AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT

OF

TRANSVESTISM

OR

FEMMIPHILIA
(cross dressing)

"When you make the two one...and when you make the masculine and the feminine into a single one...then you enter the kingdom."
A "saying of Jesus"
From the "Gospel According to Thomas"

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Masculinity and femininity are generally considered as being biologically determined, inseparable from sex and therefore unchangeable. This is not so! Sex and Gender are not the same thing. Sex is a matter of anatomy and physiology and is determined by various biological factors. Gender on the other hand, is a matter of psychology and sociology. It is a social invention and gender roles are learned responses, culturally determined and largely artificial. The requirements for each role vary from culture to culture and from one era to another. Thus we LEARN to be masculine or feminine because our anatomical sex at birth dictates what role we should be trained in. However, in cases of mistaken sexual identity, children have been reared in the gender opposite to their true sex and have learned to live the role adequately. This proves that we all have the capacity to be trained either way.

In view of this it should be obvious that in each of us there are potentials, traits, interests and characteristics which could, if the situation were appropriate, be developed along the gender lines of the opposite sex. This being the case it should be no surprise to realize that in some persons these potentials are stronger and nearer the surface of the personality than in others and that they seek expression.

One of the principle manifestations of gender in Western Civilization is clothing. It is natural therefore, that those men who have a rather larger quota of traits and interests which, in our culture, are considered feminine, will, in many cases, find it satisfying to express this phase of their personality in the attire which is appropriate to the feminine gender role. Thus the phenomenon of transvestism comes into existence.

It is the purpose of this leaflet to shed some light on this subject for the benefit of any who are interested, but primarily for doctors, lawyers, jurists, police, councilors, ministers etc. so that they may become familiar with the subject and better able to deal with it when it comes to their attention and particularly to help them distinguish it from homosexuality.
however, and relates it to and identifies it with homosexuality, thus condemning it and forcing femmiphiles “underground” so to speak.

The desire of certain males to wear the pretty and delicate clothing of the female is not an isolated problem of our culture or period. It has been known from antiquity right up to the present day with adherents in every culture and in every walk of life. In many primitive societies the male who chooses to abandon the masculine role and live out his life in the feminine mode is regarded with special favor as a person of wisdom and unusual ability. In Japan, the famous Kabuki players, who take female roles, train for them from an early age and frequently live as women to maintain their “feeling” for their roles. The Japanese think nothing of this.

In Western cultures, on the other hand, society operates on the following false logical propositions. (1) All homosexuals are effeminate (in fact only a part of them are): (2) Homosexuality is immoral and bad, and therefore, (3) ANY male who is interested in things feminine is probably a homosexual, immoral and bad. Since both the basic premise and the conclusions are false, great harm has been done to many people by this kind of thinking.

Actually there are at least five different ways in which transvestites (femmiphiles) differ from homosexuals:

(1) Transvestism is an individual personality expression while homosexual activity requires two people. Homosexuals, therefore, have to reveal themselves to get a partner, while transvestites do not, so they keep their activities secret.

(2) Practically no femmophile would advise, induce, or influence another to become a transvestite — he knows the cost too well and has suffered too much to wish it on another. Most homosexuals, however, have no hesitation about indoctrinating and initiating others into the practice.

(3) A homosexual individual is what he is all the time, day and night — his personality is constantly what it is. A transvestite alternates personalities — he is masculine as a man and performs as such, but he is feminine as his “other self” and in large measure forgets his life as a man.

(4) Many, though by no means all, homosexuals have a somewhat effeminate manner of behaviour (even in the masculine role) and this is necessary to them, since they are, in effect, taking the feminine role all the way. The transvestite, on the other hand, shows no effeminacy in his male role. He doesn’t need to or want to. He is in fact two personalities.

(5) There is also the matter of motive to consider. The femmophile adopts feminine garb as a matter of personal internal expression — the homosexual “Queen” does so for external effect — to attract males for sexual purposes and to ease the guilt of both.

These five factors are far more important as differences to distinguish between these two forms of behaviour than is the single similarity between them, namely that some (but by no means all) homosexuals also favor feminine attire.

