

## Questioning Current Definitions of Gender Identity: Implications of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory for Transsexuals<sup>1</sup>

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*To examine the relationship between sex role and gender identity, the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) was given to 72 self-defined transsexuals [55 male-to-female (M-F), 17 female-to-male (F-M)]. The F-Ms scored primarily masculine sex typed (six) or androgynous (six). The modal M-F scored feminine sex typed (33). The distribution of F-Ms across the four BSRI categories did not differ significantly from Bem's normative college student male distribution [ $\chi^2(3) = 2.30, p > 0.50$ ] but was marginally different from that of Bem's females [ $\chi^2(3) = 6.45, p < 0.10$ ]. The distribution of M-Fs was significantly different from that of both college females [ $\chi^2(3) = 19.71, p < 0.001$ ] and males [ $\chi^2(3) = 88.72, p < 0.0001$ ], because of the very high proportion of feminine sex-typed M-Fs. Psychometric data on the BSRI are presented. The score patterns of the transsexuals are compared to those from the clinical literature, and implications of the data for the relationship between gender identity and sex role are discussed.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Gender identity, the core sense of oneself as a male or female, has frequently been assumed to be almost synonymous with masculinity and

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femininity as reflected in personality traits and behavioral choices culturally stereotyped as more characteristic of men or of women. Transsexuals are individuals who do not define their femaleness or maleness in terms of their bioanatomical characteristics at birth. It has been argued that they therefore define their gender in terms of a felt or desired behavioral sex role (Raymond, 1977; Kando, 1970). The purpose of this study was to test this theoretical position against empirical data from two transsexual samples.

In recent years Bem (1976) has developed theoretical arguments and presented empirical research supporting the redefinition of traditional conceptions and measurements of masculinity and femininity. In brief, Bem considers femininity and masculinity to be two logically independent dimensions, each with distinctive correlates which have been obscured by the traditional opposition of the two on one bipolar continuum. This forced inverse relationship has made it impossible to consider hypotheses about androgyny, the possession of both masculine and feminine personality characteristics, in relation to sex typing, and the inhibition of behaviors associated with the nontyped sex role (Bem, 1974; Spence *et al.*, 1974). In order to consider such hypotheses, Bem has developed the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI), which contains separate and empirically independent scales for the domains of masculinity and femininity, and which yields a measure of psychological androgyny. Subsequent research (summarized in Bem, 1976) has shown that sex typing in either a feminine or a masculine direction is associated with deficits in cross-sex-typed behavior in both males and females. Androgynous individuals show no such deficits, displaying significantly greater situational flexibility in their behavioral choices. Bem (1976) argues from these data that culturally imposed sex-role definitions act as a "restricting prison" for human personality and should be abolished: "*behavior* should have no gender."

Bem (1976) strongly implies, however, that even with the dissolution of artificial sex-role distinctions, gender identity as a dichotomous category based on and consonant with bioanatomical features must remain as a component of psychological health. Furthermore, she argues that elimination of sex role as a constraint defining behavior by its "appropriateness" for gender should make femaleness and maleness "so self-evident and non-problematic that it rarely ever occurs to us to . . . wish that it were otherwise" (Bem, 1976, p. 17).

Sophocles' *Tiresias*, Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, and Gore Vidal's *Myra Breckinridge* have explored the idea of gender transformation in the context of literary fantasy. Such fantasy has given way to reality as advances in biomedical technology have allowed transsexuals to acquire opposite-sex primary and secondary sexual characteristics. The prominence of transsexuals in the national media has stimulated a new awareness of gender identity as potentially a matter of self-definition. Clinical reports (Dewhurst

and Gordon, 1969) indicate that this choice is only rarely influenced by intersexual disorders (e.g., hermaphroditism, Klinefelter's syndrome, and the chromosomal mosaic patterns). If the basis for such a choice is usually not biogenetic, then psychosocial influences must be considered. A frequently cited hypothesis has implicated role strain, the inability or unwillingness to meet sex-role expectations (Raymond, 1977; Kando, 1970). We will present data demonstrating that the transsexual choice is not rigidly related to sex-role preference.

