

Polare Edition 9

Published: October 1995 Last Update: June 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015

Editorial

by Craig Skinner, Polare Editor

Welcome to the ninth edition of *Polare*. This particular edition has the honour of being the first "bi-monthly edition". This means that *Polare* will now be published every two months. It is also our aim to ensure that the size (page number) does not decrease. So, if you've been thinking about contributing to *Polare*, maybe now is the time! If you would like to contribute something (as most of you stated in your evaluations) and you're not quite sure what you'd like to contribute or how to go about it, please feel free to give me a call at the Gender Centre during office hours. I'm quite happy to act as a sounding board for your ideas.

Anyway, we have a good line up of articles for you to read in this wonderful Spring month of October. Jill Hooley fills us in on the new Transgender Project being run by the Central Sydney Area Health Service, we have the opportunity to read an article with an incredibly brave sister who is living with H.I.V. and Linda brings up the subject of living with fear in our lives. Thanks to the American *F.T.M. Newsletter* we get the chance to read about a Classical *F.T.M.*, Sacha from the Kirketon Road Centre gives us the rundown on services for transgenders at K.R.C. and Bill has written some information about hormone withdrawal. norrie shares her political opinion with us in discussion about proposed birth certificate changes, we have some great personal experience articles from Joanne and Gail, and Roberta takes us on "safari" in Africa as we read about "Cross-Dressing Magic, Intersexuals and Female Husbands". Of course there are plenty of contact listings, upcoming events and things for you to get involved with.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *Polare*, we will see you in December with the 1995 Christmas edition.

Manager's Report

by Bill Robertson, Gender Centre Manager

Atending the XIV Harry Benjamin International Symposium in Kloster Irsee, Bavaria, was a truly valuable experience. Due to our work in isolation it was fruitful to network and make connection or reconnect with people of like minds from a variety of disciplines.

The conference was top heavy with surgical presentations of techniques and methods. The psychosocial issues seemed to pale into insignificance with the over abundance of surgeons present. Europe and America are well represented with reconstruction surgeons specializing in phalloplasty and vaginoplasty. With phalloplasty, a procedure called metoidioplasty seemed to be the safest and most functional method from my perspective. There seemed to be division, albeit intangible, between the surgeons and other disciplines.

It was wonderful to see the number of doctors who practise family medicine involved in the conference, they seemed to be more inclined to have an holistic view regarding the issues of transgender. The American contingent were particularly evident in this regard. The team approach was evident from countries like Germany, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

It was also evident that Australia is advanced in terms of psychosocial aspects in providing accommodation and other education services available to people who were undergoing a transition process or exploring possibilities in alternate gender roles. The provision

Feature Articles



There are many examples in Africa of women taking on men's roles for longer periods than the length of a ritual. The best known of these masculine women are the female warriors of West Africa.

Cross-Dressing Magic

Africa offers a great range of gender crossing. There are examples of crossing gender by both sexes, men and women taking on the roles of the opposite sex without adopting the appropriate dress and women taking other women as their husbands.

A Classical F.T.M.

A male writer named Lucian who lived near Syria in the second century C.E. wrote a series of dialogues between female prostitutes. In *Dialogue of the Courtesans* unfolds the story of Megilla, an F.T.M. character, and his love for Leaena.

Hormone Withdrawal

Bill Robertson explains that due to the potential of withdrawal symptoms developing following hormone cessation, one should seriously consider all aspects of the decision including the possibility of a reduction regime.

180° Turnaround

In early 1992 Gail's life seemed ruined. Her marriage over, she was lucky to survive, however she opted to give herself a second chance, a real chance and for the first time in her life she learned what liking ones-self was like.

for accommodation for persons in this position is unique to Australia.

The conference validated the Gender Centre's direction and philosophy. There is evidence that there is a global groundswell of support from the transgender community who are not seeking a surgical alternative. There is also evidence that this de-medicalisation could have the potential to alienate some doctors. Total de-medicalisation could be disastrous having the potential of creating greater divisions between the transgender community and the loss of a powerful platform from which changes can be made.

News in Brief

from the pages of Polare Number Nine

The coroner investigating Carol Abrahams' death has called for urgent legislation and professional guidelines for people undergoing sex-change operations. Health services for transsexuals before and after the operation were inadequate, Coroner Derrick Hand said after investigating Abrahams' suicide.

