wrongly believed. But despite well-meaning attempts by his family, he knew that nothing could change him, he was just a boy. Yet Phil's sexual interests, his sexual interest in men confused him.

### Trapped in the Body of a Man

Investigators from the Netherlands Institute for Brain Research in Amsterdam reported preliminary evidence that transsexuals may be inherently different. If confirmed, the study seems likely to challenge long-held beliefs about what it takes to be a man - or a woman.

### On Gender & Sexual Orientation

In the time since she first acknowledged her bisexuality, Julie has done a considerable amount of soul searching and self-analysis and in this article she shares some of her viewpoints that challenge long-standing notions about how gender relates to sexual orientation.

### Mardi Gras Memories

Jill Hooley writes that for the second time in a few years she found herself at the front of the Mardi Gras Parade. Jill was one of those people who came to be known as the 78'ers, those who took part in the first Mardi Gras and the demonstrations that momentous night.

### Beside Myself with Confusion & Despair

Lisa was beside herself with confusion and despair and she'd

H.C.C.C. Commissioner which clearly shows their commitment to dealing with any complaints transgender people may have.

Dear Elizabeth

I wanted to personally write and thank you for conducting training sessions for staff at the Health Care Complaints Commission on issues facing Transgender people.

I have received wonderful feedback from the staff particularly on the quality of information imparted at the sessions and your own training style. It is important that transgender people feel comfortable in approaching Commission staff with any concerns or issues relating to health care and the staff have commented that you have given them insight into these areas.

I would be particularly grateful if you could assist by spreading the word that Commission staff have received training and will be receptive and supportive in assisting with health care concerns and complaints.

Once again, thank you.

Merrilyn Walton,  
Commissioner

regularly burst into tears at her work. Her Counsellor however, suggested that she live only one life and that she stop having a war between her female and male selves, as in wars, nobody wins and people die.

## **Eighteen Things You Don't Say to a Transsexual**

"You look just as good as I do", "Can you have an orgasm", "How did you know you're a woman", and "Well I want you to know I certainly consider you a woman" are but some of the eighteen things that Riki Wilchins says that you should never say to a transsexual!

## **Employment News**

Following our ad for Westpac in the last edition of *Polare*, I am delighted to be able to report that a transgender woman has been offered employment with Westpac in the eastern suburbs region. The Regional Customer Service Manager has also informed me that because her qualifications were so good, she has been offered a more senior position than the one applied for. This sends a clear message to the transgender community of Westpac's commitment to equity in employment and to their recognition of individual merit. Long-term it will also send a clear message to other major employers.

A special congratulations to the woman involved and I hope this marks the beginning of a highly successful career.

I would like to give a special acknowledgement to Westpac and the managerial staff I have spoken to. They have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to equal opportunity and social justice and in no instance was the question of being transgender seen as an issue. I look forward to further successful placings with them in the future.

Stay tuned for future Westpac ads. The next successful applicant could be you.

After placing the Manpower ad in the last edition of *The Source*, I have sought feedback from Margot Griffiths on whether any transgender people applied for positions. Margot informs me that since their recruitment process is absolutely equity based, she is unable to identify whether applicants are transgender or not. In other words, recruitment is based entirely on merit and gender plays no part whatsoever in the process. This represents the ideal in E.E.O. principles and we can all take heart from their approach.

I received a few phone calls from people claiming that they were unable to find the Manpower advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Because Manpower recruit specifically in the customer service field, their ads actually appear alphabetically under "Customer Service". In the last edition, they ran three separate ads on pages 21 and 22 of the employment pages.

Manpower will next advertise in late April, so if you did not apply this time around you have another opportunity then. Remember, these ads are ongoing with major recruitment ads running on an approximately monthly basis according to need. If you think customer service may be your forte, then why not give it a go?

I have had talks with a woman who is a distributor with Amway. She is interested in doing a business opportunity meeting with anyone who might be interested. Whilst the Gender Centre makes no recommendations in regard to network marketing companies, some people do create successful businesses for themselves and companies often provide strong self-development programs.

## Future Events

Towards the end of last year, I joined the Australian Businesswomen's Network (A.B.N.) and networking with this organisation has provided a number of exciting contacts. Many of the employment opportunities that are beginning to occur are as a direct consequence of contacts made through the A.B.N.

One of the many positive features of the organisation is their regular program of seminars and workshops to assist members in their professional and personal endeavours. One workshop I attended recently was a "Member Goals Group". The workshop was conducted by two professional women, Marilyn Stephens and Donna Ward, who set up their own highly successful goals group two years ago. As a consequence of that workshop, I am now involved in my own goals group with five other women. We meet regularly once a week and support each other towards achieving our goals. The concept is simple but highly effective with a group approach helping each member to stay focused on their aims.

Having experienced the enormous value and potential of these groups, I contacted Marilyn and Donna to see if they would be interested in conducting their workshop incorporating members of the transgender community. They were both very enthusiastic about the idea and have agreed to run their workshop later this year.

We are seeking to set up the goals groups with people from diverse backgrounds as these seem to be the most beneficial combinations. With this in mind we will be encouraging both transgender and non-transgender participation in the workshop and within the goals groups that are formed.

This is a wonderful opportunity to take charge of your future. Numbers will be limited, so why not make your first goal a phone call to book your place? I will provide details of workshop dates once we have the required numbers.

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# Stress and the Transgendered Community

## Psychological and Medical Health and Lifestyle

Paper presented at the first National Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Bisexual Health Conference "Health in Difference" in Sydney in 1996.  
by Lana Barlow

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Not fitting into society's box and label scheme is a catalyst for anxiety - and anxiety leads to stress.

**B**efore I commence the main thrust of this paper, I would like to address two points: firstly, that I am focusing on the male transgendered person and secondly, the term "transgendered".

*In the eyes of the general community, a person changing gender is coped with rather easily as long as in the eyes of that community the person has the model-like appearance of one of "Carlotta's Beautiful Boys".*

The term "transgendered", having emerged in the last five years is relatively new even in the relatively short recorded history of this group of people (the main thrust of research and pioneering surgery was performed in the mid 1950s) and as such, some people and organisations disapprove of it. Therefore, is it any wonder that people who are not directly affected have problems identifying with the term? For the purpose of this paper I am using the term generically, encapsulating the well known terms transsexual, transvestite

(cross-dresser) and drag queen. It has been suggested that the term transgendered effectively removes the sexual connotations and undertones of these other terms. Many people worry about names, labels and boxes that our society so brilliantly uses. Personally I don't worry or concern myself one way or another as long as terms, names, labels, whatever are used with respect towards the person to whom they are attached. For myself, I identify as a lesbian transsexual. I will be a woman when I have my sexual reassignment surgery later this year. Then I will cease to be transsexual.

In general terms, there are four areas of health that I see as paramount for the transgendered person: psychological, medication and a combination of these and lifestyle.

