



# Metamorphosis

Vol.1, No.2

"The Newsletter Exclusively For F-M Men"

APRIL 1982

## Sex-Changing Snail, Gender-Switching Fish

You have probably read about the "transvestite fly" ("Sexual Selection and Nuptial Feeding Behavior in *Bittacus apicalis* (insecta: mecoptera)" Randy Thornhill, Amer. Nat., 110:529-548, 1976) but I'll warrant most of you have not heard about the marine snail nor the Caribbean coral-reef fish (bluehead wrasse and cleaner wrasse) that change gender. And, get this--both the snail and the fish switch sex from female to male!

The following research report is taken from Fred Hapgood's intriguing, provocative, sociobiological work, WHY MALES EXIST: An Inquiry Into The Evolution Of Sex (New York and Scarborough: New American Library, 1979, especially, chapter 8: "The Prisoner Of Gender--An Unresolved Mystery").

Hapgood reports that, in one experiment, when the young of a certain marine snail (*Crepidula*) were put in an aquarium with females of their species, 90% of these young became males. The longer the association with females was maintained, the more time the snails spent as males. The significant physiological stimulus was the tactile sensation each young snail received on his penis. When his penis stopped being stimulated, he then switched over and became a female. (R.D. Purchon, THE BIOLOGY OF THE MOLLUSCA, Pergamon Press, 1968).

When bluehead wrasse females get large, some of them switch sex to male --because the large males mate far more frequently than either the small males or small females--and try to establish their own spawning territory along the outer rim of the coral-reef.

The larger female of a related species, the cleaner wrasse (*Labroides dimidiatus*)--which cleans parasites from the jaws and gills of other fish--lives in the center of the territory with the other females scattered around her in subservient positions. If there are two equally...  
(cont'd on p.8)

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks to Dr. John Money for submitting the reprint: "GENDER IDENTITY ROLE: Normal Differentiation And Its Transpositions", John Money & Claus Wiedeking, HANDBOOK OF HUMAN SEXUALITY, B.B. Wolman & J. Money, eds., Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980.

And, to Dr. Leo Wollman for sending the reprints: "CROSS-GENDER IDENTITY (Transsexualism)", Leo Wollman, M.D., Journal of the American Society of Psychosomatic Dentistry and Medicine, Vol.15,

No.3, July 1968; "SURGERY FOR THE TRANSSEXUAL", Leo Wollman, Journal of Sex Research, Vol.3, No.2, May 1967; "TRANSSEXUALISM: Gynecological Aspects", Leo Wollman, Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences, Series II, Vol.29, No.4, P.463, February 1967.

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## Letters To The Editor

*Metamorphosis--you have done a fine job indeed! I feel you too are a very creative person! In re-reading #1 of Metamorphosis I must say it looks good! I like your "Gender Code"--I agree.*

*I give praise to the Editor for his humanism and determination to help make the struggles we face more understandable to all caring individuals and as well, the providing of knowledgeable information and peer-support to the F-M TS. I see Metamorphosis as a worthy newsletter in the cause of transsexuality which will succeed with the efforts and support of all concerned.*

*--Katherine Johnson*

Please find enclosed payment for the five remaining issues. While I appreciate your efforts toward developing a newsletter exclusively for F-M men, I do have some less positive comments re: this issue.

Re: "F-M TS DEFINED"

In this article you present as facts what are far from being established as such. Eg., you speak of the F-M TS assuming a masculine "core gender identity" at an early age. This is only one developmental hypothesis. Indeed there is controversy over what exactly "core gender identity" is and even whether it exists (cf. Morgan, 1978 with Fleming, Jenkins & Bugarin, 1980). Certainly the assumption of a masculine "core gender identity" has not been accepted as the etiological basis of (female) transsexualism. Eber (1980) and Person & Ovesey (1974) have presented interesting and viable alternative hypotheses.

You also appear to equate gender dysphoria syndrome and transsexualism when you write "suffering from 'gender dysphoria syndrome' (transsexualism)". At present, classical

transsexualism is most often construed as a sub-category under the umbrella term "gender dysphoria syndrome" (MacKenzie, 1978, Meyer, 1974).