Ms Abrahams died just three months after undergoing a sex-change operation in June 1994.

During the inquest at Glebe Coroners Court, Mr. Hand said N.S.W. did not provide adequate services for men seeking sex-change operations or for transsexuals after the operation. While he found that none of Ms Abrahams' four doctors had been derelict in their duties he also found that adequate therapy was not provided.

The trauma of a sex-change operation and subsequent changes to a person's life could cause severe depression, and counselling should be provided, he said. "The problem with the deceased is that after she had the operation she wasn't sure if she'd done the right thing, plus she had an eye problem and this is where the depression really started," Mr. Hand said.

He called for specific guidelines or the enactment of legislation similar to the Sexual Reassignment Act of 1988, which exists in South Australia. The South Australian legislation requires that doctors and hospitals involved in the treatment be accredited by the State Health Commission.

Gender Centre head Bill Robertson said: "There is so much to this process that there needs to be an exceptionally strong body of support for these people. There are complex problems involved - there is no medical model that fits."

Snippets

from the pages of Polare Number Nine

Internal Gender Centre advertisements in edition nine of *Polare* magazine included those for the Needle Exchange and Outreach services. The Needle Exchange service offered syringes, needles, spoons, water, swabs, fit packs, sharps containers, pill filters, dams, condoms, gloves and lube and advertised as a confidential free service for people with gender issues. The H.I.V. Outreach Service visited clients in convenient locations and offered supplies - condoms, lube, gloves, dams, fit packs etc. - or just someone to chat with, those interested were encouraged to contact the outreach worker at the Gender Centre. The outreach workers are also at Forbes and William Streets every Thursday night from 9:30pm - 12:00am.

The newly formed H.I.V.+ Support Group advertised as a support network that had been established for H.I.V.+ transgender people, and a series of art classes were advertised spanning a six month period from October through February. Included in the classes were book binding, acrylic painting, printing, drawing and water colours.

The Gender Centre held a World AIDS Day Lunch on 1st December from 12 noon to 4:00pm. Commemorate World AIDS Day and support those in the community who have been affected by AIDS and remember our friends who have died from AIDS.

Parents and Family were invited to access the Centre by asking whether parents that have children dealing with gender issues would like to meet other parents who perhaps have similar questions to you, or find some kind of support as you come to terms with the choices your child or family member has made.

And the Gender Centre held Monday evening Relaxation Classes at the Centre including soothing and inspirational music, essential oils and guided meditations.

Externally, the search for transgender people to take part in the Andrology Unit at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital's "Prostate Disease and the Transgender Person" study continued with an advertisement that asked; "did you know that biological males have an 80% chance of having prostate disease and a 25% chance of needing surgery? We don't know whether this is the same for transgenders. The prostate is known to be a hormone sensitive organ, but it remains unclear what the long-term effects of oestrogen are on the prostate and whether this changes the incidence of prostate disease. Did you know that the prostate is not removed in genital realignment surgery and it is unclear as to what happens to the prostate long-term post surgery. The Andrology Unit at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital is trying to answer these questions with a current research project and are looking for volunteers."

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Polare Magazine is published quarterly in Australia by The Gender Centre Inc. which is funded by the Department of Family & Community Services under the S.A.A.P. program and supported by the N.S.W. Health Department through the AIDS and Infectious Diseases Branch. Polare provides a forum for discussion and debate on gender issues. Unsolicited contributions are welcome, the editor reserves the right to edit such contributions without notification. Any submission which appears in Polare may be published on our internet site. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor, The Gender Centre Inc., the Department of Family & Community Services or the N.S.W. Department of Health.

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.

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Cross-Dressing Magic

Intersexuals and Feminine Husbands

by Roberta Perkins

Article appeared in Polare magazine: October 1995 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



Dahomey (now Benin) Warriors around 1890.

Africa offers a great range of gender-crossing types, more so than any other continent on Earth. There are examples of crossing gender by both sexes, there are cases of men and women taking on the roles of the opposite sex without adopting the appropriate dress, and there are rituals in which one or both sexes cross-dress for the period of the ceremony only.

The phenomenon of same-sex marriages were also frequent across Africa ... marriages between men were not uncommon. But more widespread were marriages between women.

