



Willow Arune and Dana Beyer debate "Autogynephilia"

[The original post is here.](#)

<https://web.archive.org/web/20030625075358/http://www.tsroadmap.com/info/dana-beyer-willow-arune.html>



Willow Arune



Dana Beyer, M.D.

Introduction by Willow

Dear Sisters,

The past few weeks have been "interesting", in the Chinese sense of the word.

What has transpired? Thanks to Conway's emotional rant and accusations, the herd has stampeded. Worst, they are goring their own as they run. While there have now been many rants concerning Bailey, Blanchard and Lawrence, there have been few who question Ms. Conway's agenda. I, for one, do. She has succeeded in dividing this community in a distasteful and - I believe - deliberate manner. She likes those like herself, calling the rest "aging CDs and autophiles". It is easier for a stampede to start than to expect reason and logic to prevail.

I fully understand why many who agree with the theory fail to step forward. Standing in the middle of a stampeding herd is not pleasant, and one can get hurt quickly. I have been, now and in the past. I am a little seasoned in that regard. Many are not, nor do they need to be. Those who say, "we are safe - stand up" have never been in the way of our form of stampede. The best course is to find a rock to hide behind until the danger is gone.

How bad? In the past weeks, I have been called a "male" by at least seven other "transsexuals". All but one are pre-op, so we have the normal situation of those with a penis calling those without a "man", while those with are



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to be defined as "female" or "women". Old fashioned type that I am, I have assumed that those with a penis are in body if nothing else, men. Silly thought, isn't it? At least, in our "world".

Any who have spent time in our community know that being called a "male" is the worst insult we can direct at one another. Gosh! Get "sirred" and one cries, posts and worse. To be "attacked" as a male, after one has had SRS is preposterous - to me if no one else. It is also insulting and hurtful. I must be thin-skinned. Not once in five years have I seen this insult used, and it is used again and again. Not once since I started transition have I had this happen to me.

It is a measure of the fury that the term "AG" is now hurled as an insult, together with inquiries as to how often and why you may have masturbated and other personal matters.

The post-ops content themselves by throwing the term "AG" or any derivative at me. To me, it is the same as those who think - and only they do - that they pass fully who look down their noses as those who they think to not match their standards. We insist on creating our fictions and then demanding that all others follow that fiction forever. Simply, we drive against common sense, crying out all the time that we are not delusional. What a lark!

I have been spoilt. Some time - over a year ago now - I founded a group on the Internet called "Muliebrity". You will have to look it up in Webster's 1989 - the last time it appeared. With over 1000 posts per month and under 20 members, not one flame. That proved that some TS women can and do discuss things without resorting to personal invectives. Thankfully, this group is still functional.

This week past I started a group for AGs only - a support group. As yet another indication of the nature of our community, this led to a debate by some who questioned the need for such a group, stating that it was "safe" for us to discuss the issue "in the open". I know, as do you, that anyone coming out in favour of the theory would get the same type of mail that now fills my mailbox - the type what contains the insults mentioned above. None of this directs itself to the theory.

Am I transsexual? Yes, indeed. I have had my SRS, present as a woman and generally am treated as one by one and all. Am I autogeniphiliac? Yes, and rather than go over point-by-point, head to the story of Philip in Bailey's book. Even though I married twice, that is me. No, I do not appear to be driven by sexual motives. But I am indeed a transsexual and an AG as was he. To put things shortly, I have my vulva and vagina - where is yours? (to address yet another insult, no, I no longer masturbate and have not since my SRS - and that suits me just fine, thank you very much).

After that, of course, comes the now hateful line "a man in a woman's body".

From that comes the so-called justification to cry - "You are a man" and like the children they resemble, they could add "Nanny, nanny". A bunch of bullies in a schoolyard would be better behaved.

Both Blanchard and Bailey - and Lawrence as well, refer to AGs as transsexuals, and in any description that follows, as women. They do not - and never have to my knowledge - treated us in any negative manner as our so-called sisters have recently. I should know - I correspond with that crew.

But it has from those in the Conway stampede - again and again, deliberate and hurtful - to a point where I say "Enough".

To end this nonsense, am I a woman? To me the question is moot. Firstly, I honour any other person by calling then what they wish to be called. I allow them, not me, to pick the identifier and in this community, I sometimes



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ask. Not one of those who said I was male bothered to ask me about my feelings before demanding that I acknowledge maleness. Second, a common sense test, and one that most used over centuries and still do. I peek between my legs. Strange, I know, but the point is made. Thirdly, because of the way the person presents. My partner, Sonia, is a GG. She finds me the most feminine person she has met in her 64 years on this planet. If a person dresses in a womanly manner and/or presents in a womanly manner, I assume she wishes to be known as a woman. I do not question her motives or how often she masturbated yesterday. Nor do I ask, or peek under her skirt, or lift her t-shirt. In short, I do not act as a self-appointed gender police force.

Lastly, as nothing in the theory, nothing that is stated or followed by B/B/L suggest that I need call myself anything but what I **now** am, a woman.

To anyone who feels drawn to the AG theory, join our little group. **Do not** stick your head over the top of the foxhole in any so-called TS or TG group unless you wish to engage in endless battle. Fifty of us may be found at autogynephiliassupport-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Please - do not join just to flame. For that very reason, this is a moderated group. I do not wish that to be, but we wish to avoid the stampede.