In my opinion, if you are going to publish "factual" articles in your newsletter, it is your responsibility to ensure that your information is indeed factual. Scientific study of transsexualism is growing fast and is becoming increasingly complex. You do your readers a disservice and detract from your credibility when you publish simplistic or otherwise inaccurate articles.

Re: "F-M MEN AND LESBIANS"

In this article you state "the F-M man always acts the male aggressor in sexual relations with his female partner." Does he? Particularly, does he always? I sincerely doubt you can substantiate this statement. Actually, I would be concerned if you could. Flexibility, both sexually and in other spheres of activity provides people with the opportunity for more satisfying experiences. I would be saddened to think F-M men are perpetually being the sexual aggressor, while many other men are able to explore and potentially enjoy being passive sexually. Not only is your statement most likely inaccurate, but by rather presumptuously defining the experiences of other F-M men, you run the risk of alienating those for whom and to whom you profess to speak.

I am also concerned by what I perceive to be the general flavour of your publication. You request "success stories" for publication in order to demonstrate that F-M men are "for the most part, highly intelligent/well-educated, emotionally stable, financially successful, socially accepted, self-fulfilled..." You say you want to "improve the largely negative image of TSs that the public and many professionals have..." Yet you ask F-M men to speak out and tell it "how it real-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (cont'd)

ly is". It seems to me the message you are giving here is "tell it like it really is, as long as it really is positive". Is the purpose of your newsletter to convince your readers F-M men are super-beings and that life post-sex-reassignment is a life of untold joy?

I certainly agree with you there is a need for a broad and accurate picture of the pre- and post-surgical F-M TS. Unfortunately, I do not see this issue of your newsletter as being oriented toward providing such a picture. Why not be open to less successful life-stories too? Why not ask people to write in with their problems? How are individual F-M men coping with the trials and tribulations of being different from other men? Are you willing for your newsletter to be a forum for F-M men to share their pain or depression or suicide attempts?

I am sure you are not so naive as to think life post-surgically is a bowl of roses for F-M men. Why then do you persist in writing as though it is?

I am irritated by the element of overkill in your perpetual emphasis of MEN. I must admit I end up thinking "HE doth protest too much". When you progress from overkill to "We should be gallant gentlemen" and "We will act like SUPER-MEN", you move from being irritating to being oppressive.

I realize I have been rather critical of this first issue of Metamorphosis. I would like to assure you my comments are intended to be constructive and reflect my genuine interest in and concern for the newsletter. The effort you are making is laudable and you have my sincere best wishes for success in your endeavours.

--Jeremy [REDACTED]

*Thank you for Metamorphosis Newsletter-premier issue. This publication truly serves a need for transsexuals everywhere, more particularly, for the female-to-male TS. I do like your logo. It borrows the essence of yin and yang of Chinese holistic medicine. The completeness of the body is embellished by the epicene biologic symbols of female and male. Androgyny is personified!*

--Leo Wollman, M.D.

Thank you for the newsletter. You seem to have worked hard and long to get where you are today and my credit is due to you for I admire anyone that tries and is successful. I myself have been transsexual since 5 years of age, have cross-dressed the last 5 years and have gone to Chef school for 1 year and would like to continue in order to finish my degree. I also worked as a male for 5 years and find the only problem is in the men's room, hoping no one notices the difference. My age is 43, still going strong and wish there were more female to males with whom I can associate.

Sir, I would like to correspond with you and am enclosing a photo of myself and hope maybe in the near future we may meet.

--David [REDACTED]

*Please find enclosed \$12 for an annual subscription to Metamorphosis. I must commend you on the notable effort you are making on behalf of FTSs. There is, at present, a great need for such a publication as yours, especially so since several other TS newsletters have ceased to publish. Similarly, there is a need for coverage of the Canadian scene re FTSism. I am submitting an article on phalloplasty for your publication.*

--Nicholas C. Ghosh

*(Please share YOUR thoughts, feelings, questions, problems, opinions, ideas, comments, suggestions and experiences with our readers.--Ed.)*



## What Is A Man?

Someone asked me this \$64 question 10 years ago at an annual seminar for transsexuals and professionals. But, as I was about to reply, the chairman interrupted to announce a coffee break because she laboured under the mistaken impression that this query would prove to be an all-time "stumper" which, she felt, I could not effectively answer.