The Magic of Cross-Dressing

When female diviners of the Zulus are called upon to forecast rain they carry the spears and shields of warriors, the symbols of male potency to pierce the clouds. Among the Masai - boys are dressed as girls during their initiation into warriorhood. The Sotho of South Africa dress their girls in boys' clothing for their initiation into womanhood. When a man in the Bangala tribe of the Congo is attacked by an evil spirit he dresses as a woman in the hope that the disguise will fool the demon. Zulu men put on women's girdles at a time of drought hoping this would bring sympathy from the rain gods. These are examples of cross-dressing to induce a magical change in certain circumstances. The idea of temporarily donning the clothing of the opposite sex for the purpose of seeking supernatural help is not confined to African societies, but can also be found among some native Brazilian, Papuan and Asian societies. They all have one thing in common: the belief that a change of clothes will bring about a change of luck.

Every year the Zulu performed a ceremony at the time they planted their crops. Women dressed as warriors, carried the men's spears and shields and herded the cattle, which was normally an exclusively male occupation. At the same time, the men hid inside their houses like women do when the village is under attack. This was the annual ritual of Nomkubulwana, the goddess of fertility. The Zulus had another ceremony, known as the umkaba, performed whenever disease threatened the tribe's cattle herd, in which girls donned their brother's clothes and tended to the cattle. Among the Yoruba of West Africa impotent men dressed as women and danced publicly to Gelede, a female demon and cult goddess of witches. These are all examples of cross-dressing and a type of ritual called 'rites of rebellion'. Not only in Africa, but rites of rebellion which feature transvestism are common to many tribes in New Guinea, as well as many societies in pre-Christian and Medieval Europe, with fiestas such as Mummers parades, Halloween, Mardi Gras and Carnival. Rites of rebellion, whether or not they involved transvestism, were an expression of a change in order, which not only sought to reset the world to its normal order, but provided participants with the chance to temporarily reverse their roles, a kind of social safety valve enabling men to become women, and vice versa, for a period as a way of relieving the pressure of living in one role all the time. The Feast of Fools is an example of non-transvestic rite of rebellion, whereby the King became a beggar and a beggar the King for a day.

Warrior Women and Women Marriages

There are many examples in Africa of women taking on men's roles for longer periods than the length of a ritual. The best known of these masculine women are the female warriors of West Africa. The Ashanti, Benin and Ibe all had women in their armies who fought as hard and as furiously as their male counterparts. But the Dahomey formed an entire regiment of full-time women warriors. In 1845, 5,000 of these women made up nearly half of the Dahomey's fighting strength of 12,000 troops. Under King Ghezo his personal bodyguard of female soldiers were largely responsible for overthrowing the Yoruba domination of Dahomey.

The phenomenon of same-sex marriages were also frequent across Africa. Among the Nuba and Azande of Sudan, the Siwan of southern Egypt, and the Nzema of Ghana marriages between men were not uncommon. But more widespread were marriages between women, in such societies as the Nuer and Dinka in Sudan, the Dahomey and Ibo in West Africa, the Zulu, Venda and Lovedu of southern Africa, and some twenty-three other tribes. These women-marriages vary greatly from one tribe to another. Among the Nuer it occurs when an older barren woman who has acquired a cattle herd from a previous heterosexual marriage purchases a woman from her clansmen with the normal bride price for other marriages. The woman-husband herds the cattle and sometimes practises magic, both normally the prerogative of men. Whilst she does not identify as a man she has all the privileges that go with the male role. In Dahomey, the situation is similar except women-husbands can acquire wealth for the bride price without having inherited it in a

previous heterosexual marriage, and she may not necessarily be barren. But among the Venda a woman needs to have acquired the status and property of a district chief, no mean feat for a woman, before she can obtain a bride. The woman-marriage of the Lovedu (which form over a third of all marriages) usually take place when a woman has a right to a daughter-in-law in the levirate system when she has no son to marry her brother's widow. To acquire an heir to her cattle herd and other property, the woman-husband will hire a non-kinsmen to sleep with her wife and any child from the resultant pregnancy is socially considered to be a member of the woman-husband's clan, just as with any husband who fathers a child. The difference is that the child grows up with two female parents, even though it will call one of them by the term for 'father'.