Of course it ought to be clear by virtue of the effort to distinguish the homosexual from the femmophile that the latter is a heterosexual person with a female as his love object. Although this is the primary distinction it is one which is not visible to the outside observer. Yet statistics show that there is a somewhat smaller incidence of homosexual experience among transvestites.
than the Kinsey report found among the population as a whole.

What are the causes of this urge? Various things are suggested. The motivations usually discussed in medical literature involve, (a) parents wanting a girl and bringing up a boy that way, (b) keeping a boy in dresses and curls to an unusually late age, (c) punishing a boy by making him wear girl's clothes, (d) not having an adequate father figure to emulate; or lastly (e) having a father who demanded so much masculinity of an intellectual, sensitive or artistic child that he took refuge in femininity where he felt more at ease.

However, since, on the one hand, neither all boys brought up with any of these experiences become femmiphiles, nor all transvestites show these experiences in their histories, there must be other and deeper reasons. There are several other factors that may be discussed briefly.

(A) The Need to Acquire Virtue and Experience Beauty; Modern man idealizes womankind and makes her the repository of all that is good, true, and desirable — girls are made of sugar, spice and everything nice the nursery rhyme says. Certain men feel the desire to think as well of themselves and to be thought of by others as they themselves think of women. This "goodness" and "virtue" is not expressible in masculine attire — it is out of place, but in feminine attire it is in order. In such clothing they can experience beauty and its satisfactions, and symbolically identify with their love object — a woman.

(B) The Need for Adornment and Personality Expression; The male of most species is prettier than the female. In past times this was true of the human species too, but our present culture severely limits the expression of this natural desire by men. Men's clothing is in general, dark, heavy, coarse and plain. It is almost a uniform in that there is little opportunity to vary from the crowd in color, cut or style. Thus some men find they can fulfill their natural desires by entering into the feminine world of color, fabric, decoration and design.

(C) Relief From the Requirements of Masculinity: All men are not psychologically or spiritually capable of or interested in being as aggressive, dominant, or forceful or of exhibiting other characteristics of the kind or to the degree that society says they should be as masculine as the ideal. Men are expected to do and be many things that they may not feel like doing or being. Many aspects of their personalities are enforced by the need to succeed, to get a promotion, make a sale, to impress superiors, etc. Many cannot truly relax and be just as they really want to be inside. Occasional abandonment of the masculine for the feminine allows the femmophile a relaxation from these demands since the feminine role is ideally a passive, accepting, non-demanding one. There is no relaxation comparable to becoming another person, particularly of the opposite gender. Golf, bowling, hunting, bridge, etc., all of which men pursue in the name of relaxation don't hold a candle to the complete escape from one's daily self to another that is greatly different. It isn't that the transvestite's true and complete self is totally feminine but that he cannot express all of his true self in masculine attire due to the social requirements and limitations placed on men and the feminine attire provides an outlet for the other part.

(D) Relief From Social Expectancy: All of us develop into certain kinds of persons displaying certain characteristics. We are thought of by others in these terms. Thus we are always having to "live up" to our own developed image. This too palls on us once in a while and we would like to "be" another person with a different set of expectations. Most people cannot get away from themselves — the femmophile, as his feminine self, can.

These four factors are present to some degree in all men though they may not be demonstrated. Usually those who discover these things do so in adolescence but sometimes it is not until adulthood upon occasion of some
burlesque, mock wedding or similar entertainment that he first arrays himself in feminine things. Then, if he is the sensitive type and these drives are near the surface of his personality, he will experience them for the first time and will know the satisfactions involved. From this point on he will wish to repeat the experience and enjoy the satisfactions — he will be a transvestite — but he will guard this secret carefully for he will also know guilt and fear.

What has medicine to say about this phenomenon? Perhaps three quotations will suffice to illustrate the current state of medical opinion.

Dr. Alfred Eyres (Dis. Nerv. Syst. 21, 52 Jan. '60) says, "Effective therapy, formidable and difficult in any of the personality disorders, is, in this particular entity (transvestism) practically impossible. Any therapeutic approach relieving symptoms, tensions, and discomfort and promoting better adjustment certainly is in order." Clearly, understanding is the bedrock upon which adjustment can be built, understanding by the individual and by those near him.

Drs. Bowman and Engle (Amer. Jour. Psych. 113, 581 '57) said, "It is generally agreed that all types of psychotherapy are a failure (as a cure for transvestism). So far there are no reported successfully treated cases."