And to those "sisters" who delight in calling me "male" or "AG" or simply "bitch", I simply bid you goodbye.

Hugs to Some,
Willow

Willow sent me the following on 11 May 2003:

This exchange of four posts might be of interest. The other party is Dana
E-mail Address(es): wbb3@cornell.edu

I, of course, am Willow without a university address...
Hugs,
Willow

The first post by Dana

Hi, Willow,

I read your article on Andrea's website and was very impressed with your writing. While I disagree with much of what you have to say, you say it very diplomatically, forcefully yet sensitively.

You freely admit you're not a scientist. I am, and a physician and a surgeon. B/B/L is not science, not by any stretch of the imagination. It fits into the long history of psychology as literary analysis begun by Freud and continued today by Lacan and others. B/B/L should be open to counterevidence (that is science) but they are not, calling those who disagree with them liars or non-existent. Bailey makes that claim several times, which is something else you as his editor would have eradicated. Claiming we are liars, otherwise psychology would be an easy game to play, is absurd.

You may not be a scientist, but you can read Andrea's link on the description of transsexualism by the leading sexologists on this planet today. I see you claim that you're a female on your Yahoo ID, so you must not believe that you're a man trapped in a man's body. According to B/B/L, that is exactly what you are, until you have SRS,



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when you become a man trapped in a woman's body. We are either extreme homosexual men, or sexually deviant, autogynephilic women, to them. The rest is ultimately irrelevant, because our lives are fundamentally based on being seen as women, not men (and this doesn't even begin to deal with the equal number of trans men, whom they completely ignore).

As a scientist, I honestly admit I don't understand crossdressing in straight males. Is there a spectrum, with straight guys on one end and trans women on the other? It would be a pretty picture, but there is no evidence for it. Maybe the BSTc's vary in volume and neural density along that spectrum. Until we get higher MRI resolution and/or additional pathological studies (which require money and political support) we won't know. Personally I support gender rights for all -- straight, gay, trans. I am bothered by the misogyny that pervades this society. Bailey begins, just begins, to ask the question as to why, though others, such as Riki Wilchins, are more effective at pursuing this issue.

But when it comes to legal rights, with the foremost right to be considered as one's brain gender, not as the way one was raised or whether or not one has a penis, there are REAL differences between CDs and TSs. B/B/L lump all TSs in with the CDs, and regardless of whether they want to improve our standing or not, that lumping, which is incorrect on its face (stop calling us liars) is extremely dangerous. As a lawyer you should know this.

You also need to know that scientifically all deny the existence of the concept of gender identity. Bailey goes so far to wonder how any trans woman can know she's a female rather than a male. That is a ridiculous position to take in this day and age of cognitive neuroscience, and is completely untenable and at the root as to why they spend their careers defining transsexualism as a sexual deviation. If Bailey awoke tomorrow after having been spirited in for SRS, he would still "know" he was a male, even without a penis, even with a vagina. If he were bound and gagged, and deprived of all sensory input and stimulation, he would still know he was male. It is really that simple, and just because we can't yet measure that feeling quantitatively doesn't mean it doesn't exist. I surmise almost every human being knows the feeling, and most who are told that is how trans women feel find they accept it pretty readily these days.

Thank you for listening. I hope we can work together to move forward to help all in our community.

Sincerely,
Dana Beyer, M.D.

Post 2 by Willow

Dear Dana--

Thank you for your comments. It was refreshing to receive a post that was not accusatory, but friendly in nature. I hope we can continue to exchange posts on this matter, accepting that by so doing we may both learn.

Some issues raised are simple. You mention Bailey does not deal with F>Ms. Indeed so, and his reason is clearly set forth on Page xii. Another book, another time...

I have read somewhat of Freud, even of Lucan, but am nowhere near able to enter into any discussion on their theories. So that I must avoid from mere lack of familiarity.

As to science, I might offer what I look at as "common sense". And this is, I fear, where we fall apart in our views.



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Please understand when I say that I wish I could believe. Yes, I wish I could believe that taking hormones and having SRS make me a woman, fully and unconditionally. I suppose the old adage about something "if you want it badly enough, it must be true" simply does not fully address the issues for me.

I do not think wanting something to be is enough and that is really where I begin my reply. Bear with me, for I think we arrive at some differing conclusions on what might be deemed the "scientific" side of things.

I am as fully female as any person born a male can be in this lifetime. Well, excluding a lifetime of operations in the future that is, in that regard anything is possible or so it seems these days. But the fact that I was born a "normal male baby" is where I start. I grew up as a boy, was socialised as a boy, educated as a boy, and took my place in society as a boy. Yes, I did think I was "in the wrong uniform" but I cannot deny that the physical Will functioned and performed daily for years as a male in every regard. Nothing was wrong physically - and never was. There was nothing inherently wrong with the body that could be - or needed to be - corrected.

There was a problem with the mind, for it seems that little Will always saw things differently, even as he grew and as an adult. For he was placed in a world where there were males - like him physically - and females similar in thoughts. Will seemed to have more in common with the females, sharing interests and more, friendships and more, with the girls - later women - than with the boys - later men.