Transgender people and Intersexuals

In many parts of Africa the phenomenon of male and female transgender people is quite widespread. There are some strange examples reported by nineteenth century European travellers to the interior of the 'dark continent', such as the sacrificial priest of the Kingdom of Congo dressed as a woman and was called 'grandmother', the Ankole of Uganda had a woman who dressed as a man in order to become an oracle for the god Mukasa, or Bangala shamans who dressed in female clothing to detect a murderer, to mention just a few. Among the Bala of the Congo were both men and women who were unhappy with their given genders and desired to change their sex roles. But Bala society frowns on gender-crossing, some people accusing both sexes who try it of doing so for purely homosexual reasons, others saying they are simpletons, and all give them a derogatory term, bitesha. Bitesha only partly cross-dress to avoid ridicule, for instance men may wear skirts but not tops or kerchiefs about their heads, which only makes women suspect them of wanting to rape them. The poor bitesha try to meet opposition to them with some optimism. "I like to be insulted", said one bitesha. "This is what bitesha like ... I love being a bitesha because no one expects or demands things or actions from him".

Like elsewhere in the world Intersexuals (hermaphrodites) were not unknown in Africa. But among the Pokot of Kenya they were given a special social status in the society, a sort of third sex. Pokot society underwent genital mutilation during their respective initiation rites: boys were circumcised, and girls were clitoridectomised. But, because Intersexuals' genitals did not conform to what was considered normal they could not undergo the genital surgery. Thus, they could not pass into adulthood and were given a status of non-person, as well as neutral sex category, sererr. They were not allowed to have sex, nor to herd cattle, hunt, fish or undertake female manufactures. They were taunted mercilessly by other Pokots and many were put to death at birth. They considered themselves as mistakes of divine creation. Yet, those who escaped the infanticide claimed this was due to the intervention of a supernatural force called Torurut.

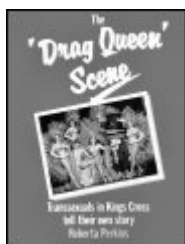
Trannie Entertainers on Madagascar

The large island of Madagascar off Africa's east coast had a long tradition of gender crossing among certain males in the island's tribes. Among the Sakalavas little boys thought to have a feminine appearance were raised as girls. The Antandroy and Hova called their gender-crossers sekrata, who like women, wore their hair long and in decorative knots, inserted silver coins in pierced ears, and wore many bracelets on their arms, wrists and ankles. They considered themselves 'real' women, totally forgetting they were born males, and through long practice spoke with a woman's voice. Their society thought their efforts to be female natural and believed that they had supernatural protection which punished anyone who attempted to do them harm. What a contrast to the sekrata were to the unfortunate Pokot sererr.

The Tanala were the most powerful of the Madagascar tribes and noted as great traders with visiting mariners. Their gender-crossers, or tsekats, were the island's outstanding entertainers, dancing for visiting chieftains, who paid them in lavish gifts for their performances. They also received payment from lovers when they pleased them. Legueval de Lacombe had this to say about them when he visited the island in 1840: "They have their own manners and customs and live apart. They do not marry and even affect a dislike for women, although they wear the dress of the latter and imitate their voice, gestures and general habits. They wear large earrings of gold or silver, necklaces of coral or coloured beads, and bracelets of silver. They carefully extract the hair of their beards and in short play the part of women so well that one is often deceived. For the rest, these dancers have simple manners, and are very sober in their habits. They are continually on the move, and are well accepted wherever they go".

Roberta Perkins

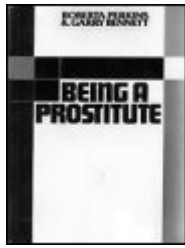
Roberta Perkins established the Gender Centre (then known as Tiresias House) in 1983. She is also a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at The University of New South Wales and has conducted many government-funded research projects into prostitution. A transsexual herself, she has the confidence of the people she interviews; a sociologist, she has counselled transsexuals for a number of years; an activist, she has worked with them in the struggle to overcome the problems they face every day of their lives. Roberta is also the author, and co-author of five books and scores of journal articles on sex work research in Australia and has also taught Native American Studies for many years in Sydney