Several issues can be investigated by applying the BSRI to a transsexual sample. Our long-range goal, beyond the scope of this article, is to clarify the operational definitions of femininity, masculinity, and androgyny produced by the BSRI by studying their correlates in a population which has defined itself by its involvement in gender, as distinct from sex-role, issues (i.e., that population which is unique by virtue of its separation of bioanatomical gender of birth and felt or desired gender). The present report has four more modest purposes. First, since the BSRI has been developed and tested on college student populations, some of its psychometric properties are examined here outside of that demographic range. Second, the BSRI score patterns of female-to-male and male-to-female transsexual groups are described to gain information about their modal sex-role self concepts. This is conceptually interesting, although not a determining factor in treating gender dysphoria. Third, the comparison of transsexual BSRI scores to those of Bem's female and male normative samples will tell us whether the BSRI differentiates between transsexual groups and college student groups. Last, we discuss the descriptive utility of the BSRI for transsexuals by comparing the score patterns of our two groups with clinical impressions from both the literature on transsexuals and the observations of the Gender Identity Service of Boston, from which the present samples are drawn.

The picture of the male-to-female (M-F) transsexual conveyed by the clinical literature is that of a pervasive and exaggerated femininity. M-Fs reportedly reject most aspects of the masculine role, including stereotypically masculine behaviors and expressive mannerisms. Their femininity is described as highly stylized in character, and they are considered somewhat more rigid in their adherence to stereotypically feminine role definitions and boundaries than are the female-to-males (F-Ms) to stereotypic masculinity; M-Fs score above the female average on femininity tests (Finney *et al.*, 1975; Pauly, 1974). When pathology is present in the M-F, hysterical patterns are noted (Finney *et al.*, 1975; Stoller, 1968; Walinder, 1967). At the Gender Identity Service of Boston, we have observed that although the majority of our M-F clients resemble the above picture, there is a substantial minority who differ in their portrayed definition of feminine sex-role behavior (e.g., Feinbloom *et al.*, 1976).

In contrast to the M-Fs, the F-Ms have been reported to be generally better adjusted and to present fewer case management problems in therapy (Pauly, 1974). They score in the range for normal males on the MMPI and seem to adopt the masculine role more naturally than M-Fs adopt the feminine role (Pauly, 1974). F-M clients of the Gender Identity Service of Boston show less rigidity in both their sex-role self-definition and their general personal style. In particular, they are less rejecting of mannerisms and role behaviors stereotyped as feminine than are the M-Fs of comparable masculine mannerisms and behaviors.

We have seen a good deal of variability in our clients' sex-role definitions at the Gender Identity service of Boston; they are no more uniform in their life goals or motives for reassignment than one would expect from an otherwise random sample of the general population. We predicted, therefore, that BSRI scores would reflect a full range of sex-role patterns, with a roughly typical proportion of androgynous and cross-sex-typed individuals, although we anticipated that the modal transsexual would be sex-typed in the gender of reassignment. The latter prediction is derived from the assumption that at least a moderate proportion of transsexuals include sex-role elements in their decision to change gender (although not necessarily as determining factors) and that, either antecedent or consequent to that decision, they seek to reject the sex role as well as the gender assignment of the sex of birth and adopt a new sex role appropriate to the new gender assignment.

Regarding the relationships between the BSRI scores of our transsexual groups and those of college students, from previous clinical reports we should expect M-Fs to score more feminine sex typed than any of the other groups in question, while F-Ms' scores should resemble college males'. Since the BSRI has been shown to correlate only modestly with the CPI femininity scale and the Guilford-Zimmerman Temperament Survey (Bem, 1974), it is not certain that BSRI scores should follow the patterns of test scores noted above. The global weight of evidence, however, is certainly in that direction. We anticipated that M-Fs would be more rejecting of masculine items than the other groups, while F-Ms would be more inclined to endorse items in both domains.

## METHOD

### Subjects

The subjects were self-defined transsexuals who came to the Gender Identity Service of Boston (G.I.S.). There were a total of 72 subjects, 55

male-to female (M-F) and 17 female-to-male (F-M). The mean age for M-Fs was 31.4, with a range of 17-54 years; the mean age for F-Ms was 24, with a range of 19-28 years. The difference between the mean ages was significant [ $t(64) = -3.41, p < 0.002$ ].

The difference in mean years of education between the two samples approached significance [ $t(59) = -1.76, p < 0.09$ ]. The typical F-M was a high school graduate (12 years education), while the average M-F had 13.5 years of education. Half of the F-Ms (eight) and 44% of the M-Fs (21) were employed as semiprofessionals. In order of frequency the remainder of the M-Fs were unemployed (16 or 33%), nonprofessionals (three or 6%), students (three or 6%). In order of frequency the remainder of the F-Ms were either nonprofessionals (four or 25%), unemployed (two or 12.5%), students (two or 12.5%). Among students who cited a religious preference, both samples were approximately evenly split between Catholic and Protestant denominations (F-M five and three, respectively; M-F 17 and 18, respectively). There was one M-F who was Jewish while the remaining three subjects (one M-F and two F-M) checked "other" rather than one of the four major religions listed. Racially, six of the M-F were black and 44 white, while 16 of the 17 F-M were white.

