

Workshop Leader's Detailed Program

Day One: Friday, October 14th

7:30pm – 9:00pm Welcome and Beginnings (Session I)

On the board:

Whenever we speak of 'a woman' or 'a man', we call into play a tremendous system of understandings, implications, overtones and allusions that have accumulated through our cultural history. The 'meanings' of these words are enormously greater than the biological categories of male and female.

~ Raewyn Connell

Each of us has a unique experience with gender, one that is influenced by a host of extrinsic factors, such as culture, religion, race, economic class, upbringing, and ability, as well as intrinsic factors including our anatomy, genetic and hormonal makeup, subconscious sex, sexual orientation, and gender expression. Together, these factors help determine the gendered experiences we are exposed to, as well as the ways we process and make sense of them.

~ Julia Serano

7:30 to 7:45 ~ Welcome and Orientation, Introductions

- Expectations
- "Rules" and "safe space"

7:45 to 8:30 ~ Presentation: Gender: Aspiration, Obstacle, Mystery, or Obsession?

- Who am I and what does a transsexual have to say/share about gender?
- Conceptualizing "Gender"
 - What are we talking about? Sex or gender?
 - Expression or identity? A little of both?
 - Thinking about Femininity, Masculinity and Spaces In Between
 - The nature of "gender"
 - Imposed, created, scripted, claimed, owned, disparaged, empowered?
 - Immutable or evolving? Changeable?
 - Opposites or a continuum?
 - Binary? "Third" gendering?
 - Fish in water – is "gender" discernable? Sub-conscious gender?
 - Gender as an enduring or widespread set of patterns among social relations (what social theory calls 'structures')
 - Not an expression of biology, nor a fixed dichotomy in human life or character.
 - A pattern in our social arrangements, and in the everyday activities or practices which those arrangements govern.
 - Judith Butler: gender as something that is produced and performed

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- Gender is produced through repeated performance
- Repetitive social fictions that are created and built up over time, which in turn are embodied as “truth” or “natural” through the performance of “social scripts”
- Does a “Gender” Label Matter?
 - Socialization ~ Entitlement? Choices? Status?
 - Nature ~ Physiological & emotional differences, reasons.
 - Spiritual???
- Gender as Aspiration
 - To be feminine, more feminine, less “frilly”
 - To be masculine, more masculine, less “macho”
 - “Non-gender” as aspiration, rejecting the binary
- Gender as Obstacle
 - Claiming a “variant” gender identity
 - Overcoming the negative stereotypes
 - Gender in the way of identity
- Gender as Mystery
 - Gender myths
 - Gendered misunderstandings
 - Opposites or simply different?
- Gender as Obsession
 - Looking through the “gender lens”
 - Being unable not to look through the gender lens
 - “learning” gender
- Gender as _____? Filling in the blanks...

8:30 to 9:00 ~ Discussion, question & answer period

Day Two: Saturday, October 15th

10:00am – 12:00 (Session II) Gender realities – Our lives, our relationships, and our world

On the board:

Because our society centers on maleness, most men are able to get by in life without ever understanding or appreciating women’s experiences of perspectives. In contrast, women need to be able to appreciate both female and male perspectives in order to successfully navigate society.
~ Julia Serano

...many academics have focused on the transsexual transition process to argue that gender does not arise “naturally,” but that it is learned, practiced, and

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performed. However, these same academics tend to overlook (or dismiss outright) the fact that most transsexuals experience a lifelong self-knowing that they should be the other sex. This self-knowing exists despite the overwhelming social pressure for a person to identify and behave as a member of their assigned sex, which strongly suggests that there are indeed natural and intrinsic gender inclinations that can precede and/or supersede social conditioning and gender norms.

~ Julia Serano

Gender is a key dimension of personal life, social relations and culture. It is an arena in which we face difficult practical issues about justice, identity and even survival.

~ Raewyn Connell

10:00 to 10:45 ~ “Inside work”: Awakening to your own sense of “gender awareness” and “Outside work”: Gender socialization

- Chloe’s story – one transsexual’s view of gender
 - Mystery and Obstacle, Aspiration and Obsession
 - Questions and discussion
- Gender identity – finding a comfortable place on the continuum
 - “Girlie” girl to “macho” man
- The “other” – finding increasing friction moving along the continuum
- Gendered experiences ~ Does gender really change or define the experience? The possible outcomes?
- Freedoms and un-freedoms ~ does a societal view of gender determine this? If so, is this fair? Reasonable? Impossible to change?