In direct contrast to the scientific view, that Will was a boy. But nobody knows what made Will think the way he did. There are theories, but no clear solution. Bailey and Blanchard both see this as something innate to Will when he was born, for most certainly he did not learn it. I am personally not sure...

Still, Will was able to keep on living, albeit with some difficulties. He felt an outsider, always travelling alone. Not able to join in with the other guys as there were few shared interests save business, and not able to fully share in the rites of women as... ..as he was not one. He learnt to hide what others disclose, and to manufacture secrets to share where really there were none. He tried to fit in to a world that was not his, to stay with an army although everything inside him said he should run to the other side. If Will was, as some suggest, always a woman, few shared that concept. Indeed, not even Will. He could identify what sex his body was, and while his gender was not consistent with that and caused problems, he did not know why that was.

That is what I felt like, for all those years. As a result, I made some poor decisions, career wise. Looking back, getting close to other males might give away how I felt, so I moved. I did not want to compete in the money side; I wanted to help on the emotional side. My clients - as a lawyer - loved me. Other lawyers respected me. My bankers were impressed with what I did, but noted that I did not seek the rewards that they saw as necessary.

Two marriages, each of ten years. My two wives wanted a male - and instead they got me. By the time I got to my forties, I knew something was wrong if not what. I lacked what others seem to have - a place within their communities of men or women. While I was in one, I felt as if I should be in the other.

So much for the bio. I am now - legally in every way according to this jurisdiction - a woman, a female. If I were to marry, our laws say I must marry a male. I have no desire to - I am lesbian. So my Yahoo ID is indeed legally correct. No doubt. My sex (externally) has been changed where it can be, but still in my medical appointments (and at my age, there are many) I am male, altered to female (i.e. a transsexual male). Now, the surgeon did a good job, but he changed the outside of the body, not inside. So I still have a prostate and other male goodies, and lack ovaries and other female bits. I still have a 56 year old male skeleton that did not have female hormones until 50, and big hands and feet that fit with the male I was but not with the woman I have become. With SRS and hormones, and breast augmentation, my body appears as female is possible - but here the key word is possible.



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My mind is still the same, having delighted in the new body. It feels right at home, in the right "army" with the right uniform. So I am happier by far and overjoyed that I can partake of the world of women as I always felt I should. Still, using reality, I know that while socially I am no longer an outside on most occasions and my external physical attributes place me better in society so that my mind is at peace. Inside I must accept the reality that such was contrived. I have no problem with so doing. When I die, I will die a happier person having lived - at the close - a happier life. I have a wonderful partner, I respond to her in ways I could never do as Will, and my world has expanded with joy in daily pleasures. But if the archaeologists later dig up my bones, they will say "male" without doubt,

So, what am I?

In my non-scientific - but reality based approach - I see that I am a woman legally, and that is how I now fit into society and my life. But I cannot deny 50 years of life as Will - he was here before and I occupy the same physical body. By every common sense test I can apply save one, I am indeed a man in a body restructured to be female. I can be nothing else in this lifetime. I can wish I was, can dream I was, but all that I can do will not change how I was born and the life I had for fifty years. By whatever standards my common sense can apply - save for a fervent wish and all ways legally - I am indeed a male in a female's body.

I am told by those that have demanded I cease my heretical ways that I am a woman. That defies the logic of my life - and indeed my being for many years. It denies reality and demands that I do so too. The only reason for this is that they say - and then assume - that I had a small part of my brain that was always, at the start and now - female. Even Blanchard and Bailey say that. The problem is, we do not know. That is a hope and promise, but not reality. Scientifically?? I suggest that science would say just as I do - a male changed into a female externally.

I can live with just what I am. I do not need to change my life, or hide, or accept unsubstantiated scientific theories. I know I was born, in all normal ways, a male, and have become *as much of a female as I can in this life*, even if I always felt more woman than man. I had to live in this world as a man for fifty years - I learnt how to do that in almost every way.

So I happen across a theory that seems to tell me "why". It does not prove to be true, but offers reasons why it may be. It makes sense of my life as I lived it, and live it now.

That is why I am happy to be autogynephilic. It give me an answer I can live with - without fabrications of truth, but as I really am (I shall not go into the sordid details other than to self diagnosis myself as being autogynephilic). Some will insult me by saying I am still a man. Legally, they are wrong - and after that, nobody (or so it seems to me) really knows. What I do know is that my condition, as described, is not "normal", in the sense that I was a physical male but felt like a female (or so I think - do we really *know* - what this really means, I think, is that I felt like I thought a female felt).

Not being normal can be called many things. One word, which we now use in a pejorative manner is "deviant". But what does that really mean, shorn of the emotional content? It means.

"Deviant" adj. Differing from a norm or from the accepted standards of a society, or n. One that differs from a norm, especially a person whose behaviour and attitudes differ from accepted social standards. [Middle English deviaunt, from Late Latin devians, deviant-, present participle of deviare, to deviate. See deviate.]"

Well, my goodness. Given the SRS and such, I would have to say that such meaning sums me up fairly well. When you use the word in your post, it is used as a negative term. But the actual usage is not too far from eccentric. There is no good or bad, is there? A person who opposed Hitler could be said to be deviant, in that he differed



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from the norm in his society. You see, it is not the work, but the subjective usage that makes it "bad", as it seems in your post.

