

Thursday, August 30, 2012

Women crossdressing

The premise that "society allows women to cross-dress" is frequently aired when we are looking for a justification that cross-dressing is normal and OK. But the truth or otherwise can only be discussed if we agree what constitutes cross-dressing. Sadly, along with just about every other term used by the gender diverse, cross dressing is subject to redefinition by the individual to suit their position and needs.

I don't respect this right of everyone to define terms to suit themselves. So I reach for definitions before engaging in discussion. In this case I commend the following authoritative (but perhaps not correct) sources.

Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/cross-dressing>) defines cross dressing as

"the act of wearing clothing and other accoutrement commonly associated with the opposite sex within a particular society".

It also stresses that cross-dressing

"denotes an action or a behavior without attributing or proposing causes for that behavior."

merriam-webster (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cross-dressing>) defines cross dressing as

"the wearing of clothes designed for the opposite sex "

Queensland Association for Healthy Communities Inc (QAHC) defines crossdressers as

"individuals who have an overwhelming desire to change their presenting gender, on an occasional basis, to that which is opposite to their birth sex."

From these definitions I think it is reasonable to conclude that cross-dressing
> is the action of presenting in clothes associated with or designed for the opposite birth sex
> is performed for diverse reasons not necessarily only gender expression

We can also note what is not part of the definition.

Firstly the style of clothing is only pertinent when it reflects the expectations in society as to the the style, color, or type of clothing men and women are expected to wear. "Only girls wear pink". What matters when considering if someone is cross-dressing is what sex the clothes were designed for or attributed to.

Secondly the reasons behind cross-dressing are not part of the definition. So any "nice feeling that we all seem to get when we are dressed" is not a fundamental or defining characteristic. You are cross-dressing whether you put the clothes on for disguise, entertainment, gratification or gender expression.

So where do that leave women in our society?

Wearing slacks and shirts designed for women clearly doesn't constitute cross-dressing by these definitions. Neither do women in general exercise any freedom to wear clothing supposedly designed for the other birth sex. Quite frankly I can't see they would see any attraction in buying trousers from the drab menswear range in Lowes. A few women do crossdress - either for gender expression (gender queers) or entertainment (Drag Kings) but this doesn't constitute evidence of women having any special freedom of choice.

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On a personal note, as I haven't changed my birth sex I accept that my general presentation to society is cross-dressing. After all I buy all my clothes in the ladies section of the shop and my assigned birth sex is male.

This is a much wider definition of what a CD is than many gender diverse people are comfortable with. In particular many of those who eventually change their birth sex assert they have never cross-dressed. But as I stated at the start, I'm not comfortable with people redefining CD to suit their purposes.

Most of our gender diverse community are cross-dressers to some degree or another. I don't think it is true to assert that most would agree that "women cross dress all the time". I certainly don't.

Posted by Adrian in Gender Diversity at 19:58