Obviously this paper has to make some assumptions, because not all people are the same, not all situations will repeat and similarities are just that - similar. I have of necessity been general or broad in reference and in defence of that and at the risk of appearing negative, I know there will be sceptics, but there will also be supporters of my views and comparisons, much of which I'm presenting here being based upon twelve years of active counselling and forty plus years of socializing. Healthy debate, in the end, is the essence of this and every conference.

Since this is a conference on health, co-sponsored by the AIDS organisations, a natural assumption by many is to focus on H.I.V. / AIDS related issues. However, I would like to move this focus for the transgendered person.

My focal point is stress.

Many transgendered people identify with one or more of the focus groups represented here - gay, lesbian, bisexual. Therefore their health concerns relative to H.I.V./AIDS are similar to, if not the same as those groups, and these are already documented. There are other similar areas of health concerns found in these communities, but while the gay and lesbian community is so very visible in the general community today, the transgendered community is not. It differs significantly but has health issues that the gay and lesbian community have dealt with and are beginning to minimise.

I am talking here specifically of mental health issues created through acute anxiety, caused by fear, guilt and perceived public image.

Fear of the unknown. Who has seen me, who knows? What will happen to me, my future, my family? Will I be subject to physical or mental abuse? I have the body of a male and the mind and soul of a female - why am I like this? Feelings emerge of inadequacy, unworthiness, shame. If children are involved, will they be seen again, let alone the possibility of sharing the parenting roles.

Guilt, the feeling that you need to hide yourself, that a double life must and is being lived. The want to come-out - but. The guilt of deception in both time and money, especially if the person is married or in long-term emotional relationships, and a large majority are.

Public image (presentation) is a real dilemma. Leading a double life, boy by day, girl by night or whenever the opportunity presents itself. The body changes that the transgendered person embraces, those same ones presented in fashion magazines across the world.

Waxing, breasts, hairstyles provide so much embarrassment for partners who know yet whilst they are "must haves" for the transgendered person, they also are the source of frustration and deception. For the transgendered person who is not yet out, these body image changes severely restrict many potential activities with family and friends, such as beach and pool parties, where their bodies are usually semi-clad in lightweight clothing. Often this becomes too much to bear. Compromise is constantly the companion of the transgendered person, a balancing of what they have, against what they would like to have - some say crave.

The high profile events such as the Mardi Gras have made huge inroads into the hearts of the general heterosexual community, and by doing so have eroded some of the homophobic attitudes and have been a pain in the hearts of much of our loved gay community. That isn't to suggest for one moment that we don't still have that problem. However, acceptance of gay people's lifestyle is on the increase. The fear of the homophobic heterosexual person and their potential acid tongue, possible physical, psychological and financial action has long caused heartache for us all.

The transgendered community is still in the very early days of acceptance - just like being gay fifteen years ago.

However, being transgendered is often a double bind. We are discriminated against not only by the heterosexual community, but also by sections of the gay and lesbian communities, often simply because we don't fit their vision of "okay" or the "norm" either. I have long been an advocate for tolerance and togetherness in our community. However, many times in the past I have been challenged by lesbian activists in toilets and change rooms and at one function less than five years ago, a group of lesbians actually barred transgendered people from the toilets! It is bad enough having the heterosexual community putting emotional and physical pressure on individuals, it is intolerable emotionally when people who are in your own community do the same to you. This type of action puts in place barriers of fear and intolerance.

In the eyes of the general community, a person changing gender is coped with rather easily as long as in the eyes of that community the person has the model-like appearance of one of "Carlotta's Beautiful Boys". However if the person changing is anything but "model-like", in other words they are average people, there are problems. Obstacles are put in their way at every opportunity, discrimination is rampant, because we are not covered under anti-discrimination laws like everyone else, including the gay and lesbian people here today. So with situations like toilets, changing sport and interest alliance (male-to-female participation, competing in the opposite gender competition) etc., anxiety levels go through the roof. I was no different from many. I suffered a major nervous breakdown in the early days of my coming-out; but unlike many, I was lucky. I have a great partner and doctor, and between them they pulled me out of it (with lots of friends of course).

Being a gay woman or man to the heterosexual community presents basically one issue, that of sexual preference. Being transgendered presents that issue plus the challenge to both female and male sexuality, an outward physical change. Humans have an innate ability to pressure others to conform, whether they be gay or straight. It is this pressure to conform that creates the contradictory emotional scene. It is no surprise to me that many outwardly gay and transgendered people have an "up yours" attitude to those challenging them. It is said that the best form of defence is attack!

Parental and family pressure for the transgendered person is probably no different from how it is for a gay person, but once again the pressure to conform and deny yourself is incredible. Is it any wonder that anti-depressants are the most commonly prescribed drugs on the market, with self-prescribed alcohol close behind?

Within the transgendered community, the very visible drag queen probably has the least stress problems with identity, probably because most of them are performers and as such many constantly change physical identity. Also the large majority are gay and their stress problems are more likely to be with being gay than because of their gender appearance.

The male cross-dresser (transvestite) is the least represented person in the transgendered community, yet statistically, evidence from around the world that as many as 5 percent of mainstream population have experimented with cross-dressing (and they usually continue). That means that in my golf club, where there are 500+ male members, there could be as many as 25 cross-dressers, or over the years, I have taught as many as 200 in my classes. But to date I have not met any at the golf club. Nor have any students confided in me, and I'm the student counsellor, as well as the counsellor for the support group in South Australia. So what does that tell us about cross-dressers?

Usually they are incredibly fearful of anyone knowing their secret. They are usually in a strong heterosexual relationship, very often married, and happy parents, but totally scared, frustrated, anxious - you find an adjective to describe their concerns and feelings, because I am having difficulty. They want to express their inner-self but can't! So what is different between these people and gay people? Most gay people don't marry into a heterosexual relationship; they recognise early in life that they are gay and while they may have difficulty in coming-out, they usually avoid heterosexual relationships. Cross dressers do commit to relationships, the vast majority are heterosexual, their partners are strongly heterosexual and most partners are not empathetic with a person who is male and yet occasionally wishes to express their inner femininity. Veiled questions and comments about articles in the media etc., are the cross-dressers clear indicators of their partners attitudes. To add to this frustration, a partner may show compassion to a family member or friend who comes out as gay or transgendered, but this character trait is not acceptable to her in her immediate household, particularly her sexual partner.

Society seems to be able to cope with people who show a positive, clear attitude in their sexual preference, appearance and sexuality, i.e. gay or transsexual, but cross-dressers do not display this clarity. They are viewed as being in limbo and this sends conflicting messages to partners and the community in general. For a simple example, take a person wishing to purchase an item of female clothing. They wish to try it on, after all it is expensive, which change room does this person use? If it is a large store there may be facilities close by, but what about the exclusively female store and other client's comfort? A clear dilemma for both the purchaser and the store. If I go into the same store, there are no problems, I present as a woman. The cross-dressers problem stems from his presentation because he does not have the confidence, build etc., to present comfortably as a woman.