10:45 to 11:30 ~ Small groups

Our lives, relationships, communities, and world through the gender lens

First 15 minutes: Queries exploring personal gender realities:

- 1) *Can you remember a time when you were reprimanded for behavior that was perceived as “gender inappropriate?” What did the experience feel like? What was your response?*
- 2) *Do you see in yourself both male and female traits? Describe.*
- 3) *Have you become more open to traits of the “opposite” sex in yourself as you have become older? Or were you more open at earlier stages of your life?*
- 4) *What role has your faith or spirituality played in your own personal understanding of gender?*

Second 15 minutes: Queries exploring relationship (couples, families) gender realities:

- 1) *Do intimate relationships work best when one person is more dominant than the other? Is it a problem for most heterosexual relationships if the more dominant person is female?*
- 2) *Is equality more important than fairness in a relationship between a man and a woman?*
- 3) *Are you comfortable with such standard “defaults” of heterosexual relationships as when the man usually drives the car, the woman is allowed into the elevator*

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first, the children acquire the father's last name, and the father "gives away" his daughter as the bride?

- 4) *Do you see fundamentally different gender roles in your own close relationships compared with your parents'? In what ways are your situations better, and worse, than your parents' gender roles?*

Third 15 minutes: Queries exploring your community (and society's) gender realities:

- 1) *Is feminine expression viewed as something strong, daring, and brave? Or is femininity more likely to be seen as helpless and dependent (or merely as masculinity's sidekick and not something that exists of its own accord)?*
- 2) *Is it acceptable for us to privilege our own socially shared "norms" (perceptions, interpretations, and evaluations) of what gender is, over how any individual understands himself or herself?*
- 3) *Generally, in your experience do men make better bosses? Military officers? Security guards? Surgeons? Architects?*
- 4) *Generally, in your experience do women make better family physicians? Kindergarten teachers? Hospice workers? Interior designers?*
 - o *Does it matter to your answers above if the women are lesbian or straight? If men are gay or straight?*

11:30 to 12:00 ~ Plenary Discussion, Question & Answer

12:30 to 1:00 ~ Lunch

3:30pm – 5:30pm (Session III) Gender and the Search for Self

On the board:

Identity is rooted in our gender expression and society demands certainty and consistency in that regard, sometimes (and often grudgingly) with occasional room at the margins to explore our feminine/masculine inclinations.

~ Chloe Schwenke

3:30 to 4: 00 ~ Femininity, Masculinity, Androgyny, and Identity

- Inherited or claimed? Found or crafted?
- The role or the person? What does gender have to do with identity?
 - o Losing the role (male expectations and behavior) and finding the person within (female identity and sensibilities)
- Who or what is it that we love? How invested are we in the gender and socially defined presentation (e.g. masculine persona: brother, husband, son, uncle, nephew, comrade in arms, drinking buddy, teammate), versus the person under that presentation?
 - o Can we describe the person without clear gender references? Can a

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- person be a person without a “gender frame”?
- What “baggage” does femininity and masculinity bring with them?
- Femininity and masculinity are influenced and enforced by society – does this make the expression of these attributes a “performance”?
 - What if expressing femininity (masculinity) simply feels “right”? Is it then a performance?
- Assertion: It is not OK in our society to openly discriminate against someone for being female, but discrimination against someone’s femininity is still considered fair game!
 - What does this mean? Do you agree?
- For women and trans women: Dressing and acting femme is something we do for ourselves, not for others.

Read aloud:

Standards of masculinity vary from time to time, from culture to culture. However, masculinity always defines itself as different from and superior to femininity. For example, gay men and househusbands exemplify "subordinate" masculinities in our culture. They're not considered "real men".

Against this backdrop, femininity is constructed around adaptation to male power. Its central feature is attractiveness to men, which includes physical appearance, ego-massaging, suppression of "power" emotions such as anger, nurturance of children, exclusive heterosexuality, sexual availability without sexual assertiveness, and sociability ("Men like women who smile.") One could say that masculinity and femininity are societal euphemisms for male dominance and female subordination. However, hegemonic masculinity and subordinate femininity are not conspiracies. Rather, they are the result of widely accepted ways of thinking that define male dominance as fair, reasonable, and in the best interests of society. John Gray's works shamelessly play on this theme. "Dr" Gray clearly doesn't think femininity means power, for he says, "New skills are required to remain feminine and also be strong." He also believes masculinity means male dominance, as shown by his statement, "Rather than continuing to do masculine things like make decisions, initiate sex, and solve problems for her."

~ Kathleen Trigiani

See http://web2.iadfw.net/ktrig246/out_of_cave/mf.html

Compare the typical attributes of femininity and masculinity, and see how “loaded” these are with positive or negative meanings:

FEMININITY	MASCULINITY
Contrived	Natural
Frivolous	Practical
Manipulative	Sincere
Artificial	Simple
Deceptive	Direct
Enchanting	Commanding
Soft	Strong
Emotional	Rational

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Compassionate	Just
?	?