So, I can accept that I am a deviant male in a woman's body. Trapped?? Oh no, I love being here, just where I am.

And that is what causes us to differ, I think. I am prepared, in a realistic manner, to accept that is what I am. You are not. I fail to understand what "scientific" tests you can apply to yourself, as a doctor, or to other transsexuals that changes this reality. You can of course support a different view of reality, one that is, I strongly suggest, delusional and seems to me to be unhealthy. But that is a choice we all have.

Now, one last point. Bailey, you say, accuses us of lying. Well yes, in many ways he does. But he is hardly the first to comment on our revised memories. Anne Bolin certainly addresses the issue in "In Search of Eve". So does Hausman (in a more negative way) in "Changing Sex" and, more pointedly, Jay Posner in "Second Skins". The phenomena is certainly not new and is found in much clinical data on transsexuals. Why? Because the old ways demanded that to get what we wanted (i.e. SRS) we had to conform to a model, and that model was incorrect. Blanchard changed the model and now, I believe, I can fit the model without fabrication - or using a lawyer's method of saying what helps the cause and not what might hurt it. It seems to me that Bailey merely uses what is already known in this regard. Is Bailey/Blanchard/Lawrence science? As much as any "soft science" can be - in this case psychology and psychiatry. You cannot cut it with a scalpel or sew it together, that I grant. But neither can you prove totally any theory in those fields. And just how do you prove, scientifically as you suggest, "brain gender"? I see no proof at this time in history. "Gender Identity" is a concept with which I agree, but I know of no scientific proof - but lots of common sense - that says men and women are different mentally, not just physically. In fact, I think that much feminist thought denies there is any difference save socialisation. Oh yes, I think it is clear that Bailey sees cross-dressers and transsexual women as a continuum, not as separate camps. As stated earlier, that does not make the TS community happy, for there is an antipathy between the two and a difference in how they identify. Perhaps, as Lenin stated regarding the Mensheviks, you have to hate those closest to you and deny that both of you are similar. I do not know, but I do see Bailey's point given the whole of his book, not just Part Three. One could also ask why transsexuals feel "superior" to cross dressers? Is it because they see the cross dresses as "deviant" and themselves as "normal women". I suspect that might well be true. And on this we do battle within the transgendered community, in the same way that others war over points of religion. I think both are silly.

In closing, I also support laws that protect all - gays, lesbians, TS, TG and other minorities. I sing openly with the Vancouver Lesbian & Gay Choir, the only choir in B.C. to be gas bombed during a performance. You see, I accept that reality too, and as the choir replied to the question as to why we were so named, the reason is so that one day we shall not have to be. One day, perhaps, we will not need to be identified in the manner we are as well.

Hugs,
WillowYahoo! Groups Sponsor

Then a reply from the post that started this thread.

Editor's note: Willow is first, Dana is indented.

Dear Dana,

Thank you for your comments. It was refreshing to receive a post that was not accusatory, but friendly in nature. I hope we can continue to exchange posts on this matter, accepting that by so doing we may both learn.<



Thank you.

Some issues raised are simple. You mention Bailey does not deal with F>Ms. Indeed so, and his reason is clearly set forth on Page xii. Another book, another time...

Sorry, Willow, but that's a cop-out. Nowhere does he even acknowledge FtMs exist, and there's a simple reason for that --their existence negates the universality potential for the B/B/L theory. He's only interested in male femininity, and he is willing to ignore FtMs as well as all the other trans women who don't fit into his theory.

I have read somewhat of Freud, even of Lacan, but am nowhere near able to enter into any discussion on their theories. So that I must avoid from mere lack of familiarity.

That's ok, but it doesn't change the reality that what he does is literary or social criticism, not science.

As to science, I might offer what I look at as "common sense".

And this is, I fear, where we fall apart in our views.

Please understand when I say that I wish I could believe. Yes, I wish I could believe that taking hormones and having SRS make me a woman, fully and unconditionally. I suppose the old adage about something "if you want it badly enough, it must be true" simply does not fully address the issues for me. I do not think wanting something to be is enough and that is really where I begin my reply. Bear with me, for I think we arrive at some differing conclusions on what might be deemed the "scientific" side of things.

Willow, if you don't feel that is who you are, that's fine. My point is that estrogen and genital reconstruction do NOT make you, or anyone else, a woman. Western society has until very, very recently used external genitalia to signify sex, so it has accepted that SRS does make one a woman. But I reject the premiss of SRS as "sex reassignment surgery," except as part of the western legal paradigm. Genital reconstruction is simply that -- a reconstruction of external genitalia to match internal brain state, and, therefore, mind.

I am as fully female as any person born a male can be in this lifetime. Well, excluding a lifetime of operations in the future that is, in that regard anything is possible or so it seems these days. But the fact that I was born a "normal male baby" is where I start. I grew up as a boy, was socialised as a boy, educated as a boy, and took my place in society as a boy. Yes, I did think I was "in the wrong uniform" but I cannot deny that the physical Will functioned and performed daily for years as a male in every regard. Nothing was wrong physically - and never was. There was nothing inherently wrong with the body that could be - or needed to be - corrected.