Changing tack now, the transgendered person (Transsexual) requesting, and more importantly needing sexual reassignment surgery has not only the foregoing issues to contend with, but also "the program".

This program is in fact the medical procedure that must be followed and regardless of your urgency, personal progress or stage of life, must be adhered to. Because of the nature of the total procedure, mental, moral (religious), medication, legal, political and surgical, and because there is no reversal after surgery, there are standards set down, often referred to as the "Harry Benjamin" standards because they were developed in the United States by Dr. Benjamin. Not only is this process long and expensive, it is very stressful. Doctors play "good cop, bad cop" to try and catch out the non-genuine patient, or unsuitable one, and to ensure that mistakes are not made. If you happen to live in Melbourne it is not too expensive, but watch your credit card blow up if you live elsewhere! In the back of every patient's mind is always the fear of rejection. Together with this, we also have the necessary hormone replacement therapy for the transsexual. This is all about experimentation. Sure they have an idea what to prescribe, but everyone is different and needs special treatment.

If a patient happens to be unemployed through all this, there is also the additional stress of finance. There have been many examples of girls "working the streets" to pay for their program, but this is part of another story, one of the transsexual lifestyles during the minimum two year cycle of the program.

Unfortunately, society teaches early in life that boxes and labels help us cope (if only superficially) with differences, but that doesn't help the person who is "different". Not fitting into society's box and label scheme is a catalyst for anxiety - and anxiety leads to stress. Support groups and counselling schemes have come a long way in the last fifteen years, but we still have a long way to go.

Please, let us all be tolerant, kind and respectful to each other.

**Lana Barlow is a post-op transsexual person. She is President and Counsellor with the Carrousel Club in South Australia Inc., and a full-time lecturer with Technical And Further Education (T.A.F.E.) South Australia.**

**Stress and the Transgendered Community was a paper presented at the first National Lesbian, Gay, Transgender and Bisexual Health Conference "Health in Difference" in Sydney in 1996.**

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## What You See is Not What You Get

I have, since I can remember, been a boy

by Phil Kirk

Article appeared in Polare magazine: April 1998 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



One day I was surfing the net and I found F.T.M. International. Something clicked.

**W**hen I was born, I was to be Anthony Lee. No one even planned on a girl so they didn't have a girl's name available for me. I was named after my Mother in a "now what do we do moment".

***After thirty-eight years I realised that gender-identity has nothing to do with sexual preference. I was a man. I was gay.***

Did I pick up on them, or did they pick up on me? I don't know but I have, since I can remember, been a boy. I just knew it. I knew just as strongly I was not a girl. Questions of "why" puzzled me. It would have been like asking a boy the same age, why he was a boy "Cause I am".

My Mother assisted that image unwittingly when she told me that "if I ate my veggies, I would grow hair on my chest". (that was my main goal at age two and three ... to have hair on my chest like my big brother, I totally ignored my big sister). I am still mad that I got a 40DD chest for all those veggies. I was what my family considered a tomboy. It would be a passing phase. Since we lived in the country until I was nine I was left alone with these behaviours. My Mother had started her familiar chant that would haunt me for thirty-seven years of "why can't you be more lady like? You should be more feminine". Deep down inside I think she knew and she did her best to change me into what I looked like physically ... a girl. Nothing could change me because nothing made me this way. I was just a boy.

At that stage I could only define girl's clothes as uncomfortable. Today I can tell you that I feel like a straight guy in drag when I wear them. I could trash all the frilly, lacy, ruffled dresses in five minutes (quicker if there was mud). This didn't have any lasting effect on me. What did was my sexual development. I was interested in men. My logic was, if I was interested in men I had to be a straight female because I had a female body. All women must feel like I did because when you looked in the mirror I was one. Most women that I knew got married and had children if they were interested in men. So I must be a woman and I knew what my role was to be. Mom kept saying the same things about trying to be more feminine.

I hadn't realised that gender-identity had nothing to do with sexuality. I was focused on my preferred sexual partners - men and my physical body - female. I was also totally miserable. I always felt as if I were hiding something that someone might find out. For thirty-eight years I tried to live as a woman.

Drag to me is when I dress as a woman because it is not who I am. For thirty-eight years, twenty-four hours a day I was in drag. That wore me out and made me miserable. One day I was surfing the net and I found F.T.M. International. Something clicked. As I read some things at the bottom dropped out of my stomach. It fit. I found information on transfags and suddenly it really fit. After thirty-eight years I realised that gender-identity has nothing to do with sexual preference. I was a man. I was gay.

Many friends surprised me by saying they knew. Very few reacted in a negative manner. My family is another story. They don't know yet and I don't know when I will tell them, but that is from other family issues not from me being a gay F.T.M. I personally am planning on taking them out to a nice Italian dinner. The pasta should soften the blow of the head hitting the table. As my S.O. says, "Those who matter knew and those who don't matter don't know".

One more time: Gender Identity.

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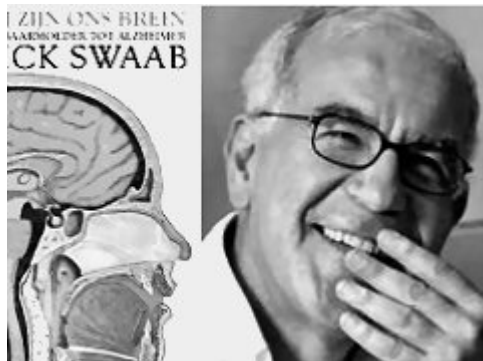


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## Trapped in the Body of a Man

### Preliminary Evidence from the Netherlands Institute for Brain Research Reveals that Transsexuals May Be Inherently Different After All

by Christine Gorman, [Time Magazine Volume 146 No. 20](#) , Reported by James Geary in Amsterdam and Alice Park in New York  
Article appeared in Polare magazine: April 1998 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



To do their research, the Dutch team, led by Dr Dick Swaab ... took eleven years to find transsexual candidates, persuade them to donate their brains and then wait for them to die to make the comparisons.

**T**ranssexuals often claim they were born the wrong gender. Microscopic studies of a key region of the brain suggest they may be right.

*... investigators from the Netherlands Institute for Brain Research in Amsterdam reported preliminary evidence that transsexuals may be inherently different ...*

Most young children like to play dress up, parading around the house in their Dad's wing tips or smearing their Mum's lipstick all over their face. But for a few youngsters, usually boys, this childhood rite is more than a game. They are obsessed with their Mother's clothes and wear them at every opportunity. It is as if a part of their mind were trying to erase the maleness of their body and allow an inherent femaleness to emerge. As they grow older, their discomfort with their gender often increases, until they finally turn to doctors for help. Some take feminizing hormones to grow breasts. Some even have their sex organs surgically altered so they can live completely - including anatomically - as women.