4:00 to 4:30 ~ Integrity, Humanity, Authenticity

- The experience of gender dissonance (the fish feels the “wrong” water)
- Bringing together gender and bodies, minds & spirits into cohesive wholeness
- Reconciling femininity and masculinity as different but not opposites – not a zero sum game
- Reconciling femininity and masculinity with basic human dignity

For Wilmer Cooper, the Testimony of Integrity can be articulated and practiced in four ways:

- (1) Integrity calls for truth-telling, or simply not telling lies.
- (2) Integrity calls for authenticity, for genuineness, and for veracity in one’s personhood
- (3) Integrity calls for obedience, or faithfulness to conscience illuminated by the Light Within
- (4) The root meaning of the word “integrity” calls for wholeness.

All four ways matter, but for people striving to be authentic to their subconscious sense of gender identity, perhaps #2 is the most instructive. What can be more compelling to a transgender person than the call to “veracity in one’s personhood”?

- Are there gender dimensions to this “veracity” challenge for people who are not transgender?
- Are transsexuals obliged to be entirely honest about their lives before transition, or is it somehow OK for “white lies” to deflect or conceal a gender-dissonant past?
- For cisgender people who express their gender in non-traditional ways, how can integrity be achieved?

4:30 to 5:30 ~ Small Groups:

Queries

In their chapter “Femininity/Masculinity” in the Encyclopedia of Sociology, authors Jan Stets and Peter Burke state in an authoritative, matter of fact manner that:

Femininity and masculinity or one's gender identity refers to the degree to which persons see themselves as masculine or feminine given what it means to be a man or woman in society. Femininity and masculinity are rooted in the social (one's gender) rather than the biological (one's sex). Societal members decide what being male or female means (e.g., dominant or passive, brave or emotional), and males will generally respond by defining themselves as masculine while females will generally define themselves as feminine. Because these are social definitions, however, it is possible for one to be female and see herself as masculine or male and see himself as feminine.

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- 1) *Is it your experience that “societal members” decide what being male or female means? Or is there a deeper, even spiritual identity tied to femaleness and maleness?*
- 2) *How do you know “what” you are? What feelings, sensibilities, and other forms of awareness other than simple body awareness most make you feel that you are male, female, or somewhere in between?*
- 3) *In pairs, try to identify two ways of describing the other person’s character (not appearance) that both of you agree are both accurate and non-gendered.*
- 4) *Is there a sense of “gender core” to you and your identity, which is largely fixed and with which you are comfortable? Is this “gender core” as identity different from “gendered behavior” as expression?*

7:30pm - 9:30pm (Session IV) Gender and a Global Search for Acceptance

On the board:

*For transitioning transsexuals, the construction of identity – even in its crudest hair-plucking, make-up smearing forms – is an effort to prove that our true selves exist, **that they ARE true, that they are so true they are worth destroying or at least risking** every aspect of our lives. When I speak, walk, sit, stand, eat, gesture, get into or out of a car, even sleep, I constantly evaluate the authenticity of my actions: Are they convincing? Are they real? These supremely self-conscious efforts to “act like a woman” seem like the opposite of authenticity, proof positive that I am not and can never be real. Even the criteria I use for judging the “authenticity” of my behavior reflect the sexism that shapes our culture’s definition of femininity. Thus, for me, the behaviors that are most self-affirming, that create the potential for relationships in which I feel most “real,” are also deeply destabilizing. How do you practice being the person you have always believed you are? How do you become real?*

~ Joy Ladin

7:30 to 8:00 ~ A personal quest for acceptance

- Transgender people seek to be accepted in their gender
 - Identity, dignity, and sense of worthiness as “self” are linked closely to being accepted in one’s gender identity and expression
 - Defining gender is hugely problematic
 - Gender as genitals, chromosomes, birth sex, legal sex, individual sense of what is rights?
 - Creating new categories to “third gender” or simply reject gender variant people
 - Gender queer as a self-selected category, rejecting the gender

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binary

- “Transgender” as a phenomenon is largely unknown in much of the developing world
- Cisgender people seek alternatively:
 - To protect gender-linked prerogatives that give preferences to one gender over the other, based on traditional values,
 - To define their “acceptability” in oppositional terms,
 - To have their gender accepted as equal to – even if different from – the other gender
 - To resist the “inconvenience” and “unsettling nature” of gender variant persons
- How do women fare in the larger world, being accepted as equally dignified and worthy human beings?

8:00 to 8:30 ~ The religious and spiritual worlds, “reality”, and being female

“In a real sense, the Historic Christ set the stage for women’s spiritual awakening by preaching ‘female’ qualities of love, compassion, healing, gentleness, tolerance, and humility; and he showed that living these qualities demonstrated, not weakness, but strength.”