There was a problem with the mind, for it seems that little Will always saw things differently, even as he grew and as an adult. For he was placed in a world where there were males - like him physically - and females similar in thoughts. Will seemed to have more in common with the females, sharing interests and more, friendships and more, with the girls - later women - than with the boys - later men.

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But nobody knows what made Will think the way he did. There are theories, but no clear solution. Bailey and Blanchard both see this as something innate to Will when he was born, for most certainly he did not learn it. I am personally not sure...



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> Still, Will was able to keep on living, albeit with some difficulties. He felt an outsider, always travelling alone. Not able to join in with the other guys as there were few shared interests save business, and not able to fully share in the rites of women as... ..as he was not one. He learnt to hide what others disclose, and to manufacture secrets to share where really there were none. He tried to fit in to a world that was not his, to stay with an army although everything inside him said he should run to the other side. If Will was, as some suggest, always a woman, few shared that concept. Indeed, not even Will. He could identify what sex his body was, and while his gender was not consistent with that and caused problems, he did not know why that was.

That is what I felt like, for all those years. As a result, I made some poor decisions, career wise. Looking back, getting close to other males might give away how I felt, so I moved. I did not want to compete in the money side; I wanted to help on the emotional side. My clients - as a lawyer - loved me. Other lawyers respected me. My bankers were impressed with what I did, but noted that I did not seek the rewards that they saw as necessary.

Two marriages, each of ten years. My two wives wanted a male - and instead they got me. By the time I got to my forties, I knew something was wrong if not what. I lacked what others seem to have - a place within their communities of men or women. While I was in one, I felt as if I should be in the other.

So much for the bio. I am now - legally in every way according to this jurisdiction - a woman, a female. If I were to marry, our laws say I must marry a male. I have no desire to - I am lesbian. So my Yahoo ID is indeed legally correct. No doubt. My sex (externally) has been changed where it can be, but still in my medical appointments (and at my age, there are many) I am male, altered to female (i.e. a transsexual male).

Sorry, Willow, but if your doctors describe you as a "transsexual male" then they are wrong. I would be insulted.

Now, the surgeon did a good job, but he changed the outside of the body, not inside. So I still have a prostate and other male goodies, and lack ovaries and other female bits. I still have a 56 year old male skeleton that did not have female hormones until 50, and big hands and feet that fit with the male I was but not with the woman I have become. With SRS and hormones, and breast augmentation, my body appears as female is possible - but here the key word is possible.

Again, I can empathize with your history, but I note that you repeat that you were a male and are now a woman. OK. Your body "appears female," but isn't. So you fit in with B/B/L -- you are a male with a sexuality disorder, who prefers to have modified one's body and to live as a woman. Fine. You managed to get your documents changed, though I wonder if seeing "female" on your license doesn't bother you -- unless, of course, you just use "female" as a stand-in for "woman."

You can see how messy this gets, and as an attorney you should be able to see how dangerous. Based on what you've said, I don't consider you transsexual. Transgendered, yes, transsexual, no. You are still a male, who's modified his body and lives as a woman. If B/B/L is accepted as science, which I am hopeful it will not be, you could have your sex designation revoked. It will certainly be harder for other trans women who follow to get the changes made in the first place, if it is accepted that they were, and always will be, male. I can easily see genital surgery grinding to halt for a variety of reasons, because why should men have vaginas? In a free, liberal society, hey, no problem. But we don't live in such a society, and things seem to be getting both better, from a social perspective, and worse, from a judicial perspective (with some rays of hope, however).

For further clarification, I would consider a transsexual person who has always felt she's a girl as a woman, even without SRS. I believe she's entitled to have her documentation changed as long as she lives as a woman. But if you had come to me, said I'm an AG male but I live as a woman and I want SRS, I would give it to you, but I would bet many others wouldn't.



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My mind is still the same, having delighted in the new body. It feels right at home, in the right "army" with the right uniform. So I am happier by far and overjoyed that I can partake of the world of women as I always felt I should. Still, using reality, I know that while socially I am no longer an outside on most occasions and my external physical attributes place me better in society so that my mind is at peace. Inside I must accept the reality that such was contrived. I have no problem with so doing.

I hope you never have any problem with it, but the potential is there, and, as I've said, your acceptance of your condition makes it harder for non-AG trans women.

When I die, I will die a happier person having lived - at the close - a happier life. I have a wonderful partner, I respond to her in ways I could never do as Will, and my world has expanded with joy in daily pleasures.

But if the archaeologists later dig up my bones, they will say "male" without doubt.

Yes, your bones would say "male," or more correctly "affected by testosterone," and since your brain wouldn't have survived, the archeologist would classify you as "probably male." So what?

So, what am I?

In my non-scientific - but reality based approach - I see that I am a woman legally, and that is how I now fit into society and my life. But I cannot deny 50 years of life as Will - he was here before and I occupy the same physical body. By every common sense test I can apply save one, I am indeed a man in a body restructured to be female. I can be nothing else in this lifetime. I can wish I was, can dream I was, but all that I can do will not change how I was born and the life I had for fifty years. By whatever standards my common sense can apply - save for a fervent wish and all ways legally - I am indeed a male in a female's body.