But are such people, who are known as Transsexuals, truly women trapped in men's bodies? For years, scientists searched for, but never found any memorable differences between most men and the ones who became transsexuals, whether in the level of hormones, the shape of the genitalia or the number of chromosomes. Nor did scientists find any fundamental similarities between transsexuals and women.

Last week, however, investigators from the Netherlands Institute for Brain Research in Amsterdam reported preliminary evidence that transsexuals may be inherently different, after all. Their study of six male-to-female transsexuals showed that a tiny structure deep within a part of the brain that controls sexual function appeared to be more like the type found in women than found in men. If confirmed, the study seems likely to challenge long-held beliefs about what it takes to make someone a man - or a woman.

The Dutch research is part of a growing body of evidence suggesting that nature is just as important as nurture in determining how we think and behave as sexual beings. Neurobiologists have catalogued apparent differences in the way men's and women's brains process information and interpret facial expressions. Geneticists have begun sifting through tantalizing clues that sexual orientation - as opposed to sexual identity - may at least be partly inherent. Yet the subject matter is so charged from an emotional, political and even religious perspective that evaluating all the various claims dispassionately can be difficult.

In many respects, studying transsexuals would seem to be the most difficult undertaking of all. Not to be confused with transvestites or cross-dressers, true transsexuals are rare. By some estimates, no more than 1 person in 350,000 believes he or she was born the wrong gender. Moreover, the portion of the brain that seems to be different in transsexuals is smaller than a pinhead. Even advanced imaging techniques, like the P.E.T. scan or M.R.I., cannot detect such tiny variations. To do their research, the Dutch team, led by Dr Dick Swaab, had to dissect the brains of transsexuals in autopsies and examine them under a microscope. Little wonder then, that it took Swaab's team eleven years to find transsexual candidates, persuade them to donate their brains and then wait for them to die to make the comparisons.

Despite these constraints, Swaab and his colleagues were able to detect some intriguing patterns. They compared the brains of two dozen "ordinary" men and women. For the most part, the brains appeared to be the same until the researchers examined a section of the hypothalamus called the B.S.T.c. Although no one knows for sure what this tiny patch of neurons does in humans, earlier studies have indicated that, in rats at least, it plays a key role in regulating male sexual behaviour. Half the men in the control group were heterosexual and half were homosexual. Yet, regardless of their sexual orientation, they all had a B.S.T.c. that was 50 percent larger than that in women.

When the researchers examined the B.S.T.c.s of the transsexuals, they found a marked difference. The transsexuals B.S.T.c. was more like the women's than the men's. In fact, the transsexuals' B.S.T.c. was, on average, slightly smaller than the women's. The researchers seem to have found at least one biological motive for the transsexuals' desire to change sex, although it may not be the only one. Says Swaab: "Our results indicate that other structures in the brain could be involved".


How could the brain and the body become so mismatched? Several explanations are possible. One is rooted in the process by which embryos take on sex differences. All human embryos develop in the very earliest stages of gestation along more or less feminine lines. Those destined to become males differentiate from the master template after a complex series of hormonal secretions start to masculinise the embryo. Miscues in this process could result in crossed signals in the portions of the brain that are responsible for gender-identity. That would help explain why there are more male-to-female transsexuals than female-to-male.

Not everyone is convinced, however. All transsexuals in the Dutch study took the feminizing hormone oestrogen. The smaller B.S.T.c. may have therefore been the result rather than the cause of their quest to become women. Swaab concedes this possibility but notes that two women in the study's control group were post menopausal and presumably no longer manufactured much oestrogen. Their B.S.T.c. was still the same size as the younger women's, which may mean that oestrogen has no effect on the structures size.

There are simpler explanations - stress for example. "Think about it", says Roger Gorski, a neurobiologist at U.C.L.A. who has studied rats' sexual behaviour for thirty years. "These people undergo a lot of emotional trauma. To cut everything off to become a woman has got to be awfully stressful, and that has got to effect brain structure".

But for most transsexuals, there is no question that something deeper is going on. From the time she was a boy of six, Bea Johnson, 46, who lives outside Amsterdam, knew her body did not reflect her true gender. "I felt there was something that didn't fit," she says. "And that something was a penis." Jansen, who plans to donate her brain to Swaab's study when she dies, underwent a sex-change operation five years ago. She speaks for many transsexuals when she describes her transformation as a liberation: "I felt as if I could finally take off a mask that I had been wearing for a long time." With Jansen's help, scientists may some day understand how that mask got there in the first place.

## Dick Swaab

**Edited from Wikipedia:**  Dick Swaab is a Dutch physician and neurobiologist who is famous as a brain researcher. He is a professor of neurobiology at the University of Amsterdam and was until 2006 Director of the Netherlands Institute for Brain Research, and of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.



He is best known for his research and discoveries in the field of brain anatomy and physiology, in particular the impact that various hormonal and biochemical factors in the womb have on brain development. Another area of Swaab's work which has drawn much attention is his research on how Sexual dimorphism relates to brain anatomy, as well as research relating to homosexuality. Swaab, according to his own words through his years of research, came to the deterministic and materialistic conclusion that brains are not things we have, but rather brains are what we are: the physical and chemical processes in our brains determine how we react and who we are. Currently, Swaab is most active in the field of Alzheimer's research.

Swaab's research has on several occasions produced controversy. After conducting research suggesting links between brain anatomy and sexual orientation, Swaab reports receiving death threats from individuals believing this work was attempting to "pathologise" homosexuality and treat it as a biological abnormality or disorder.

## Sexual Differentiation of the Human Brain in Relation to Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Swaab D.F., Garcia-Falgueras A.  
The Netherlands Institutes for Neuroscience, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

### Abstract

During the intrauterine period the foetal brain develops in the male direction through a direct action of testosterone on the developing nerve cells, or in the female direction through the absence of this hormone surge. In this way, our gender identity (the conviction of belonging to the male or female gender) and sexual orientation are programmed into our brain structures when we are still in the womb. However, since sexual differentiation of the genitals takes place in the first two months of pregnancy and sexual differentiation of the brain starts in the second half of pregnancy, these two processes can be influenced independently, which may result in transsexuality. This also means that in the event of ambiguous sex at birth, the degree of masculinization of the genitals may not reflect the degree of masculinization of the brain. There is no proof that social environment after birth has an effect on gender identity or sexual orientation.

To read the full text of this research paper, please visit [Zoe Brain's website](#) .

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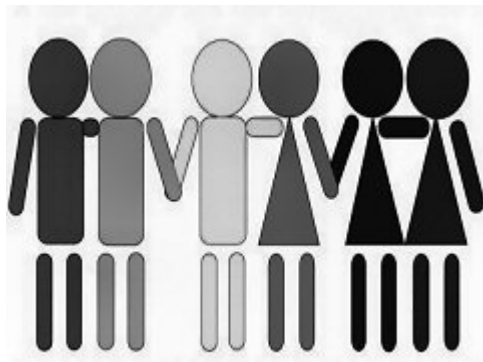
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# On Gender and Sexual Orientation

## Viewpoints that Challenge Long-Standing Notions

by Julie Waters

Article appeared in Polare magazine: April 1998 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



Am I bisexual because I am interested both in men and women or am I bisexual because I am interested in the person behind the gender?

