Gender-Defined Woman

4 views

ObedientFemme
to

May 31, 2002, 1:06:50 AM

What Does it Mean to be a Gender-defined Woman?

By Roberta Angela Dee

INTRODUCTION

My comments will only make sense to those who can distinguish between sex and gender. These words are often used interchangeably. However, when we discuss transsexuals, and other individuals for whom there is a conflict between anatomy and self-perception, it is important to distinguish between the two words.

Recently, it has become somewhat trendy to refer to transsexuals as people who "hate their sex." This gross simplification aside from being mean-spirited is incorrect and rooted in ignorance.

The individual who perceives a conflict between his or her sex and gender is concerned only with resolving the conflict. If there is any hate, it is the hate directed at these individuals by people who do not understand the condition.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) continues to present any conflict between sex and gender as a psychological disorder. Homosexuality had also been classified as a psychological disorder. However, the classification was deleted in 1973 for the following reasons:

* Crucial issue is the consequence, not the etiology of a condition
* Significant portion of subjects
o are satisfied with their sexual orientation
o show no significant psychopathology
o function socially and occupationally
* Condition fails criteria of distress and disability
* Condition fails criterion of inherent disadvantage

The same logic used to eliminate homosexuality as a disorder applies equally well to individuals with a conflict between sex and gender. Yet, transsexuals continue to be classified as gender dysphoric, as though they are incapable of functioning normally in society. To make matters worse, individuals referred to as transgendered are classified under Transvestic Fetishism, along with Pedophilia, Exhibitionism, Voyeurism, Frotteurism (sexual fantasies, urges, or behaviors involving touching or rubbing one's genitals against the body of a non-consenting person), Sadism and Masochism.

SEX vs. GENDER

Sex refers to the anatomy. It is strictly a physical concept. Boys have a penis. Girls have a vagina. Those who are intersexed have characteristics of both sexes -- male and female. In each case, when we speak of the sex of an individual, we address their anatomy.

Gender refers to the behavioral characteristics attributable to a particular sex. Most often females identify as being girls or women. Most often males identify with being boys or men. Therefore, when we speak of the gender of an individual, we address the behavior with which they most readily identify. Gender might also be expressed as some variation or combination of what is understood to be traditional masculine or feminine behavior.

Most males identify with being boys or men. However, I suspect that only 1 out of ever 1,000 males identifies with being a girl. For women, it is perhaps 1 out of ever 3,000 identifying with being a boy. In these instances, sex and gender cannot be used interchangeably.

The above figures are only speculative. Some may offer different ratios, and that is acceptable. Suffice it to say that the condition is rare.

At some point, prior to birth, transgendered or transsexual individuals are predispositioned to identify with the gender that is opposite their anatomical sex. In other words, a male identifies with being a girl; and a female identifies with being a boy. In such cases, the individual is said to be either transsexual or transgendered. They perceived that they are a woman in a man's body, or a man in a woman's body.

WE ARE NOT DYSPHORIC OR DYSFUNCTIONAL

Being born transgendered or transsexual is not a dysphoria or "gender dysphoria" as some medical professionals have suggested. It is simply a condition of birth -- not unlike being born left-handed or being born with brown hair.

Just as homosexuals can be perfectly adjusted and functional members of society, so can those of us who are born with a conflict between our psychology and our anatomy. One way or another, we simply adjust.

TERMINOLOGY

In the case of a transsexual, the word 'transsexual' is perfectly descriptive of the condition. An individual who is born male, for example, surgically alters his anatomy to be regarded as female. He is transsexual. The prefix 'trans' means to "cross over." In this instance, the individual "crosses over" from male to female. In the case of a female-to-male transsexual, the individual "crosses over" from female to male. They change their sex -- their anatomy.

The mechanism used by transsexuals to resolve the conflict between their anatomy (sex) and their psychology (gender) is to have sex reassignment surgery (SRS). In reality, only a minority of transsexuals actually completes the sex change procedure; most do not complete the procedure for a variety of reasons - moral, financial and for reasons having to do with their relationships with family, employers, clients, and so on. Still, they all believe that it is the only way for there to be a sense of harmony between their minds and their bodies is for the body as female as is possible.