Willow, you are able to live as you do because you used the then-current laws of society to allow you to restructure your body to that of a woman, and to have the state recognize it as such. But, as I've said, if medicine and then the law ever accept the B/B/L hypothesis, others like you will not have that opportunity. Religious Christians will not agree to SRS for men simply because they are more comfortable, or were feminine boys. They will consider you a fraud. If we don't base this in science now, we have little to be hopeful about in the future.

I am told by those that have demanded I cease my heretical ways that I am a woman. That defies the logic of my life - and indeed my being for many years. It denies reality and demands that I do so too. The only reason for this is that they say - and then assume - that I had a small part of my brain that was always, at the start and now - female. Even Blanchard and Bailey say that. The problem is, we do not know. That is a hope and promise, but not reality. Scientifically?? I suggest that science would say just as I do - a male changed into a female externally.

You're wrong about that. But now I am confused. At the top you said that you are a woman in all ways but one -- having been born male. Now you seem, in the above paragraph, to be denying you're a woman at all.

I can live with just what I am. I do not need to change my life, or hide, or accept unsubstantiated scientific theories.

Willow, you may be naive scientifically, but you're a lawyer, for God's sake. B/B/L is psychological trash which doesn't meet any standards for hard science. The work out of the Netherlands is hard science, published in hard science journals. Is it the final word? No. Do we need more data, better tests? Yes. But right now it IS the scientific truth as best we can explain it.



Transgender Map

I know I was born, in all normal ways, a male, and have become *as much of a female as I can in this life*, even if I always felt more woman than man. I had to live in this world as a man for fifty years - I learnt how to do that in almost every way.

You seem to think that having lived as a male for fifty years means something significant biologically. It does not. You may be ok with it because you truly are male, or you may be ok with it because you adapted to society as best you could. Scientifically it is irrelevant

So I happen across a theory that seems to tell me "why". It does not prove to be true, but offers reasons why it may be. It makes sense of my life as I lived it, and live it now.

Actually, Willow, nothing you have said says to me you are AG. Did you masturbate with women's clothing as an adolescent? That would make you either a male het crossdresser, or still possibly a trans woman with no outlet to express herself in her society. Or, did you, and do you, really "love yourself as a woman," which is the definition of AG? You must introject the heterosexual object of desire into yourself, and then love that image of yourself, to be AG. You said above that you're in love with your female partner. Doesn't sound like AG to me.

That is why I am happy to be autogynephilic. It give me an answer I can live with - without fabrications of truth, but as I really am (I shall not go into the sordid details other than to self diagnosis myself as being autogynephilic).

OK. I guess you might very well fit the criteria after all, and I won't pry. Though according to Bailey you should be proud of your autosexual sex life.

Some will insult me by saying I am still a man.

Why, based on everything you've already said, would you consider it an insult? You acknowledged above that you are a male, so you shouldn't be insulted or surprised if people consider you a man. You would have to be proud to stand up and tell the world you're a "male woman." (I don't see how that simplifies anything or gets us closer to the truth, but that's how you self-describe).

Legally, they are wrong

As I said, you're lucky you got your "sex" changed before B/B/L becomes standard.

- and after that, nobody (or so it seems to me) really knows. What I do know is that my condition, as described, is not "normal", in the sense that I was a physical male but felt like a female (or so I think - do we really *know* - what this really means, I think, is that I felt like I thought a female felt).

You've described here just what many trans women feel -- they feel they are females with a male body. They are actually intersexed. That's the point. Female brain nuclei, male genitalia.

Not being normal can be called many things. One word, which we now use in a pejorative manner is "deviant". But what does that really mean, shorn of the emotional content? It means.

"Deviant" adj. Differing from a norm or from the accepted standards of a society, or n. One that differs from a norm, especially a person whose behaviour and attitudes differ from accepted social standards. [Middle English deviaunt, from Late Latin devians, deviant-, present participle of deviare, to deviate. See deviate.]"



Transgender Map

Well, my goodness. Given the SRS and such, I would have to say that such meaning sums me up fairly well. When you use the word in your post, it is used as a negative term. But the actual usage is not too far from eccentric. There is no good or bad, is there? A person who opposed Hitler could be said to be deviant, in that he differed from the norm of his society. You see, it is not the work, but the subjective usage that makes it "bad", as it seems in your post.

Oh, please, Willow! Now you're being foolish. You have as much chance of having the word "deviant" shorn of its negative connotations, outside of statistical studies, as you have of being elected president. People mean deviant in terms of sex and gender precisely with its negative connotations. If you're proud of being a male sexual deviant, good for you. But I don't like it, my friends don't like it, and it could be deadly to the next generation of trans women (and men).

So, I can accept that I am a deviant male in a woman's body. Trapped?? Oh no, I love being here, just where I am.

Well, good luck to you, because if you get banned from the Women's bathroom, you'll have no one willing to help you out.

And that is what causes us to differ, I think. I am prepared, in a realistic manner, to accept that is what I am. You are not. I fail to understand what "scientific" tests you can apply to yourself, as a doctor, or to other transsexuals that changes this reality. You can of course support a different view of reality, one that is, I strongly suggest, delusional and seems to me to be unhealthy. But that is a choice we all have.