### Setting

The G.I.S. is a nonprofit organization offering a full range of professional services to the transsexual population of New England. Since 1972 it has helped more than 200 people who define themselves as transsexuals receive the social, psychological, and medical help they needed as they moved toward self redefinition.

### Procedure

Each subject first met with an interviewer who took a detailed psychosocial history. The services offered by G.I.S. were then presented, with primary emphasis being put on counseling. Clients were asked to meet with three separate clinicians over a 3-week period for further evaluation, after which they would be referred for individual counseling.

It was made clear to the clients that they would be accepted into G.I.S. and that the three interviews that were to follow would be used only as a way of helping both counselor and client to clarify their aims. After interviews the clients typically begin a year of individual counseling. During this year they are receiving hormones and living in the desired gender role. If, after this year, both a client and the counselor agree that surgery is

desirable, then a surgical referral is made. With the possibility of being "rejected" by G.I.S. eliminated, the three independent interviews and testing battery take place in a less intimidating context.

The testing battery, administered during the third interview, consisted of the following, in order of presentation: Rorschach, Draw-A-Person, Animal Opposite Test, and the Bem Sex-Role Inventory. It was made clear that the results of the tests would be shared with clients by the counselor they would be seeing, although any pressing concerns could be dealt with at the end of the testing session.

Directions for self-rating on the BSRI were read by the client from the test protocol.

## RESULTS

### Analytic Procedures

Two kinds of statistical analyses were performed. First, following the sequence of development of Bem's scoring methods, a one-way analysis of variance was used to test for statistically significant differences between the samples' mean scores for each scale separately. The second form of analysis used Bem's more recent dual median split scoring (Bem, 1977), in which subjects are categorized as either above or below the sample median for each of the two scales and are then classified as androgynous (high on both), feminine or masculine sex typed (high on the named scale, low on the other), or undifferentiated (low on both). This analysis allowed comparison of the distribution of subjects across the four categories for each transsexual subgroup with the distributions of Bem's females and males. Since we are primarily interested in comparing our two samples, one rather small, with Bem's normative data rather than with each other, references to "median split" denote our data split by Bem's (1977) medians (4.76 for femininity, 4.89 for masculinity) rather than by the medians for our two disparate groups.

For noncategorical analyses the simple difference score between femininity and masculinity scales was used as the measure of androgyny, in order to avoid the statistical equivocation of the *t*-test method (Strahan, 1975; Bem, 1977). This analysis has the advantage of preserving the additional information contained in ordinal data which is discarded by the median split scoring method.

### Psychometric Properties of the BSRI

Our main psychometric concern is with the intercorrelations of the three BSRI subscales, since these may tend to reflect our subjects' residual

Table I. Correlations of Masculinity, Femininity, and Androgyny with Social Desirability

Sample		Masculinity with Social desirability	Femininity with social desirability	Androgyny with social desirability
Bem's normative data	Male	0.38	0.28	0.08
	Female	0.19	0.22	0.04
Transsexual	Male to female	0.27	0.57	0.11
	Female to male	0.41	0.60	0.00
	Male to female and female to male	0.23	0.57	-0.05

response to the demand characteristics of the clinic situation and the degree of their belief that the BSRI scores would influence the reassignment decision unduly despite assurances to the contrary. Table I displays BSRI scale intercorrelations, with those of Bem's (1974) normative data included for comparison. As Bem found, femininity and masculinity were both correlated with social desirability, while androgyny (difference score, femininity - masculinity) was independent of social desirability. It is interesting to note that, while the relationships among social desirability, masculinity, and androgyny are quite comparable to Bem's, femininity is significantly more highly correlated with social desirability for the M-Fs than for either nor-