The so-called transgendered man or woman holds a quite different opinion. They have the same conflict as the transsexual but prefer to resolve the conflict differently. The transgendered woman (anatomically male but psychologically female), for example, states that she is a woman in mind, heart and soul. She defines herself not on the basis of her anatomy but on the basis of her disposition -- her mind or gender. Technically, she may be said to be partially transsexual, if she changes her physiology by taking hormones to develop breasts and develop more feminine behavior and demeanor. However, she makes no attempt to alter her genitals beyond the effect of taking female hormones.

For the transgendered woman, hormones result in testicular feminization. Her testicles shrink, her penis partially atrophies, and she usually becomes both impotent and sterile. The transgendered man (anatomically female but psychologically male) takes testosterone and other male hormones to become more muscular, his clitoris might enlarge, and there is a likely increase in facial and body hair.

The problem with the word transgendered is that the so-called transgendered individual never "crosses over" as the term applies to gender. The transgendered woman is born with the predisposition to be a girl. The transgendered man is born with the predisposition to be a boy. Their orientation never changes. There is never any "crossing over" as there is for the transsexual. Consequently, it is erroneous to say they are transgendered because their gender remains fixed. All that changes is how they choose to accept or adapt to the conflict.

Another problem with the word transgendered is that it is used to describe everything from gender variant behavior, to casual cross-dressing. In the case of those individuals who believe they are neither male, nor female, but rather some other variation, they assert that they are "transcending" conventional definitions for male and female. My perspective is that they are 'expanding' the definitions, but I do not believe they are transcending being male or female. So, again, transgendered is incorrect terminology, incorrectly applied.

For many years, the anatomically female women responsible for organizing the Michigan's Women Festival, an event patronized mostly by lesbians, wanted to particularly exclude transgendered and pre-operative transsexual women. The hypocrisy of their position was that they readily accepted transgendered men -- individuals who were anatomically female, but either psychologically male or who indicated a preference to present themselves in a way that was markedly more masculine than feminine. At any rate, to exclude women who were in any way anatomically male, or even those who had been born anatomically male, the organizers devised a policy specifying that only "women-born women" could attend the festival.

Ironically, from the perspective of the transgendered woman, womanhood was an attribute of gender. Consequently, she could honestly and logically state that she was as much "woman-born" as any anatomically female woman. For her it was not a question of being "transgendered;" she was and would always be a woman.

This is the primary reason why the term transgendered doesn't work for many individuals. It's simply inaccurate.

When Virginia Prince introduced the term back in the late 1950s, she used it to define himself as a man who found it more comfortable to live in the manner generally ascribed to women. He took hormones to develop breasts, dressed as a woman, and socialized as a woman; but he still regarded himself to be a man. As gender awareness grew, the word transgendered was applied to anything and everyone from the casual cross-dresser, to the post-operative transsexual. I'm not certain that at this point in time anyone can agree on what it means.

GENDER-DEFINED

Transgendered has been used, abused and misused to such an extent that it's virtually meaningless. Perhaps, the most accurate phrase would be "gender conflicted." However, this phrase sounds negative and suggests negative attributes. Ideally, we would call such men and women simply men and women. However, I'm certain that people would always want to be able to distinguish genetically consistent men and women from those who were not genetically consistent.

A genetically consistent woman would have the XX chromosomes. That's how we define a woman in a genetic sense. This, however, is a minor point. What I really want to get across here is that no matter how much a male-to-female transsexual appears to be genetically female, she is not; and if she is choosing a partner, the partner has a right to know whether or not she is genetically female. Because some partners will still consider her to be a man.

In any event, the most accurate and positive sounding phrases I can suggest are either "gender-defined" or "gender-derived" men and women. Both phrases distinguish the individual from genetically consistent men and women while also being technically accurate.

These phrases would also be applicable to the thousands of gender-defined men and women who do not opt to live according to how they feel about themselves, but who live their lives in a manner consistent to their anatomical sex. It is perhaps an empty and unfulfilled life, but everyone is entitled to his or her choices.

CONCLUSION

Am I suggesting that the DSM-IV is incorrect? Absolutely. In fact, it's no better than the DSM-III regarding gender issues.

A significant number of medical professionals have tainted society with misconceptions about gender, and now conform to the society they initially corrupted. It's a Catch-22 situation, and they haven't the good sense to admit they were wrong. So, they continue treating and diagnosing people as though they had a mental illness when in fact they don't.