Now we're getting ugly. As I said, maybe you're safe and sound where you live, but you are not being realistic. And, no, there are no scientific tests just yet that can "prove" that I am who I say I am, pre-mortem. Fortunately the next generation of MRI scanners may do the trick, but we'll just have to wait and see. But, as I've said, the science is out there, it's been published in Nature and Science magazines, and you are the delusional one, along with B/B/L, if you refuse to even acknowledge it. That is the fundamentalist position.

Now, one last point. Bailey, you say, accuses us of lying. Well yes, in many ways he does. But he is hardly the first to comment on our revised memories. Anne Bolin certainly addresses the issue in "In Search of Eve". So does Hausman (in a more negative way) in "Changing Sex" and, more pointedly, Jay Posner in "Second Skins". The phenomena is certainly not new and is found in much clinical data on transsexuals. Why? Because the old ways demanded that to get what we wanted (i.e. SRS) we had to conform to a model, and that model was incorrect. Blanchard changed the model and now, I believe, I can fit the model without fabrication - or using a lawyer's method of saying what helps the cause and not what might hurt it. It seems to me that Bailey merely uses what is already known in this regard.

That doesn't change anything. Bailey calls us out-and-out liars. He doesn't say he understands why we had to lie in the past, as you do. He just says we lie, whenever we don't fit into his thesis. And, as I said, if B/B/L becomes medical dogma and general law, you will quickly see the opportunities for SRS dry up. You're a fool if you can't see that in this political climate.

Is Bailey/Blanchard/Lawrence science? As much as any "soft science" can be - in this case psychology and psychiatry. You cannot cut it with a scalpel or sew it together, that I grant. But neither can you prove totally any theory in those fields. And just how do you prove, scientifically as you suggest, "brain gender"? I see no proof at this time in history.

Check out the work of the Dutch neuroanatomists, and you'll see scientific "proof." Check out John McLachlan's work on lower animals for the concept of gender identity. Many people have done work on this, and you've acknowledged it as well by saying that you felt like a boy growing up. That's your gender identity.



"Gender Identity" is a concept with which I agree, but I know of no scientific proof - but lots of common sense - that says men and women are different mentally, not just physically. In fact, I think that much feminist thought denies there is any difference save socialisation.

True about second wave feminist thinkers.

Oh yes, I think it is clear that Bailey sees cross-dressers and transsexual women as a continuum, not as separate camps. As stated earlier, that does not make the TS community happy, for there is an antipathy between the two and a difference in how they identify. Perhaps, as Lenin stated regarding the Mensheviks, you have to hate those closest to you and deny that both of you are similar. I do not know, but I do see Bailey's point given the whole of his book, not just Part Three. One could also ask why transsexuals feel "superior" to cross dressers? Is it because they see the cross dresses as "deviant" and themselves as "normal women". I suspect that might well be true. And on this we do battle within the transgendered community, in the same way that others war over points of religion. I think both are silly.

Actually, I wish I could agree with you. On many issues, such as anti-discrimination law I think we can mix all gender variance together. As for legal rights, that's a whole different thing, and as I've said I don't care to be labelled a male sexual deviant, so, no, I don't care to be lumped together. Bailey is too obsessed with "grand theory" to even acknowledge the neuroscience, which makes him, as a psychologist, a pretty poor scientist.

And I don't care to label myself as superior to crossdressers, but I am a woman, they are men. Give us that, and I would bet most trans women would have no problem with crossdressers.

In closing, I also support laws that protect all - gays, lesbians, TS, TG and other minorities. I sing openly with the Vancouver Lesbian & Gay Choir, the only choir in B.C. to be gas bombed during a performance. You see, I accept that reality too, and as the choir replied to the question as to why we were so named, the reason is so that one day we shall not have to be. One day, perhaps, we will not need to be identified in the manner we are as well.

Hugs,
Willow

I agree with your last statement wholeheartedly.

A fourth exchange

Dear Dana,

I wonder at times if words do not do more to hinder than to help humanity as a whole. It seems that each and every word, even "is" has different meanings to different people. Regardless, I shall forward these posts to Andrea and she may use them as she sees fit. In any event, to move forward...

"Sorry, Willow, but that's a cop-out.<snip>

I do not see Bailey that way. He states there is a difference and that he had intended to include both initially. I think that he makes a valid point for non-inclusion and cannot classify that as a cop-out (i.e. A discussion of American politics, even though the United States and Canada occupy North America. It is right to state the



exclusion, why it is not included and, having done that, to exclude Canada from the further discussion). Had he not excluded them as he did, then that would have presented many further issues.

"That's ok, but it doesn't change the reality that what he does is literary or social criticism, not science."

What is or is not a science. I remember that debate from university days. I majored in "political science", which by name attempted to proclaim it was indeed a science. I never believed that. As to the "social sciences" or "soft sciences" and the "pure sciences", there continues to be the same debate - and distinctions. A side-track that we need not follow.

"Willow, if you don't feel that is who you are, that's fine. My point is that estrogen and genital reconstruction do NOT make you, or anyone else, a woman. <snip> -- a reconstruction of external genitalia to match internal brain state, and, therefore, mind."