Table II. Mean Scores for the BSRI Scales

Scale score	Sample	Mean	SD	Students's <i>t</i> with Bem's males	Student's <i>t</i> with Bem's females
Masculinity	Bem's males	4.97	0.67		
	Bem's females	4.57	0.69		
	Male to female	4.19	0.82	7.03 <sup>a</sup>	3.43 <sup>b</sup>
	Female to male	5.30	0.81	1.66	3.68 <sup>b</sup>
Femininity	Bem's males	4.44	0.69		
	Bem's females	5.01	0.52		
	Male to female	5.14	0.57	9.14 <sup>a</sup>	1.68
	Female to male	4.77	0.56	2.41 <sup>c</sup>	1.78
Androgyny	Bem's males	-0.53	0.43		
	Bem's females	0.43	0.93		
	Male to female	1.08	0.81	11.62 <sup>a</sup>	4.08 <sup>a</sup>
	Female to male	-0.50	1.03	0.00	3.99
Social desirability	Bem's males	4.91	0.82		
	Bem's females	5.08	0.50		
	Male to female	4.60	0.47	4.87 <sup>a</sup>	7.55 <sup>a</sup>
	Female to male	4.54	0.40	3.84 <sup>b</sup>	5.60 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*p* < 0.001.

<sup>b</sup>*p* < 0.01.

<sup>c</sup>*p* < 0.05.

mative females or males [Fisher  $z = 2.89$  ( $p < 0.004$ ) and  $2.48$  ( $p < 0.02$ ), respectively]. The correlation for F-Ms, while high, is not statistically significant. These findings occur in the context of significantly lower mean social desirability scores for both transsexual groups compared to either normative group (see Table II).

For both samples there were large and significant differences in social desirability among the four Bem categories of transsexuals [for F-Ms,  $F(3,13) = 4.90$ ,  $p < 0.02$ ; for M-Fs,  $F(3,51) = 3.81$ ,  $p < 0.02$ ]. In both cases the androgynes were highest in social desirability (4.85 for F-Ms, 4.91 for M-Fs) and feminine sex-typed subjects next highest (4.60 for F-Ms, 4.58 for M-Fs). This pattern is in accord with the high positive correlation between the Bem social desirability and femininity scales. The Bem categories of transsexuals averaging lowest in social desirability were those which were also low in femininity (undifferentiated F-Ms = 4.05 and M-Fs = 4.30, and masculine sex-typed F-Ms = 4.45 and M-Fs = 4.15).

### Comparisons with Normative Data

Table II presents the mean scores for the transsexual samples compared with those from Bem's normative data (1974). Comparing mean androgyny scores, the M-Fs as a group were significantly more feminine sex typed than Bem's females,  $t(54) = 4.08$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , by virtue of both a high endorsement of feminine items and a much lower rating of masculine items. The F-Ms were significantly more masculine sex typed than Bem's females,  $t(16) = 3.99$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , but not more than Bem's males,  $t(16) = 0.00$ ,  $p = \text{n.s.}$  Although their average masculinity scale scores were somewhat higher than those of the males, they scored significantly higher on femininity as well,  $t(16) = 2.41$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

The score patterns derived from the dual median split method are depicted in Table III. The distribution for F-Ms was bimodal, with the majority scoring either masculine sex typed or androgynous. The majority of M-Fs were feminine sex typed.

Using the dual median split analysis, we compared the distribution of M-Ds across the four categories with Bem's distributions, using Pearson  $\chi^2$  for goodness of fit (Hays, 1973), with the proportional cell frequencies from Bem's data providing the expected values of our cells. The relevant hypotheses were that the distributions would be significantly different, with more M-Fs in the feminine sex-typed cell (femininity  $> 4.76$  masculinity  $< 4.89$ ) than would be expected from the proportion of college students falling in that cell.



Table III. Subjects by Bem's Median Split and Percentage by Median Split<sup>a</sup>

Sample	Feminine		Undifferentiated		Androgynous		Masculine		Sample N
	sex typed	%	sex typed	%	sex typed	%	sex typed	%	
Male to female transsexuals	33	60	9	16	12	22	1	2	55
Bem's females	99	34	59	20	85	29	47	16	290
Female to male transsexual	2	12	3	18	6	35	6	35	17
Bem's males	60	16	100	27	77	21	138	37	375

<sup>a</sup> Bem's medians: masculinity = 4.89, femininity = 4.76.

The hypothesis that the category distribution of M-Fs would be significantly different from that of Bem's males was strongly supported. The number of feminine sex-typed M-Fs was nearly 4 times the expected value [ $O = 33$ ,  $E = 8.64$ ; Pearson  $\chi^2(3) = 88.72$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ].

Compared with that of Bem's females, the category distribution of M-Fs was again significantly different. The number of feminine sex-typed M-Fs was not quite double the expected value [ $O = 33$ ,  $E = 18.414$ ; Pearson  $\chi^2(3) = 19.71$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ].