The Drag Queen Scene: Transsexuals in Kings Cross
Author: Roberta Perkins Publisher: Allen & Unwin (1983)
I.S.B.N.-13 978 0868610474

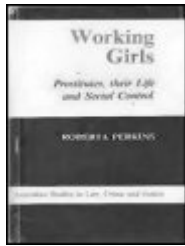
Through a unique series of frank interviews, *The Drag Queen Scene* deals with the experiences of male-to-female transsexuals who live and work in Sydney's Kings Cross area. It focuses on twelve people — showgirls, strippers, bar girls and prostitutes. Each of the twelve speaks for herself, providing first-hand insights into life and work in her world — a world a few people understand. Their stories uncover the raw reality behind the shallow popular view of the "Drag Queen". These revealing every-day accounts demonstrate how much accepted attitudes are based on ignorance, prejudice and callousness. By offering the reader a rare opportunity to view a closed subculture as its participants see it, *The Drag Queen Scene* is an attempt to break down the resistance facing transsexuals, to influence changes in social attitudes and the law. In this book, twelve voices, hitherto silent, challenge the reader to question the stigmatising and

ostracising transsexuals endure.




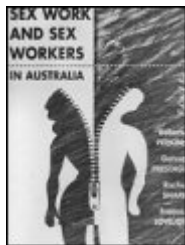
Being a Prostitute: Prostitute Women and Prostitute Men (with Garry Bennett)
Author: Roberta Perkins and Garry Bennett Publisher: Allen & Unwin (1986)
I.S.B.N.-13 978 0868616780

Constant media coverage and popular concern about prostitution, recent changes to legal and administrative regulations governing prostitution in its various forms in its several States, and the emergence of organised groups to represent the views and interests of prostitutes in public discussions and to influence policy formation ensure that the subject retains a high level of visibility and social significance. At the same time there have been remarkably few empirical studies of prostitution in Australia and our knowledge is largely confined to sensationalised reports of criminal cases and media exposés. So a book giving detailed accounts of the perceptions and experiences of a variety of prostitutes, male and female, homosexual and heterosexual, of different ages and background, and covering the diversity of forms of occupational types and organisational settings of prostitution at the present time would seem to be timely.




Working Girls: Prostitutes, Their Life and Social Control
Author: Roberta Perkins
Publisher: Australian Institute of Criminology (1991)
I.S.B.N.-13 978 0642158765

From Abe Books:  This book has three objectives: 1. To demonstrate empirically that prostitutes are basically ordinary women with only their occupation distinguishing them from others; 2. To bring to the general public a balanced, well-informed view of prostitution, shed of its tawdry reputation; 3. To convince legislators to adopt a more practical method of dealing with prostitution.




Sex Work and Sex Workers in Australia
Author: Roberta Perkins
Publisher: University of New South Wales Press (1994)
I.S.B.N.-13 978 0868401744

From Google Books:  *Sex Work and Sex Workers in Australia* is one of the most comprehensive books on the sex industry. This book's main focus is on prostitution and it is broken down on many levels: female, male, transsexual, health care, oral histories, and foreign workers (e.g.. Thai). It is very easy to read and one leaves this book with an excellent history lesson as well as viewpoints from both men and women which balances this book.



Call Girls: Private Sex Workers in Australia
Author: Roberta Perkins and Frances Lovejoy
Publisher: U.W.A. Publishing (2007)
I.S.B.N.-13 978 1920694913

From Booktopia:  *Call Girls* casts a penetrating, red light gaze upon the upper echelons of the worlds oldest profession private sex workers who use the telephone as a means to solicit clients. Containing frank accounts from women working in the Australian sex industry. *Call Girls* puts a human face on this hitherto shadowy, clandestine world as it documents how many women became sex workers; run their businesses; maintain their health; and how the call girls work affects their relationships with husbands, lovers and families. Far-removed from the moralising, victim stereotypes and *Pretty Woman*-inspired fantasies which pervade popular culture, *Call Girls* places the world of the sex worker within social, political and legal contexts which will surprise and change the preconceived notions of many readers.