Drs. Walker and Fletcher, in the book "SEX AND SOCIETY" (Pelican Books) state: "When doctors are able to do as little for patients as we doctors are able to do for these cases of transvestism, it would be better for us perhaps to make efforts in another direction. Instead of treating the patients themselves, we might treat with more profit the society which makes it so difficult for these unfortunate people to live in." With this in mind, let us look at society's attitude.

It is commonly recognized that no man is 100% masculine and no woman 100% feminine. Since this is the case, every man has feminine qualities that seek expression and every female has masculine aggressiveness, domination, etc. in various activities and allows her to dress to fit the part. Thus we have women soldiers and women policemen, bus drivers, riveters, motorcycle delivery girls, etc. In all cases they wear clothing that is distinctly masculine but is suitable and proper both to their own inner demands and the requirements of the job.

But the male who seeks to express his feminine qualities such as gentleness, nonaggressiveness, compassion, an interest in color, design and beauty, or artistic or domestic talents, is frowned upon and made sport of. He comes to feel out of place in attempting to express this side of his personality while in pants. Thus, just as the woman bus driver is more in harmony with her own desires and the needs of her job when she wears mannish attire, so the male seeking personality expression and freedom for the feminine aspect of his being, is more in harmony in a dress, makeup and high heels, etc. than when he is in pants. So he adopts feminine apparel, makeup and decoration to enable his feminine side to "live." In this costume those feelings and patterns which are inappropriate in a masculine person become appropriate and can be expressed. The male should be entitled to emancipation and freedom of expression just as much as the female.

It is important to point out that just as the woman bus driver may still be a good wife and mother when off the job and back in her feminine clothes, so the femmiphile does not sacrifice or imperil his masculinity by his transvestic activities. He is still an adequate male, father, and husband. Wives and parents who can come to understand this fact would discover that the person involved was really a much broader, better and more understanding human being precisely because of his "double gender" than he might otherwise be.

The average male in our culture is very much on the defensive about any manifestation or accusation of femininity. Yet it is there in some degree in all men.
Those men who become aware of it, and learn to accept
without guilt, the gentler side of their nature, whether
through transvestism or other means are generally better
integrated, more secure, and more complete human be-
ings for having done so. They are no longer at war with
a part of themselves nor unduly sensitive about other
people’s views of the matter.

What are femmiphiles like, and how could you tell
one? The answer is that you couldn’t! Transvestites do
not come out and admit their interests. Due to fear of
ridicule and false accusations of homosexuality, they keep
it a secret. You wouldn’t know a transvestite if you saw
him because on the average he is married, usually a
father, and is well integrated into society. He is effective
and adequate in his business relationships and to all
intents and purposes is a “regular guy.” But many a
home has been broken and many a child-parent relation-
ship has been badly strained by discovery or revelation
of the fact of transvestism in husband, son, brother,
father or friend. When people have insufficient know-
ledge they can not know and understand. When they
do not understand they are afraid and insecure, and
when they are afraid they are cruel. Such is life. It
is because understanding can reverse this chain that this
has been written.

Please understand that it is not intended as advocating
transvestism — but since society has been very repressive
due to a lack of understanding of its true nature and
confusing it with other behaviour patterns, many persons
have suffered greatly. It is to be hoped that this discus-
sion will broaden the scope of knowledge and under-
standing among those who read it and increase their
awareness of the complexities of the human animal
who, like an iceberg, often has much more substance
beneath than above the surface. Awareness of this should
make all of us more tolerant and understanding of our
fellows.

Self acceptance and understanding of himself are problems for the
transvestite himself. To know that he is not alone in his feelings
is usually a great relief. To help him and his friends and relatives
in their search for understanding, there is a publication devoted ex-
clusively to this pattern of behavior has been published for the past
nine years. It is called

TRANSVESTIA
MAGAZINE

Its purposes are:

To provide ENTERTAINMENT and a sense of belonging
to the transvestite himself---

To provide EXPRESSION for those interested in the
field whereby they can make themselves and their
feelings and experiences known to others---

To provide INFORMATION not only to the transvestite
but to others who, through ignorance, condemn that
which they do not understand---

To provide EDUCATION for those who see evil where
none exists.

For further information about TRANSVESTIA and other
publications on transvestism write to:

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