**I**n the time since I first acknowledged my bisexuality (about four years ago), I've done a considerable amount of soul searching and self-analysis, especially in regards to how gender relates to

sexual orientation and how both relate to my perspectives on the world as a whole. This article is intended to share perceptions and viewpoints which, I hope, will challenge many long-standing notions as to how we construct gender and sexual orientation and how they intertwine.

Furthermore, I hope that in writing this article I will not only open minds to some, somewhat unusual points of view, but will help address concerns which I know are not unique to myself or specifically to transsexuals or bisexuals but which should, instead, concern us all.

***If a lesbian is interested in a woman who has a penis is she still a lesbian? If a gay male is interested in a woman who exchanges her penis for a vagina is he still a gay male?***

At this point in my life, I am in what some people would call "transition mode". In other words, I am living part-time as a woman, but many people still perceive me to be a man. My attire tends to be entirely androgynous. In stores and places of business I often get called "ma'am" or "sir" regardless of my attire. I introduce myself to most people by initials which are gender-neutral and try to avoid to give them any excuse to assign a gender to me. The reason I do this is simple; I do not feel quite capable at this point of "passing" full-time as a woman and I absolutely refuse to live as a man. So I choose something which is neither male nor female, nor exactly a hybrid of the two since I think that gender goes a great deal beyond a binary system.

More often than not, gender is viewed in some sort of continuum. It is common to think of aspects of a person as being more "masculine" or "feminine" and not leave ourselves much room outside those models. That's partially because we are so fixated on gender in this world as an "either/or" proposition that we can not allow ourselves to see beyond it.

My own opinion is that this is nonsense. I say now that there are as many genders in this world, if not more, as there are people with gender. I am not a man, but the body I possess has many male aspects to it. I have breasts, but I also have a penis. I can grow facial hair and have a lot of muscle, but I have relatively soft skin. Am I a woman? In my own view, yes. However, it would be arrogant for me to assume that I can share all experiences that women experience. I can never have a period. I can never bear a child. Of course the same can be said for some women. Furthermore, many women are more "masculine" (in purely "traditional" terms) than I am, just as there are many men who are more "feminine".

So what am I? To classify me as "in-between" indicates that my gender is relevant only in terms that relate to more traditionally gendered people. I am not gendered in the same manner as anyone I know and I have to say that it has been my experience that this disturbs a great many people. The same way that people who are not heterosexual are seen and perceived as a threat by many people who are, those of us who are not gendered in a traditional mould may represent some great danger to those of us who are.

Alfred Kinsey created a scale which defines sexual orientation on a scale of 0 - 6, with people who are considered "more heterosexual" leaning towards the lower end of the scale and people who are considered "more homosexual" leaning towards the higher end. Thus, an unwavering "utterly straight" person would be a "0" on the Kinsey Scale whereas a person who has never been anything but gay their entire life would end up as a "6". A "perfect" bisexual would be a Kinsey "3", since three is the median point between 0 and 6. However it is my opinion that this scale falls short. As I mentioned in the previous paragraph, to consider my gender only in terms of how it relates to other genders is as simplistic as to only address the topic of bisexuality in terms of how it relates to heterosexuality or homosexuality.

What about people who have shown sexual interest specifically in me? If a lesbian is interested in a woman who has a penis is she still a lesbian? If a gay male is interested in a woman who exchanges her penis for a vagina is he still a gay male? Are we interested in the person behind the sex organs or are the sex organs our primary motivating force in determining to whom we are attracted? Do I, to be at a particular point on the Kinsey Scale, have to demonstrate my interest in people in terms of how their appearance, actions and attitudes relate to their perceived gender? Is sexual orientation constructed in a manner which even allows for such perspectives as my

own?

So where is the room for shemales, hermaphrodites, drag queens, non-op transsexuals, transgenderists, cross-dressers and all other forms of gender benders, blenders and breakers in our "spectrum" of sexual orientation? Am I bisexual because I am interested both in men and women or am I bisexual because I am interested in the person behind the gender? Or is it some combination of the two? Does gender play a role but not one to the point where I would not be attracted to someone based specifically on their gender?

The closest thing I can get to a definitive statement on this topic is simply and utterly that I am Julie. That is my name; the name I have chosen for myself as my own form of self-identification. I am to my own view a woman who also happens to be somewhat androgynous, just as there are very androgynous women who were born women and very androgynous men who were born men. We need to get beyond the point where we feel this need to pigeon hole ourselves into boxes which define our gender and our relative "success" as members of our gender to the point in which our gender defines our identity more than our identity defines our gender. Only then can we truly understand and accept our own individual selves at face value, rather than at value of the faces we put out for others to see.

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## Mardi Gras Memories

### 78'er Casts Her Mind's Eye Back

by Jill Hooley

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The experience of being cheered applauded and revered by a huge crowd does great things for your ego.

**F**or the second time in a few years, I found myself at the very front of the Mardi Gras Parade. The first time was with Aidy Griffen, on the invitation of Em Owen, when we were part of a contingent representing the diverse strands of the "Queer Community". But 1998 was truly special to me. I was one of those people who came to be known as the 78'ers. The people who took part in the first Mardi Gras, and/or the demonstrations following that momentous night twenty years ago. Yes folks, there were some trannys at the original Mardi Gras (which ended in a violent riot, with fifty-three people being arrested, and some bashed by the police).

*I read about the arrests at the first Mardi Gras parade, and felt a sense of outrage that the Sydney Morning Herald printed the names of those arrested.*

But that was then and this is now. On the early evening of 2nd March 1998, a throng of mostly forty-something people is gathered at the top of Liverpool Street. I feel a state of heightened anticipation. Still dazed and disbelieving, I am greeted and hugged by Gay activists who I knew in the 1970s, or from more recent times. I recognise faces I haven't seen since 1978. On my way here tonight, accompanied by my friend Joan, (a heterosexual woman who was a supporter of gay rights at the first Mardi Gras), two young boys see us in the street. Joan is wearing my tiara and I'm wearing my Tranny Pride t-shirt. One of the boys exclaimed to us "they're both blokes"! Joan and I laughed conspiratorially at their confusion. Further on we meet norrie wearing next to nothing on Newtown station. Queer commuters pack the platform, dressed in outrageous fashion. It should be as colourful as this everyday, rather than so grey and dreary.