Polare Magazine is published quarterly in Australia by The Gender Centre [Inc.](#), which is funded by the Department of Family & Community Services under the [S.A.A.P.](#) program and supported by the [N.S.W.](#) Health Department through the AIDS and Infectious Diseases Branch. Polare provides a forum for discussion and debate on gender issues. Unsolicited contributions are welcome, the editor reserves the right to edit such contributions without notification. Any submission which appears in Polare may be published on our internet site. Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor, The Gender Centre [Inc.](#), the Department of Family & Community Services or the [N.S.W.](#) Department of Health.

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A Classical F.T.M.

Lucian's *The Dialogue of the Courtesans*, from the 2nd Century C.E.

by Andrew Matzner from the F.T.M. Newsletter, U.S.A.

Article appeared in Polare magazine: October 1995 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



Megilla, who is very aware of how her male energy dominates her psyche, and is brave enough to act on her feelings.

Is there such a thing as a 'history of F.T.M.

Transsexuality'? And if so, how far back does it go? Some people think that only with the

development of surgical techniques did the 'transsexual' come into being. But if one studies accounts of F.T.M. transgendered people through the ages, it seems likely that some probably would have taken advantage of hormones and/or surgery, had these options existed.

I love reading about ancient Greece and Rome - they were incredibly cosmopolitan societies that remind me a lot of today's world. These complex cultures also had their fair share of sexual minorities - gays, lesbians, cross-dressers. I wondered if people who we'd consider F.T.M. were around back then - is the feeling that you were 'born into the wrong body' something that can occur in any culture, at any time? To me the answer seems obvious - sure, why

not? Yet there are scholars that insist that the 'homosexual' is a nineteenth-century invention and that only the 'patriarchal medical establishment' could have created a transsexual. So I begin reading classical literature to see if I could discover anyone 2,000 years ago who felt some of the same things that some of us are feeling today.

And this is what I found: a male writer named Lucian who lived near Syria in the second century C.E., wrote in ancient Greek, a series of dialogues between female prostitutes. It is not known whether these mini-plays were completely made up by Lucian or if they were based on women he had known or heard stories about. At any rate, in *Dialogue Five* in the work *The Dialogue of the Courtesans* the following scenario unfolds:

“ One courtesan (Clonarium) is asking her friend (Leaena) about the rumour that Leaena is living with another woman (Megilla), as her lover. Leaena replies that it is true and proceeds to describe how this came about. Megilla and another woman, Demonassa, had given a drinking party to which Leaena had been invited to provide musical entertainment. After the party was over, Megilla asked Leaena to get into bed with her and Demonassa. Leaena did this, and soon found herself being kissed and caressed by her two hostesses. Although Leaena didn't object, she did get a shock when a few moments later Megilla pulled off what turned out to be a wig to reveal the hyper-masculine crew-cut of a male athlete, stated that her name was 'Megillus' (the male version of Megilla) and proclaimed that she was married to Demonassa, who was her 'wife'.


At this point Leaena is confused and thinks that Megilla is really a man. She asks Megilla if she has a penis, to which she replies that she does not need one, for she uses a better method. As Leaena continues to be bewildered, Megilla further claims that she is 'all man' and states "I was born a woman like the rest of you, but I have the mind and desires and everything else of a man. Leaena then asks if those 'desires' are sufficient, since she does not have a penis. But Megilla is quick to reassure Leaena and argues, "you'll find me as good as any man - I have a substitute of my own, just give me a chance and you will see".

Leaena ends up accepting Megilla as her lover and moving in with her, and the little vignette ends.

Some scholars have looked at this dialogue and viewed it as a condemnation of lesbianism and a caricature of masculine women. On the other hand, after carefully studying the dialogue's vocabulary and structure, I feel that, while we will never know whether these courtesans were completely made up or based on real people and events, the author, Lucian, has characterised a woman, Megilla, who is very aware of how her male energy dominates her psyche, and is brave enough to act on her feelings. Megilla is a strong and dangerous figure who has usurped male power prerogatives. After all, the resolution of the dialogue presents no negative outcome for this 'gender-law-breaking' woman - unlike the tales of the Amazons, in which those feminist heroines always end up being subdued and raped by men.


For me it was refreshing to meet so far in the distant past, a woman who perceived her gender to be at odds with her biological sex, was articulate about expressing her feelings, and managed to cope successfully in the only way an F.T.M. 2,000 years ago knew how.