Some psychologists have discouraged people from having sex reassignment surgery when it would clear improve the quality of the individual's life. Conversely, other psychologists have encouraged people to have surgery who were simply ill prepared for the transition.

Finally, I know who I am. I'm not transsexual. I'm not transgendered. I'm a gender-defined woman. It's what I've been saying for nearly 40 years, and now I'm certain of it.

Yes, it will be difficult for some people to use a new term. I can't help that. Some people would rather be wrong than to accept something new. C'est la vie. Such is life.

This is an important issue in the gender community because we need to demonstrate that we can define ourselves and do so in a way that is accurate and consistent with the way language is used in our culture. If we fail to make corrections, we will continue to confuse ourselves as well as the culture we hope to change.

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Feel free to provide feedback to Roberta at Dian...@aol.com. Also, feel free to copy, photocopy or share this article with your loved ones and colleagues.

(c) 2002 -- Roberta Angela Dee / Revised 2002

BOFH
to

Jun 2, 2002, 3:40:37 PM

Roberta:

ONE announcement is sufficient. Please do not REPEATEDLY advertise your group here. We heard it the first time. Notices of this type should be posted infrequently, like onec a month, not again and again within a couple days.

Your "Friendly" (no so)local Sysadmin

A follower of the BOFH

Marti Abernathy
to

Jun 2, 2002, 5:33:01 PM

or how about you just post your thoughts and have your info about your sites in your sig file??

Marti

Duhhhh
Listen to Trans-Sister Radio LIVE! Thursday Nights, 8-10 eastern.
http://www.trans-sisterradio.com . Visit TransAdvocate.com and check out the new messageboard. http://www.transadvocate.com .

MrBig2U
to

Jun 3, 2002, 12:32:45 AM

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<input type=image border=0 alt="Click here to join real_tgts_woman"
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Powered by <a href="http://groups.yahoo.com/">groups.yahoo.com</a>
</td>
</tr>
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MrBig2U
to

Jun 3, 2002, 12:38:35 AM

For the on going nurturing of the Transgendered/Transsexual life and the journey with others who "really" understand and share gender concerns without prejudice or malice on unrelated issues of race or creed or geographical location come to:

Real TG/TS Woman

http://groups.yahoo.com/subscribe/real_tgts_woman

ObedientFemme
to

Jun 4, 2002, 1:11:05 PM

Hey, is this a clever way to advertise for T-Radio?

Marti Abernathy
to

Jun 4, 2002, 2:16:24 PM

Well Ms A..sit down and have a seat.
#1 Post an opinion not a commerical.
#2 use a sig file...and put your stuff in that...then people dont get pxssed at ya for posting spam. ...but u still get your info acrossed...and people come to know you for your ideas..not your spam..
#3 Dont Lie about what you do. Dont say your unmoderated...when actually you are.

Then, and only then, might someone actually listen to you.

Class Dismissed.

Marti

ObedientFemme
to

Jun 5, 2002, 10:21:11 AM

In that case, Mr. Marti, there's no need for you to request that I advertise your group through TG Woman.

Class dismissed.

Roberta

ObedientFemme
to

Jun 5, 2002, 10:32:17 AM

Please note that TG Woman is not affiliated with, nor does it sponsor or support, T-Radio.

Roberta Angela Dee
Founder of TG Woman

Marti Abernathy
to

Jun 5, 2002, 10:43:18 AM

>In that case, Mr. Marti, there's no need for you to request that I advertise
>your group through TG Woman.

LOL......Um....why would I want you to? Just keep your spam up....just makes me use my xnews..instead of aol to read my ng.....then PLUNK....goodbye!

Marti Abernathy
to

Jun 5, 2002, 10:50:13 AM

Are you refering to TSR LIve? With guests such as Monica Helms, Dawn Wilson, Dana Rivers, Nancy and Gordene from Gendertalk??? If you are then YES IN NO WAY >>>NO WAY<<<< are we affiliated with or sponsored by TG Woman.

Glad we could clear that up.

Marti

Marti Abernathy
to

Jun 5, 2002, 11:04:43 AM

>In that case, Mr. Marti,

LOL....you have such class. Someone that runs a group.....someone resorts to using incorrect pronouns to insult...instead of addressing the points. No wonder I dont belong to that group.