~ John Nash

- Gender bias in world’s religions
 - Goddess worship was commonplace in the world until the coming of the patriarchal Hellenic Greeks, i.e. 3,000 years ago
 - 30 centuries of male-dominated spiritual teachings
 - Despite the “female” qualities of the teachings of Jesus – after all, he incarnated as a man!
- Women as second-class spiritual citizens
 - The Upanishads, the Bible, and the Koran all describe the achievements of male heroes, and they are written in gender-exclusive language
 - The Bible was written by men for male readers
 - In Tibetan Buddhism, nearly all traditional prayers, affirmations, and invocations are written in gender-exclusive language
 - Where are the women heroes?
 - Are “heroes” limited to warriors, powerful kings, or dragon-slayers?
 - Where is there a feminine role model of spirituality?
 - Many religions consider the female body to have less “spiritual potential” than the male body
 - Masonic and other occult groups (and arguably even the Roman Catholic Church) argue that women’s “gender polarity” makes them unsuitable to perform key rituals of ceremonial magic, including the Mass
 - In contrast, the Roman Catholic Church does place great emphasis on the Virgin Mary as “mother of God”
 - In some cultures, the Virgin Mary has simply taken the place of historic goddess-oriented worship (as in the Celtic religions in

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Ireland)

- Modern women's response:
 - Women's studies and feminist theology, philosophy, and political theory
 - Ethics of care; and the moral experience of women
 - Wicca, and "Old Religion" that emphasize nature and its cycles, sharing and inter-connectedness
- Is there room for the differing (but not opposite) spiritual experiences of women and men? Of transgender persons? Of gay and straight persons?
 - How do Quakers present ourselves to ourselves and the world, with respect to female and male symbols and metaphors, equality of the sexes?
 - Do Quakers celebrate gendered spiritual gifts? Are Quakers (and people of deep spiritual leadings) called to be aware of and respond to gender differently than the norm?

8:30 to 9:00 ~ The social and political worlds, "reality", and being female

- Gender disparity: A global view
 - Women perform 2/3 of the world's work
 - Women earn 1/10 of the world's income
 - Women are 2/3 of the world's illiterates
 - Women own less than 1/100 of the world's property.
- Women ignored
 - Until the 1970s, mainstream research, policy and planning virtually ignored the economic role of women. Development plans and policies were either based on men and then generalized to all people, or they prescribed a development future in which men were assumed to be the only breadwinners, and women and children their dependants.
- Gender based violence in Africa
 - Horrific scale: SGBV kills and maims more African women than the combined effects of cancer, malaria, road accidents, and war
 - The most pervasive yet least recognized human rights abuse in the world
 - Consequences:
 - Physical: HIV/AIDS, unintended pregnancy, trauma to reproductive system
 - Psychological: PTSD, suicide
 - Social: Stigma, rejection, isolation
- Other symptoms of global "gender" pathology, beyond VAW:
 - Rape as a "strategic weapon"
 - Human trafficking and forced prostitution
 - Child brides and bride kidnapping
 - Female genital cutting
 - Infanticide
 - Honor killings

9:00 to 9:30 ~ Gathering our thoughts and spirits

- Where are we moving towards? What are the trends?

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- Personally?
- Corporately (societies, religions, institutions)?
- Are we redefining what it means to be male or female?
 - Is there room for “genderqueer” or androgynous?
 - What are we losing? What are we gaining?

Day Three: Sunday, October 16th

10:00am - 12:30pm (Session V) Gender, Identity, Meaning, and You

On the board:

Gender is not in every way “natural.” “Feminine” gestures, for example, are not God’s own creation. This of course I know. The social construction of gender is, after all, something a gender crosser comes to know with unusual vividness. She does it for a living.

~ Deirdre McCloskey

10:00 to 10:45 ~ Learning gender from each other

- Can you remember a time when you were reprimanded for behavior that was perceived as “gender inappropriate?” What did the experience feel like? What was your response?
 - Gender expression as a natural, flowing way of being
 - Gender expression as a studied, practiced performance
 - Gender expression as trickery, deceit, manipulation
 - Variant gender expression as pathology, perversion
- Do you see in yourself both male and female traits?
 - Do they diminish each other? Confuse the whole picture?
- Have you become more open to traits of the “opposite” sex in yourself as you have become older? Or were you more open at earlier stages of your life?
- What role has your faith or spirituality played in your understanding of gender?

10:45 to 11:30 ~ Small Groups

- Explore the 16 Queries (on separate sheet and in Participants’ Handbook)

11:30 to 12:30 ~ Plenary - Closing Reflections