We stand in Liverpool Street waiting for the parade to start. Joan is deep in conversation with some of the lesbians. I ponder that it's a bit overwhelming and hard to believe that the police, who were profoundly homophobic and transphobic twenty years ago, are marching in support of queers in the parade tonight. At last a marshal tells us to standby, as the dykes on bikes tear away from us with a roar. The crowd milling around Museum station begins to cheer, as we stride up Oxford Street under an oyster grey sky fading into twilight. We chant, stridently and loudly, as we did back in 1978. "Stop Police Attacks on Gays, Women and Blacks". My dear friend David, a gay activist wearing retro 1970s drag tonight and whom I've known twenty years, seems to have started this. It continues. The feeling coming at us from the crowd as we pass Whitlam Square is very positive. We scream and wave and touch people in delirium. We chant continuously. The experience of being cheered applauded and revered by a huge crowd does great things for your ego. Feelings of love and solidarity flow between the crowd and we 78ers. A man among the 78ers comes up and hugs me, telling me that I am "amazing" and "fantastic". (I forgot to obtain his telephone number). It is an unforgettable night.

Back in 1978, I wasn't out as a tranny, although a few trusted friends knew about or experienced my cross-dressing. In 1978, I used to visit Oxford Street clubs like Capriccio's, the Tropicana and yes the Taxi Club. On my way to work one Monday morning, I read about the arrests at the first Mardi Gras parade, and felt a sense of outrage that the Sydney Morning Herald printed the names of those arrested. Some were to lose their jobs because of this. Two weeks later, looking androgynous in overalls and a jumper, I find myself following the gay march and demonstration. We chant "Stop Police Attacks ...", outside Darlinghurst Police Station, and some people at the front of the rally are arrested for throwing things at the Police Station.

Some years later, the sodomy laws are repealed and Anti-Discrimination laws in place. I have to say that I didn't feel much solidarity at the time with some in the gay and lesbian movement. Trannys in those days of sexual fundamentalism, were seen to be ideologically unsound by numerous gays and lesbians. Such rigid ideas are falling into the dust bin of history. The passage of the Transgender Amendment Bill of 1996 is evidence of this.

Are things changing? How are they different? There is a movie showing in town, in which the principle character is a child who seeks to change his gender. Ma Vie en Rose (or My Life in Pink), is the story of Ludovic, a young "boy", who sees nothing problematic about his feeling that he can be a girl and that he will one day marry the boy next door. This film is really about the violence of families and the straight jacket of gender conformity that heterosexual norms enforce. It is about the terror and fear of the border lines set up around gender, for most "normals". Ludovic's behaviours, "his" cross-dressing, "his" innocent challenge to these rigid ideas of a strict two gender world, becomes a trauma for his parents. Rather than accept "him" as "her" and face social opprobrium, their solution is to send Ludovic to a psychologist, to "cure" or normalise him. They fail, and Ludovic, who faces the blame for bringing "his" parents into

disrepute, undergoes a series of abuses, violations and mob violence for being "different". Ludovic responds to "his" situation by referring to himself as a "girlboy". He can't know that in modern cultures, gender is constructed in terms of a dichotomy and that it is compulsory to be either one or the other. No overlapping is permitted under compulsory heterosexuality and the gender norms that social institutions demand.

Ma Vie en Rose is a sad and stirring film. Mostly it made me very angry. I re-experienced some of the childhood trauma and persecution of many years ago; in the scene where he has his hair cut, when the soccer team bashes "him" and when various people humiliate "him". This film is as much about the constraining and destructive effects of middle class hetero-gendered conformity, as it is about the experience of feeling different from the rest. Sadly, Ludovic has no one who validates "his" reality or tries to understand, except his grandmother, whom the family leave behind. Perhaps many years of isolation await Ludovic. "He" learns, like we do, to clam up, to wait, and not to disclose or trust, for fear of abuse, violence or persecution. He is not however, without hope at the finish. He is by then wiser, or well appraised of gender bigots.

Just before the 1998 Mardi Gras, I also managed to catch the show by brilliant cabaret artist Paul Capsis at the Enmore Theatre, Burlesque Tour. Paul's character "Melissa" based on William Street girls, powerfully evokes the continuing exclusion of many trannys from "mainstream" culture - from society, from basic human rights and respect. Trannys have an ongoing struggle on our hands. Awareness is slowly and continuously being raised about issues affecting trannys in films, through the media and in community events. Perhaps we are slowly educating people that loosening up gender categories nurtures a freer concept of identity for everybody.

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## Beside Myself with Confusion and Despair

Lisa Wins the Battle to Become Herself

by Lisa

Article appeared in Polare magazine: April 1998 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



I sought counselling as I was crying daily by now ...

I talked to management at length, but the day of actual transitioning at work never seemed to get any closer. I was beside myself with confusion and despair and would regularly break openly into tears at work. My work suffered and my life suffered. Life was not good.

***... never give up even if all seems lost. If your desire is strong enough to change your gender, let no one get in your way. Think positive.***

I would dress at home and socially around town and amongst friends, but it was so hard to change from male by day to female by night. The change of this nature to a transsexual is extremely difficult as clothes didn't make any difference to the way I felt, but being addressed as male, he or him or he by day was irritating and confusing. Transvestites cope with this as the clothing makes them feel like women but to a transsexual, we are women all the time.

I sought counselling as I was crying daily by now, and cleverly, my counsellor suggested that I live one life and stop having a war between my female and male: as in wars, no one wins and people die. I was not going to die.

Regrettably I gave up my male life. This life had tremendous history and success, many friends and many memories, but it was a life of the past, and Lisa was my life of the future.

On returning home from my dismissal from work, I threw my male clothes in the dustbin as a statement of my intent. I showered, put on a summer dress, and had a coffee. At this point I noticed a number scribbled on the front of my phone book. I recalled it may have something to do with a job. I flippantly called the number and addressed myself as Lisa. The voice on the phone soon informed me that the company I had called were interviewing applicants over the next few days. I had nothing to lose, yet a chance to start a new life, the life I had dreamed about for the twenty years of my working life.

The rest is history. I got the job out of sixty applicants. This was the most memorable moment of my life. I had planned how I could do this for at least seven years and now all my dreams had come to fruition in twenty minutes.

I started work four days later, not in the public eye, but on the phone and it is vital for a transsexual on the phone to have a voice that matches your name. All my life my voice never aligned with my male appearance, but now everything was in harmony. Of the 4,000 phone calls I have made since I have started work, I have never been questioned over my voice. I am doing well in my new job and now have a goal in life. I never had one before.

Finally, dear friends, never give up even if all seems lost. If your desire is strong enough to change your gender, let no one get in your way. Think positive. I mean really positive - that's the answer, and I hope your life will be as happy as mine is now.

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# Eighteen Things You Don't Say to a Transsexual

## A Light-Hearted Look at Prejudicial Comments Borne of Ignorance

Riki Anne Wilchins

Article appeared in Polare magazine: April 1998 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



Riki Anne Wilchins

1 - "I was just talking to a *change* the other day and..." To me, this suggests that you are having strange conversations with your pocket money. No one *is* a change. One can ask for change, own change, ex-change, change tyres, change clothes, change sides, change to a minor key and change of life, but one cannot *be* a change.