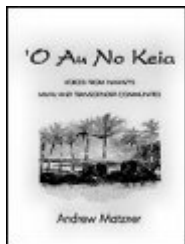
Andrew Matzner

From Andrew Matzner's website:  Andrew Matzner has a Master's Degree in Anthropology and another in Social Work, and is a licensed Clinical Social-Worker, Psychotherapist and Life-Coach. He has also studied Emotional Freedom Techniques (E.F.T.) and Hypnosis, and has completed Reiki I and II training. He has a history of working with people dealing with serious mental-illnesses, starting as a case manager and then moving on to mental-health support services, treating clients in their homes and out in the community. Since being licensed as a psychotherapist in 2006, he has worked with a wide variety of clients in his private practice and specialises in pain management, emotional eating, and gender identity issues.




He is the author of a book about Hawai'i (*'O Au No Keia: Voices from Hawai'i's mähū and Transgender Communities*), and co-author of a book about northern Thailand (*Male Bodies, Women's Souls: Personal Narratives of Thailand's Transgendered Youth*, with LeeRay Costa). His newest book, *The Buddha Diet: A Guide to Creating a Positive Relationship with Food and Eating*, is also now available. He has also appeared several times as an expert commentator on *Taboo*, a television series on the National Geographic Channel in the U.S.A..

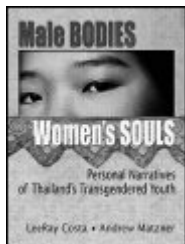
Andrew has been fortunate to spend extended amounts of time living in Japan, Thailand, Australia, and Hawai'i. Originally from New York, he currently lives in Roanoke, Virginia, U.S.A.. [More information about Andrew can be found on his website.](#) 



'O Au No Keia: Voices From Hawai'i's Mähū and Transgender Communities


Author: Andrew Matzner
Publisher: Xlibris (2001)
I.S.B.N.-13 978 0738861616

From Amazon Books:  *'O Au No Keia* is a collection of spoken narratives by male-to-female transgendered people and mähū who live on the island of O'ahu. The powerfully moving stories in this book not only reveal the experiences of those who cross the boundaries of sex and gender, but also illuminate what it means to do so in the unique cultural context of Hawai'i.



Male Bodies, Women's Souls: Personal Narratives of Thailand's Transgendered Youth

Author: Andrew Matzner and LeeRay M. Costa
Publisher: Routledge (2007)
I.S.B.N.-13 978 0789031143

From Amazon Books:  The Thai term *sao braphet song* (a "second type of woman") describes males who reject the gender of masculinity for femininity. *Male Bodies, Women's Souls: Personal Narratives of Thailand's Transgendered Youth* uses the narrative method, stories in the words of these "second type of women" to analyse these transgendered experiences. This previously ignored perspective of the Thai sex/gender system gained through this theoretical and methodological approach offers students and general readers a rich, more readily accessible foundation of knowledge about gendered subjectivity and sex/gender systems. The book features in-depth, autobiographical life histories from individual Thai transgendered youth. Life stories, told in the participants' own words, provides an engaging, at times touching, always insightful look at Thai culture's sex/gender system.

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Hormone Withdrawal

Flooding the Brain with Norepinephrine

by Bill Robertson

Article appeared in Polare magazine: October 1995 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015



... if anyone is considering ceasing hormones that they have been taking for a period of time, they should look at the possibility of a reduction regime as opposed to a 'stopping cold'.

Using drugs such as alcohol or heroin markedly affects the uptake of a brain chemical called norepinephrine. The drugs do this by decreasing brain cell receptor activity

Norepinephrine must attach to these receptors to fulfil it's function of transmitting nerve messages in the brain. If an 'addicted person' were to stop suddenly taking alcohol or heroin, the brain would be flooded with norepinephrine because of increased receptor cell uptake and synthesis. This results in the familiar withdrawal symptoms such as anxiety, irritability, insomnia, hot and cold flushes, sweats, loss of appetite, muscle pain and so on.

Similar symptoms occur when ceasing hormones, although with far less intensity. It would seem to follow then, if anyone is considering ceasing hormones that they have been taking for a period of time, that they look at the

possibility of a reduction regime as opposed to 'stopping cold' to minimise the effects of doing so.