Well, I've waited a decade to tell you now what I should have told them then.

Then, I would have said that a Man is someone who *feels* as a man (in his head and heart, in his gut and very soul), who *talks* (clearly--loud enough to be heard) and *walks* (with a firm stride but without a swagger) like a man, who projects a penetrating aura of male-ness or masculinity, who *dresses* in distinctly male attire, who looks you straight in the eye (not defiantly but confidently), who holds his head up high (not conceitedly but proudly) and who fearlessly speaks his own mind and steadfastly "sticks to his guns" (stands by his convictions).

In short, I would have defined a Man as a strong and courageous, confident and charismatic, dominant and aggressive, *masculine* person--who would be, needless to say, romantically and sexually attracted to the "fairer sex", yet, always acting as a "perfect gentleman".

Now, I would still include all of the above in my definition--with the exception of the heterosexual requirement (even though I consider myself such) inasmuch as *sexual orientation* (ie. sex-partner preference) has little or nothing to do with *gender identity* (ie. one's intuitive sense of being male--or female--to the innermost core of one's being).

In spite of the fact that I am not

altogether displeased with my original definition of Man-liness, I have since found it to be limited, and have arrived at the following additions and revisions--which are a direct result of my increasingly expanding Consciousness ("worldly wisdom" and "cosmic consciousness").

The *real* (true, genuine, bona fide, human(e), manly, super) MAN characterizes these qualities: *integrity* (versus hypocrisy), *respect* (including *humility*, *compassion*, *empathy*), *love* (of self, others, nature, universe, life itself), *independence* but willing to compromise if reasonable and necessary), *reason* (rational intelligence/logical analysis) and *intuition* (in optimum alternation/complementarily), *individuality* (of thought, speech, action) and *universality* (in mind, heart, soul), *natural charisma* (versus a phoniness, plasticness, playing a role, trying to be other than oneself), *courage* and *confidence* (to be and to become), and finally, *self- and cosmic consciousness* (personal and universal awareness). The most important of the above virtues are, of course, those of *integrity* (true to oneself, honest and upright with others) and *Consciousness* (awareness, knowledge, perception, wisdom re oneself and others, the universe and life).

Remember the popular nursery rhyme: "little girls are made of sugar 'n spice and all things nice while little boys are made of spiders 'n snails and puppydogs' tails"? Well, this may be true in some cases but let us hope that by the time the boy has become a man, his essential ingredients will have largely improved to that of truly a MAN!

"For what is a man and what has he got? If not himself (ie. integrity, Selfhood) than he has not....and through it all, I stood tall, and did it my way!" (Excerpted from: "MY WAY", composed by Paul Anka, sung by Frank Sinatra/Elvis Presley).

--Rupert Raj

WHAT TYPE OF MAN ARE YOU?

CAVEMAN



(Neanderthal, hoser, macho, chauvinist, obnoxious boor, bigot, cock-sure stud, self-centered, egotistic, loud mouth, domineering, Know-it-all)

INVISIBLE MAN



(indifferent, non-committal, ambivalent, wishy-washy, lethargic, apathetic, drifter, blind follower, superficial, mind-less, silent, inconspicuous, shadow, ghost)

NEW MAN



(liberated, enlightened, conscious, wise, cosmic, caring, compassionate, humble, confident, integrity, respectful, initiative, leader)

KATHY

Recommended Reading

BE A MAN!: Males In Modern Society, Peter Stearns, Holmes & Meier, 1979

FOR MEN AGAINST SEXISM: A Book Of Readings, Lou Snodgrass, ed, Times Change Press, Order Dept., Albion, CA 95410 (\$6 plus 50¢ postage).

MEN AND MASCULINITY, Joseph Pleck & Jack Sawyer, eds., Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1974.

MEN IN DIFFICULT TIMES: Masculinity Today And Tomorrow, Robert Lewis, ed., Prentice-Hall, Inc, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1981 (\$10).

MEN'S LIBERATION: A New Definition Of Masculinity, Jack Nichols, Penquin Books, Inc., NYC, 1975 (\$3).