The small size of the F-M sample made Pearson's  $\chi^2$  inappropriate for its analysis, so we employed the likelihood ratio (Hays, 1973), which is distributed as  $\chi^2$  for large samples but is more robust for small expected values. The F-M distribution did not differ significantly from that of Bem's males [ $\chi^2(3) = 2.30$ ,  $p > 0.50$ ] but was marginally different from that of the females [ $\chi^2(3) = 6.45$ ,  $p < 0.10$ ].

### Subanalysis by Age

Because of the statistically significant differences between mean ages of the two transsexual samples, a subanalysis was run using only subjects under 27 years of age. This sample included 11 F-Ms and 12 M-Fs. There were no significant differences between the young M-Fs and those over 27 on any of the variables studied, although the mean masculinity score of the older group (4.29) was almost significantly greater than that of the younger group (3.79) [ $t(48) = 1.860$ ,  $p = 0.07$ ].

Age was significantly and positively correlated with masculinity for M-Fs ( $r = 0.34$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) but was not correlated with either Bem scale for F-Ms.

Comparing mean androgyny scores, the young M-Fs were significantly more feminine sex typed than Bem's females [ $t(11) = 4.74$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ], primarily by virtue of a significant lower mean masculinity score [ $t(11) = 3.37$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ]. Likewise paralleling the findings for the total M-F sample, the young M-Fs were significantly lower in social desirability than Bem's females [ $t(11) = 2.35$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ].

The Bem category frequency distribution of the young M-F sample did not differ significantly from that of the total sample of M-Fs. Like the M-F samples as a whole, the young M-Fs were distributed significantly differently from Bem's males [ $\chi^2(3) = 12.94$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ], but the younger group was not distributed significantly differently from Bem's females [ $\chi^2(3) = 4.89$ ,  $p < 0.20$ ].

It is interesting to note that when the two transsexual subsamples under 27 years of age were compared with each other, there was no signifi-

cant difference between their femininity means [ $t(21) = 0.281, p = 0.475$ ]; the means (F-M 4.84, M-F 5.05) converge slightly relative to the full group means. However, the masculinity means (F-M 5.42, M-F 3.79) are significantly different [ $t(21) = 4.86, p < 0.001$ ] and are more extreme than are the means for both samples *in toto*.

An  $F$  test for age differences among Bem quadrant groups indicated no significant difference for F-Ms ( $p > 0.50$ ); however, for M-Fs the differences were nearly statistically significant [ $F(3,46) = 2.76, p = 0.053$ ], with the androgynous M-Fs averaging 37.7 years of age and the single masculine sex-typed M-F being 21 years old. Comparisons of these score patterns with clinical impressions are presented in the Discussion section.

## DISCUSSION

Although the general pattern of scale intercorrelations recapitulates that found by Bem (1974), the unusually high correlations between femininity and social desirability deserve comment, especially as they occur in both transsexual samples. The possible influence of the demand characteristics of the situation must be considered. Although subjects may in theory be motivated to present themselves in the best light in order to "qualify" for reassignment, in fact they tend significantly less than college students to describe themselves as possessing socially desirable qualities unrelated to sex role. Our clinical experience leads us to believe that the high correlation for M-Fs may be due largely to a few clients who from the beginning projected onto G.I.S. a rigid set of sex-role values which were imagined to be criteria for reassignment. In general, it has been our impression that M-Fs are more impatient for surgery than are F-Ms, and these particular M-Fs displayed great urgency behind the careful image of being the "right kind" of person which they had constructed to meet imagined G.I.S. demands. Clinically, we have found that M-Fs, although feminine sex typed and sometimes exaggerated in their role behavior, nevertheless act quite instrumentally within that role. For this subgroup, rating themselves high in both social desirability and femininity may be an instrumental attempt to ensure that their needs for reassignment will be met quickly.

For the F-M it may be that the reverse is the case. It is plausible that F-Ms who dismiss feminine qualities might tend toward a negative identification with the social role of deviant, or perhaps they are simply more willing to be candid in acknowledging that they are somewhat "moody," "theatrical," "unpredictable," etc. Thus the positive correlation between femininity and social desirability for F-Ms may show the influence of a subgroup's feeling of being the "wrong kind" of person in a general sense.