***... you probably know a few hundred of us, but you don't know you know us, and we won't tell you that you do.***

2 - "You look just as good as I do." Of course I do. And this is precisely the state of grace to which we all aspire. But more than likely you do both of us an injustice.

3 - "Well I want you to know I certainly consider you a woman." It is a never ending source of wonderment that well-intentioned, and otherwise very well brought up, people say this to me, with a light of total sincerity shining from their eyes for which any self-respecting cocker spaniel would kill. Unfortunately, this assurance turns on at least four assumptions which, upon closer inspection, prove to be entirely unfounded: a) my gender is a subject about which reasonable people might be expected to reasonably differ; b) my gender is a topic that is currently open for discussion; c) my gender and your perception of it, is something about which I suffer rather a great deal of anxiety and about which I am seeking

some reassurance; d) you, since you are a non-transsexual, are in just the providential position of providing me with this reassurance I desperately seek.

4 - "I consider you as much a woman as *any* of my friends." What a treat for them; especially your male friends.

5 - "I would *never* have guessed you were a transsexual." This phrase is usually accompanied by a look of the utmost incredulity, followed closely by a searching, penetrating, and largely sotto voice reappraisal of all the things you thought you knew about me (or perhaps only all the times we slept together). Unfortunately, this utterance assumes that your credulity, no doubt a topic of endless fascination to you, is of equal interest to me. Since there are tens of thousands of us (perhaps in your building alone!), the fact that some of us can 'pass' (a nasty concept if ever there was one) as non-transsexuals only prophesies that, wedded to the entirely fragile notion that you should be capable of identifying all of us on sight, you are destined for a life of more or less unending private humiliations.

6 - "When did you decide to become a woman?" Well, when did you decide to become a woman? Oh...I see; with you it is normal. Um-hmmm.

7 - "Can you have an orgasm?" Yes, but only when I'm asked this question.

8 - "Can you have an orgasm?"

9 - "Can you have an orgasm?"

10 - "Can you have an orgasm?"

11 - "You must have a lot of courage to face surgery." To have the actual surgery, I just had to be able to breathe deeply, count at least partway backwards from 100, and fall asleep with some semblance of dignity. In all of these tasks I was reliably aided by enough anaesthetic to subdue a small water buffalo. It would also have helped, had I \$10-20,000 in spare change (See #1 above) about my person. Unfortunately, while I was thus drifting majestically off to sleep, I found I also had to be able to watch my friends, most of my lovers, all of my family, and any Lesbian who used the term 'politically correct' in any context other than a Lily Tomlin joke, fade out of my existence forever. Also, I found that I woke up to endless refrains of *don't(s)* #1 - 7, above. That is the hard part; the surgery I could probably do again before breakfast.

12 - "I don't think it's anyone's concern what's between your legs, unless they're sleeping with you." Well, yes. But you, like me, might be surprised at the profound lack of fastidiousness some people display to even this tender area, as my weekly trips to the accoutrement racks at The Pleasure Chest and Eve's Garden confirm. In any case, I'm quite certain that whatever is between your legs, even during those hot, sticky, yucky days of summer, is totally above reproach and perfectly charming, while what's between mine,

even on the very best of days, is, well, let's just not talk about it.

**13 - "No one needs to know ..."** Of course they don't. We all have our little secrets, the small indiscretions we would prefer no one know. The thirty-five or so years of my life just happen to be mine.

**14 - "How did you know you're a woman?"** Well, how did you know you were a woman? Ah-humm: breasts and vagina. Well, I can introduce you to some very handsome, bearded, muscular young men of my acquaintance who began life with the very same equipment, so that's not particularly compelling evidence, is it? I see, inside you just know. Call me sometime, we'll have lunch.

**15 - "When you were a man ..."** Unless it refers to a prior life of mine (something I have yet to explore), it's always a toughie, because it assumes itself; i.e., that I ever was a man. I think this sentence is supposed to begin with, "When you lived socially as a man ..." or "When people thought you were a man ..." small, but nonetheless, like lapels or pleats, highly significant differences.

**16 - "I think transsexuals are just men in drag."** Of course you do, and you're entitled, even justifiably proud, to think so. Do not, however, voice this sentiment while surrounded by a full room of men who really are in drag, (for instance, the next Night of a Thousand Gowns) Also, be certain to note the exception to this rule, which is, of course, female-to-male transsexuals, who are really, well, just women in drag. We all know how naturally distasteful it is when men wear dresses or women wear pants. Do not, however, voice this sentiment while surrounded by a room of S/M dykes in full leather and studs.

**17 - "Well, I want you to know I respect your choices."** And I yours, particularly in transcendent matters, such as whether to register your pattern at Bloomingdale's or Saks, or whether a bright, robust yet tart, Almanden can properly accompany sushi. However, in more pedestrian spheres, such as gender identity, it profits us immensely to recall that none of us exercises much choice.

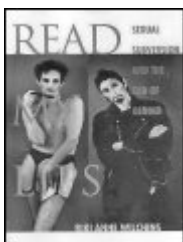
**18 - "Isn't it amazing you're the only transsexual I know."** Yes, and isn't it amazing, when you came-out to your mother, you were the only homosexual she knew. Ho-hum. The fact that I am the only transsexual you know only emphasises that: a) you probably know a few hundred of us, but you don't know you know us, and we won't tell you that you do; b) there are tens of thousands of us, and more all the time; c) we are secretly plotting to take over the planet earth, and infiltrating your prevailing non-transsexual culture is just our first step; d) while we are waiting to take over your planet, we are amusing ourselves at your expense by seeing just how much we can fuck with your head.

## Riki Anne Wilchins

**From Wikipedia** and **Amazon Books:** Born in 1952, Riki Anne Wilchins is an activist whose work has focused on the impact of gender norms. While she started out as a transgender leader — founding the first national transgender advocacy group (GenderPAC) - her analysis and work broadened over time to include discrimination and violence regardless of individuals' identity. While this perspective has been widely accepted, its breadth has provoked criticism by some in the transgender community. Wilchins' work and writing has often focused on youth, whom she not only sees as uniquely vulnerable to the gender system's pressures and harm, but whom she sees as capable of "looking with fresh eyes". Wilchins' work has been instrumental in bringing transgender rights into the mainstream L.G.B.T. movement, and has helped bring awareness of the impact of gender norms to a wider audience. In 2001, Wilchins' work resulted in her being selected one of just six community activists named by *Time* Magazine among its "100 Civic Innovators for the Twenty-First Century". A founding member of Camp Trans, since the mid 1990s Wilchins has been highly active in founding a number of organizations and events focused on gender issues, including:



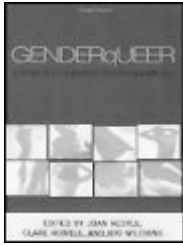
- » The Transsexual Menace - the first large direct action group for transgender rights, which was modelled along the lines of Queer Nation and which at one point boasted representatives in over forty cities (co-founder Denise Norris).
- » Hermaphrodites With Attitude - the first direct action group for the intersex (co-founder Cheryl Chase, Executive Director of the Intersex Society of North America).
- » New York City Gay Community Centre Gender Identity Project (co-founder Dr. Barbara Warren, Director of Social Services).
- » New York City Gay Community Centre Transgender Health Empowerment Conference, an annual event (co-founder Dr. Barbara Warren, Director of Social Services).
- » Camp Trans, an annual educational event outside the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival that contests the exclusion of anyone who is not deemed a "womyn-born womyn" (co-founders Janice Walworth, Nancy Jean Burkholder).
- » National Coalition for Sexual Freedom (co-founder Susan Wright, its first Executive Director).
- » National Gender Lobby Day, an annual event on Capitol Hill (co-founder Phyllis Frye).