MEN WITHOUT MASKS: Writings From The Journals Of Modern Men, Michael Rubin, Addison-Wesley Publishing Co. Phillipines, 1980 (\$10).

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND MALE SEXUALITY, Hendrik Ruitenbeek, ed., College & University Press Services Inc., New Haven, Conn., 1966 (\$2.25)

THE AMERICAN MAN, Elizabeth Pleck & Joseph Pleck, Prentice-Hall, Inc, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1980 (\$10).

THE HAZARDS OF BEING MALE, Herb Goldberg, New American Library, New York City/Scarborough, 197-.

THE LIBERATED MAN: Beyond Masculinity--Freeing Men And Their Relationships With Women, Warren Farrell, Random House, Inc., NYC, NY, 1974.

THE NEW MALE: From Macho To Sensitive But Still All Male, Herb Goldberg, New American Library, New York City/Scarborough, 1979 (\$3).

UNBECOMING MEN: A Men's Consciousness Raising Group Writing On Oppression And Themselves, Times Change Press, Order Dept., Albion, CA 95410 (\$2.50 plus 50¢ postage).

## 'Little Girls Don't Do That!'

My name is Khalil [REDACTED] I am a pre-op f-m transsexual. I'm a Black writer, 23 years of age. I've known that I was a boy since the age of 6

My childhood was painful and confusing because many things that came natural to me, I was told, "little girls don't do that!" As I grew older, and having once had the chance to sneak peek at my brother's genitals as he went to the bathroom, I realized we were developed very differently in that department. I was terribly upset for I felt something was very wrong--that a colossal mistake had been made.

As time went by, and breasts began to bud, I became more and more miserable. I was 14 and I loved being a boy. I'd always admired the muscularity of my father's arms and legs as he played baseball with us in the summer, and I was proud to be his son and to be like him--except I felt very cheated, for he didn't think of me as his son at all. I couldn't play football, or help build the treehouse, or talk about the girls I liked with him, because to him, I was his little girl, and "little girls don't do that!" I hated him and loved him furiously at that time.

When I was about 17, things became even more painful. I was always athletically inclined; I loved sports and began lifting weights. I was attracted to pretty, delightful young ladies, but since they all knew me as 'Cleo [REDACTED]', a girl they went to school with, I could approach none of them. But, having grown up in Washington, D.C., all wasn't really lost. When I got out of school, I left home, moving to a different section of the city where I could dress as I liked and be as I liked. I always wanted to be a male model, as well as a writer--of course I was much too short (5'5") but nevertheless, I focussed much attention on dressing the part. I became an ardent TV and I loved

it. I also met many women who found me attractive...all is well, right? WRONG! I still felt incomplete, as a eunuch, and the sight of my size 36 breasts disgusted me! Although I did manage to camoflauge them sufficiently to dress masculine, I still knew they were there, and hated them!

I started going to college--a journalist student and I enjoy it enormously. I did everything possible to bring me closer to maleness. I even got sexually involved with a young man who is gay--man to man. I felt that by indulging sexually with him, I would feel more masculine than ever. I was right...for he is a very 'manly' man...not girlish at all, and I enjoyed the aura of maleness he lived in. He helped me to develop my masculine 'etiquette' and the two of us are still very good friends.

Then, something really beautiful happened to me. I met a woman who came to be my other half--my heart. She is beautiful in all ways possible and best of all, she loves me whole-souled, despite my plight of transsexuality.

With the help of God, my friends, my Lady and myself, I believe that one day, I will really be complete. I simply pray for the strength to be patient....

### FROM WITHIN

*A man,  
borne of a woman's self--  
and even more than that...  
A man from within,  
reaching, striving desperately  
to surpass a physical misconception  
A situation...from within...  
where strength is the issue,  
(a strength that is intense)  
For a man MUST be strong enough  
to be what only HE  
knows he is...  
And the strength (like the man)  
must come from within...*

--Khalil [REDACTED]



## Penis Construction: Yes Or No?

One of the greatest concerns of the FTS man is the attainment of as realistic-looking and normally-functioning a penis as possible. Yet, in the face of still far-from-perfect phalloplasty\* this legitimate desire for the male organ should be prefaced by realistic expectations rather than naive fantasy wishes for miracles of surgery.