The BSRI score patterns of these transsexuals have interesting implications for the stereotype of transsexuals as universally extreme in their sex typing. While it is true that both groups showed substantial cross-sex identification, this characteristic was not universal. In the F-Ms it was as often as not accompanied by acceptance of feminine aspects of their personalities, indicating that a substantial proportion were not seeking reassignment primarily to reject their femininity. That the M-Fs were somewhat more rejecting of the masculine self-description argues for a difference in motives for reassignment between M-Fs and many F-Ms, and perhaps hints at the presence of several constructions of gender identity, each differently related to sex role. Two major points can be made from these data: gender dysphoria is not universally a result of the rejection of sex roles stereotypically assigned to the sex of birth, and, for the sizable proportion of androgynous and undifferentiated transsexuals, gender identity appears to be independent of sex role.

In terms of Bem's normative data, F-Ms display a pattern of BSRI scores similar to college males, although slightly more androgynous. F-Ms are thus not particularly unusual as a group in their sex-role self-definition, taking at face value their designation of themselves as psychological males. M-Fs see themselves as more feminine and far less masculine than college females, and in this respect they are less typical of the general population of persons who identify themselves as females.

The resemblance of the F-M four-category BSRI score distribution to that of Bem's college male data supports our clinical impression of the F-Ms as less exaggerated in their sex-role style, making use of a wider range of affect and behavior than our M-F clients. The F-M's sex typing is slightly less extreme than that of Bem's males and far less extreme than that of the M-Fs. Clinically, the F-Ms are less rejecting of mannerisms and role behaviors identified as feminine than are the M-Fs of comparable masculine mannerisms and behaviors. Proportionately F-Ms are more androgynous than any other group.

One explanation for these results might be that the M-F develops a sex-role reaction formation which is mitigated somewhat for the F-Ms by the plausibility, in our male-valued culture, of a woman wanting to make the "step up" to being a man. The F-Ms' adoption of a new sex role may be freer of conflict and doubt than that of the M-Fs, who must defend against the incredulity expressed in a male-dominated culture toward a male who desires to give up his privileged position. Far fewer nontranssexual men than women report having consciously desired to be of the opposite sex, and cross-sex behaviors are more allowable for females than males (Brown, 1957; Lynn, 1959, Sears *et al.*, 1957). The broader range of permissible

behavior for females may also provide the F-M transsexual with the opportunity to model some aspects of the adult male sex role from environmental males, whereas the M-F, exposed to the narrower and more rigid male sex-role socialization, has a smaller chance of acquiring female-role skills by practicing them. He may have to work much harder and more consciously and more covertly to imitate the women around him in order to enact the female sex role. The F-Ms' role-taking opportunities may be especially useful to them, given the demonstrated relatively greater (bioanatomical) female capacity for empathy and emotional sensitivity to others (Hoffman, 1977). This is borne out by clinical experience at G.I.S. indicating that it is easier for F-Ms to find and sustain heterosexual relationships in which they are accepted as men by their female partners than for the M-Fs to establish similar relationships with male partners. The M-Fs may therefore be prompted to exaggerate their "feminine" helplessness and seductiveness in an attempt to attract intimates.

It is difficult to know how best to interpret the different relationships between age and sex role in the two transsexual samples. One reading which incorporates the data on conscious desire for sex reversal, and also our observations on the general rigidity of male sex-role socialization, is that M-Fs may need more years of maturity, lowering of defenses, ego strengthening, and perhaps the building of social supports before they are psychologically prepared to affiliate with a gender service and begin hormone treatments. The significant relationship between age and masculinity for M-Fs supports this view; such masculinity scale items as "self-reliant," "willing to take risks," "defends own beliefs," and "makes decisions easily" may be face-valid predictors of a readiness to differ severely with cultural proscriptions. The younger cohort of transsexuals presently involved with G.I.S. have of course come in a cultural period which is more aware of and supportive of transsexuals than were previous times.

Bem's work has shown that androgyny is associated with a behavioral repertoire which is not restricted by sex-role stereotypes, encompassing feelings and behaviors appropriate for both sexes in our culture. The presence of 18 androgynous transsexuals emphasizes the fact that transsexuals are not universally paragons of sex-role conservatism, as is often implicitly reported in the popular and professional literature (Finney *et al.*, 1975; Pauly, 1974; Kubie, 1974; Raymond, 1977; Kando, 1970). It would appear that these androgynous transsexuals are not seeking reassignment in order to gain access to a sex-role domain felt to be "inappropriate" for their original anatomy, nor are they seeking to flee a set of role demands associated with the "wrong" sex of birth, as argued by Kando (1970). These subjects report sufficient flexibility to be comfortable with the behavioral

repertoire of either sex, so they must be seeking reassignment for other than role-based reasons. It appears that for androgynous transsexuals gender identity is independent of sex role.

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