Kaskin and Kleber, two researchers connected to the Substance Abuse Centre and the Department of Psychiatry at Yale University's School of Medicine, have determined that both testosterone and oestrogen act in the brain as powerful anti-depressants. Major fluctuations of hormone levels either up or down, whether they be oestrogen or testosterone can have the ability to upset the delicate balance of enzyme and other chemical activity in the brain causing depression and other side-effects.

If you plan to undergo neo-vaginal surgery, you will be asked to stop taking hormones four to five weeks prior to the surgery. If you have been compliant with the recommended dosage there is little need for concern in this instance.

Conclusion: Due to the potential of withdrawal symptoms developing when considering hormone cessation, seriously consider all aspects of the decision including the possibility of a reduction regime.

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180 Degree Turnaround

Gail Makes the Right Decision

by Gail

Article appeared in Polare magazine: October 1995 Last Update: October 2013 Last Reviewed: September 2015

The first week of January 1992 was a very traumatic week for me. My partner told me that she couldn't stand me any longer and that our marriage was over. That afternoon I decided that life had ceased to have any meaning and went down to my garage to commit suicide. As I was about to open the garage door, I heard the little children who lived behind me, playing in their backyard - laughing, screaming and making eight-year-old noises. At that moment I realised what a very selfish, horrible thing I was about to do to my own children (aged eleven and nineteen) and went back up to the house to think about the situation again. My decision then was to turn my life around 180° and see what would happen.

For the first time in my life I learned what liking one's self was like. My children even opted to live with me ...

As a result, for the first time in my life, I learned what liking one's self was like. My children even opted to live with me instead of their mother (it was up to them to decide).

I work in the University system teaching students workshop practice, using wood, metal, welding etc. (I'm a toolmaker by trade) and I've received so much support from the people whom I work with, I now wonder why I waited so long to come to terms with my own feelings.

The beautiful thing is that I haven't lost any real friends. I've been a member of a car club for years (I love Plymouths!) and still go to meetings and rallies. My friends invite me to their homes for the normal suburban parties and barbecues as my new persona with no 'warnings' to their other friends, so I am accepted as who I am by all and sundry.

My learning curve has been vertical - how to dress, what to dress in! I'm now fifty-four years old but my dress sense can vary from that of a nineteen-year-old to a forty-year-old in one week. I've never dressed as a fifty-year-old yet. Girlfriends, friends wives, neighbours and students whom I work with have helped me with things like make-up, voice (it is deep) and walking. I find that I have lost my aggressive, angry attitude to life that was always present in the past, and I am told by an N.R.M.A. road service man that I can only be picked because I know too much about my 1968 American car!

The one thing that I've never done is hide the truth about myself. If someone is being suspicious, I'll just say "by the way, I'm a transgendered person" and keep talking as though it is the most natural thing in the world. Most people only take five minutes to acclimatize to the situation and everything is okay. By the way, living in the heart of Sydney's north shore can be stressful at times - especially as I still shop at the same large complex I have been going to for the last twenty-eight years.

Being a single parent means that my social life is on weekends only, and as most of the Gender Centre's social activities are weekdays and evenings, it is very difficult. If some things were held on weekends it would help.

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related articles

EXPRESSING MY FEMININE SIDE BELINDA'S PERSONAL STORY

Belinda has been cross-dressing at different times since she was a teenager. She's considered starting hormone treatment but isn't sure, however she's of the opinion that it may help her understand who she really is. She enjoys the freedom

Questions? Concerns?

The Gender Centre counselling service provides a high quality professional psychological service to the

of expressing her feminine side.

JESSICA'S TRANSITION EXPERIENCE ASSAULTS AND BEATINGS, I'VE HAD MY SHARE

Jessica believes that she was born a girl in a male body however her female side soon came out. She describes herself as happiest when in her sister's clothes and make-up, but when her father caught her in a dress she received the first of many bitter floggings.

ON BEING A GIRL LET US BE WHOLE AND HAPPY WOMEN

Jenny is a biological male who desperately wants to be a girl – in her case, only some of the time because she enjoys the kind of gender wholeness that she has even though many girls-like-her cannot understand how she can be comfortable living both apparently different lives.



transgender and gender questioning community. Come in and talk confidentially with the Gender Centre's Counsellor (by appointment only).

9:00am - 4:30pm Monday and Thursday only.

(02) 9519 7599