I simply mean here that an FTS fellow contemplating--as a foregone conclusion--the fact of possessing a functioning phallus (as I once did until I became bitterly disillusioned but am now realistically resigned to an alternative fate) should seriously consider the viable alternative of a penile prosthesis (like the artificial phallus designed and engineered by Werner Schulz in 1972 at the Stanford University School of Medicine) until such time as phallic operations are greatly improved re: medical soundness and minimized risk of complications requiring surgical repair, natural cosmetic appearance, effective urinary and erectile functions and reduced cost.

Dr. John Money, Director of the Johns Hopkins' Psychohormonal Research Unit, advises that, "For many years there has been no plastic surgeon at Johns Hopkins committed to phalloplasty. I am strongly in favor of a penile prosthesis as superior to surgery." (July 1978).

I, personally, share this opinion, but then, we are faced with a somewhat mind-bending vicious circle: somebody has to undergo penile constructions if plastic surgeons are ever to gain the practice and improved technical skills necessary to the development of sounder techniques and superior results. I can suggest no satisfactory solution to this ironic situation except to point out that masochism (great pain, extensive time consumption, frequent re-hospitalization for surgical repair, exorbitant expense)

should not be confused with envisioned martyrdom (to the cause of scientific/medical advancement, the betterment of Society or the wishes of relatives, lovers and friends).

I can do no better than to close this somewhat disillusioning and disconcerting dissertation with a quote by my distinguished friend, Mario Martino, Director of The Labyrinth Foundation Counseling/Gender Services, "Think carefully before you act! As in all surgeries, you are cautioned to recognize the possibilities of complications before making a decision." (April 1978).

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\*"The surgery is imperfect. Cosmetic appearance is pretty good but it does not act as a conduit for urine and there is no feeling in it at all. It can be used for sex by intermittently placing a stiffener in the tunnel...." (Donald Laub, M.D., Stanford Medical Center, Aug 1972).

"...there is a relatively high risk of complication with the surgery and the phallus is largely without sensibility...." (Marti Schultz, Co-ordinator, Gender Dysphoria Program, Stanford Medical Center, Feb. 1978).

"As this surgery is still in an experimental phase, I would honestly rate the ppearance as only fair.... There may be infection, shrinkage or loss of tissue, necrosis of all or part of the reconstruction, rejection of testicular implants, opening of suture lines, etc. No guarantee can be made about the final size, shape or function of the constructed phallus....We have performed 10 successful phallus constructions but have seen numerous complications and...discourage patients from phallus construction... and advise them to wait until better techniques are devised and standardized." (David Wesser, M.D., plastic surgeon, NYC, Jan. 1978).

(by Nicholas Ghosh, GENDER REVIEW--The FACTual Journal, No.3, Dec 1978, P.13, Used by permission).

SEX-CHANGING SNAIL (cont'd from p.1)

large "top" females, then the territory may be divided between them. The male feeds and interacts aggressively with the females. He is more aggressive toward those females most likely to change sex and to threaten his position--ie. larger females, especially the dominant one. A special aggressive display is used specifically by males against the larger females. When the male dies there is a rush to take over his territory between neighboring males and the largest resident female who tries to change sex and become a male herself. If there are two dominant females, they may each change into males and divide the territory and the "harem" of other females between themselves. (D.R. Robertson, "Social Control of Sex Reversal In A Coral-Reef Fish" Science, 177:1007-1009, 1972; Robert Warner, D.R. Robertson & Egbert Leigh, "Sex Change And Sexual Selection", Science, 190:633-638, 1975).

Hapgood also mentions two species of coral fish--also called "clown fish" (*A. Alkallopisos*; *Amphiprion bicinctus*) in which males contend with each other for the advantage of being female. (Hans & Simone Fricke, "Monogamy And Sex Change By Aggressive Dominance In Coral Reef Fish", Nature, 266:830-832, 1977).

He also mentions that when several species of worm are starved they become male; when fed, they switch back to being female. In addition, there are a great many invertebrates--sponges, parasites, mollusks--that have this ability to assess the social situation and choose their gender accordingly. So, transsexualism does exist in species other than that of *homo sapiens*!

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