Read My Lips: Sexual Subversion and the End of Gender  
Author: Riki Anne Wilchins  
Publisher: Firebrand Books (1997)1563410907  
I.S.B.N.-13 978 1563410907

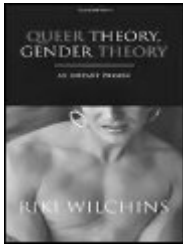
**From Amazon Books:** Over the course of the past decade transgender politics has become the cutting edge of sexual liberation. While sexual and political freedom of homosexuals has yet to be fully secured, questions of who is sleeping with whom pale in the face of the battle by transgender activists to dismantle the idea of what it means to be a man or a woman. Riki Anne Wilchins' *Read My Lips* is a passionate and extraordinarily intelligent look at how society not only creates men and women - ignoring the fluidity of maleness and femaleness in most people, but also explains how those categories generate crisis for most individuals. It is impossible to read Wilchins's ideas and not be provoked in fundamental and

mysterious ways.



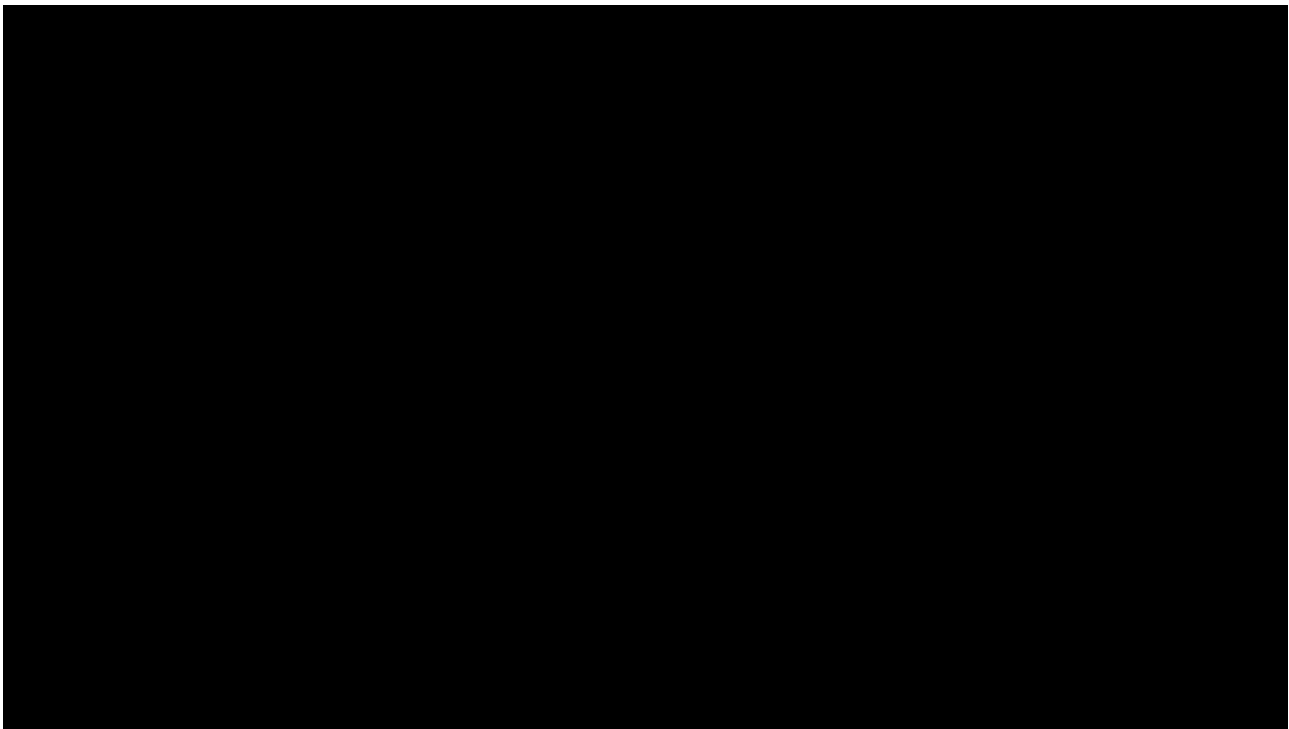
**GenderQueer: Voices From Beyond the Sexual Binary**  
Author: Riki Anne Wilchins, Joan Nestle and Clare Howell  
Publisher: Alyson Books (2002)  
I.S.B.N.-13 978 1555837301

**From Amazon Books:** Perhaps more than any other issue, gender identity has galvanized the queer community in recent years. The questions go beyond the nature of male/female to a yet-to-be-traversed region that lies somewhere between and beyond biologically determined gender. In this ground breaking anthology, three experts in gender studies and politics navigate around rigid, societally imposed concepts of two genders to discover and illuminate the limitless possibilities of identity. Thirty first-person accounts of gender construction, exploration, and questioning provide a groundwork for cultural discussion, political action, and even greater possibilities of autonomous gender choices. Noted scholar Joan Nestle is joined by internationally prominent gender warrior Riki Anne Wilchins and historian Clare Howell to provide a societal, cultural, and political exploration of gender identity.



**Queer Theory, Gender Theory: An Instant Primer**  
Author: Riki Anne Wilchins  
Publisher: Alyson Books (2004)  
I.S.B.N.-13 978 1555837980

**From Amazon Books:** A one-stop, no-nonsense introduction to the core of post-modern theory, particularly its impact on queer and gender studies. Nationally known gender activist Riki Wilchins combines straightforward prose with concrete examples from L.G.B.T. and feminist politics, as well as her own life, to guide the reader through the ideas that have forever altered our understanding of bodies, sex and desire. This is that rare post-modern theory book that combines accessibility, passion, personal experience and applied politics, noting at every turn why these ideas matter and how they can affect your daily life.



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The Gender Centre is committed to developing and providing services and activities, which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices. We offer a wide range of services to people with gender issues, their partners, family members and friends in New South Wales. We are an accommodation service and also act as an education, support, training and referral resource centre to other organisations and service providers. The Gender Centre is committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues. We specifically aim to provide a high quality service, which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.