ObedientFemme
to

Jun 5, 2002, 10:40:14 PM

>>In that case, Mr. Marti, there's no need for you to request that I advertise
>>your group through TG Woman.
>
>LOL......Um....why would I want you to? Just keep your spam up....just makes
>me
>use my xnews..instead of aol to read my ng.....then PLUNK....goodbye!

Apparently, your owner has a somewhat different point of view:

From: rebecc...@softhome.net
To: Obedie...@aol.com
Sent from the Internet (Details)

Roberta,

Honestly, I thought you were being a little unfair, especially when you attacked both Marti and I for promoting TSR on your list...you accused us both of spamming, and yet, I've seen the number of times you post on the newsgroups promoting your list...some would certainly call that spamming as well...

The truth is that we are all engaged in the same endeavor here...trying to promote the stuff we do to our community, because we think it's useful and important. Personally, I think we should be looking for ways to help each other accomplish that...it's not our own egos or personal accomplishments that should be the primary focus here, but how we all can best serve our community. You'll soon see a short post from me on alt.transgendered as well...not meant as an attack, but to point out this inconsistency. I don't often post to the newsgroups, but after reading the last exchange between you and Marti I felt compelled to throw my two cents in...

I'll resubscribe to your list and begin posting our promos...this week, we're having Anne Casebeer...thanks, and I hope we can work together in the future to help support our community...

Peace and Power,

Becky

ObedientFemme
to

Jun 5, 2002, 10:41:37 PM

Marti,

You were banned from TG Woman. You were banned earlier for precisely the kinds of antics you are pulling now.

Roberta Angela Dee
Founder of TG Woman

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tgwoman/

ObedientFemme
to

Jun 5, 2002, 10:43:25 PM

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tgwoman/

ObedientFemme
to

Jun 5, 2002, 10:43:55 PM

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tgwoman/

ObedientFemme
to

Jun 5, 2002, 10:43:38 PM

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tgwoman/

Marti Abernathy
to

Jun 5, 2002, 10:59:17 PM

Ya..for telling and spreading truth..and for telling it like it is. You sound green with envy....that you have to spam to get people to your site....but I dont.

People actually want to come and listen to the show...and its SPAM FREE

Marti Abernathy
to

Jun 5, 2002, 11:05:33 PM

>Apparently, your owner has a somewhat different point of view:

LOL....guess what? I am the "owner"..becky is my co-host. I dont need your list....People come and listen because we have great guests like Monica Helms, Gwen Smith, Dawn Wison, and Dana Rivers, with guests coming up like Jamison Green and Anne Casebeer. I dont have to spam lists to get people to listen. Its the difference between us.

Becky Juro
to

Jun 6, 2002, 1:58:40 AM

I did have a different point of view..until you demonstrated that nothing had really changed...and if you want to get into reprinting private emails we could always include this one, even tho you apparently had no idea who you were lauding at the time:

At 04:52 PM 6/4/02 +0000, you wrote:
From: "dianic007_2000" <obedie...@aol.com>
Date: Sun Jun 2, 2002 10:59 pm
Subject: Re: Dawn's Trans-Sister Radio Interview

Hi Monica,

The interview with Dawn Wilson was very insightful and informative. I was very impressed with both the content and the audio quality.

As a teenage, I listened to WBLI-FM radio out of New York, because it was the only radio station that provided interviews with gays, political activists, folk singers, and members of the transgendered and transsexual communities. At the time, they were considered an "underground" radio station because they played because by such unknown artists as Jimi Hendrix, The Doors, Dr. John, and Arlo Guthrie.

I've neither seen, nor heard anything like WBLI, since I moved from New York, to Augusta, Georgia, some 15 years ago. So, it was really very exciting for me to listen to the interview with Dawm Wilson.

I should add that Ms. Wilson is quite articulate and enjoyable to hear. For a very brief time, I was even able to forget that she's a Republican. I'm only teasing, of course.

Seriously, it is well worth the investment in time.

Thank you for sharing. And, I look forward to your interviews with FTMs as well.

With Love,

Roberta Angela Dee

Obvoiusly, you know how good we are...too late to take it back now....

Becky

obedie...@aol.com (ObedientFemme) wrote in message news:<20020605224014...@mb-cp.aol.com>...