Actually, we agree here, totally. One friend pointed to a spiritual being, an inner spirit if you will. I agree that a woman is more than a female body, but exactly what "makes" a woman from some cells and flesh is unknown at this time. The operation - as I tried to state, does the external job, not internal nor anything to do with "spirit". The problem here is that we go to the metaphysical or religious in a sense. We have faith and so we believe we are women. Now that, as an article of faith, I could also agree to. "Gender identity" is similar, but not the same. What is it? I do not believe we know. "I feel therefore I am"???? Perhaps.

"Sorry, Willow, but if your doctors describe you as a "transsexual male" then they are wrong. I would be insulted."

Well, they do not call me that, but it is in the charts. In fact, they are directed not to use such terminology to transsexual patients. Transsexualism is divided into two broad categories: Homosexual Transsexualism and Nonhomosexual Transsexualism. Please do not use these terms around your clients since they are backwards to the way the transsexual sees sexual orientation.

Counseling the Transsexual Client: A Brief Overview of Transsexualism for Mental Health Professionals

So I am not insulted at all when I peak into the charts. Should not a doctor or nurse be advised, if it not visually apparent, as to "what" I am, both for medical reason and so that they do indeed use the right pronouns and such in addressing me. The designation "F" does also appear, buy the way. Simply, being a transsexual woman is crossing over and blurring many liens, this is but one. It may, in fact, help them to deal with whatever emotional baggage they have as well.

"Again, I can empathize with your history, but I note that you repeat tha you were a male and are now a woman. OK. Your body "appears female," but isn't. So you fit in with B/B/L -- you are a male with a sexuality disorder, who prefers to have modified one's body and to live as a woman. Fine. You managed to get your documents changed, though I wonder if seeing "female" on your license doesn't bother you -- unless, of course, you just use "female" as a stand-in for "woman."

Oh dear. Now, I admit to a bit of a conundrum. I am not a male and really do not like being called one. Nor am I fully a woman, "scientifically" (that is where you started, was it not?). I am a transsexual woman and would appreciate simply being so identified if identity of myself is relevant to the discussion. I default to "woman" on government forms where there is no other choice (they rarely allow "Other"). I too have some feelings and the used of male or man in that context disturbs me - as much as it would you. I suspect that few of us are totally rational or logical in such matters. I shall ignore the barb at the end and no, it does not bother me at all. I live as a woman and am treated as one daily.



Transgender Map

"You can see how messy this gets, and as an attorney you should be able to see how dangerous. Based on what you've said, I don't consider you transsexual.

Well, you can, of course, call me what you wish - as long as you do not do so in my face, as it were. As Denny stated "If one is not transsexual before the operation, they certainly are after.". You see, you have one opinion, and not the ruling one at that. I do not agree, and shall continue to view myself as both a transsexual and a woman. "You are still a male, who's modified his body and lives as a woman. If B/B/L is accepted as science, which I am hopeful it will not be, you could have your sex designation revoked. .<snip>

Now, after drawing attention to my feelings on this point, it seems unnecessary to do so again. To me, you are allowing yourself to slip nicely into a pejorative manner, which I do not like. That will end the exchange rather quickly. I have not attacked your character or identity, and do not appreciate being told what you think of mine. To repeat, I am a transsexual woman and quite accept that.

"For further clarification, I would consider a transsexual person who has always felt she's a girl as a woman, even without SRS."

You go on to suggest document change. Legally, a terrible mess, and likely to be so for many years in our respective societies. This rather reminds me of a recent unpleasant experience of being called a "male" by a pre-op in a newsgroup. Legally, the two statements serve as a necessary bureaucratic "reason" to change all that nice paperwork. Without that, do you propose that we go back and forth at will, as in a Heinlein novel? As long as we use the identifier for any purpose, it needs some "proof" which the two affidavits provide. Still, your opinion.

"But if you had come to me, said I'm an AG male but I live as a woman and I want SRS, I would give it to you, but I would bet many others wouldn't." Thankfully, I already asked someone else - a few actually - and all agreed. Now, you see, I am tempted to respond in kind, which is wrong of me, I know. But once one is attacked the normal reaction. I shall try not to, honest. "I hope you never have any problem with it, but the potential is there, and, as I've said, your acceptance of your condition makes it harder for non-AG trans women."

My potential of nasty things to happen is the same as any post-op, I should think - or was I to view this as more pointed? As to making it harder, Blanchard actually made things easier at the Clarke, which was the initial reason for the AG theory. HE and Bailey both believe the operation is warranted for both types.

"..So what?"

I agree, it was a silly point.

"Willow, you are able to live as you do because you used the then-current laws of society to allow you to restructure your body to that of a woman, and to have the state recognize it as such."

As does every other person who is approved for SRS and subsequently changes her gender formally. Believe me, I am not alone.

"Religious Christians will not agree to SRS for men simply because they are more comfortable, or were feminine boys. They will consider you a fraud. If we don't base this in science now, we have little to be hopeful about in the future."



Transgender Map

The fundamentalist Christians presently do not agree that any SRS should be permitted - right now let alone with any changes in the DSM. Their dogma is totally against "mutation of god's works" (see "Transsexuality" by the Evangelical Association in England, from Amazon). Their opposition shall continue as it already is. To suggest anything else is a moot point. Will it get worse? No way it can.

"You're wrong about that. But now I am confused. At the top you said that you are a woman in all ways but one -- having been born male. Now you seem, in the above paragraph, to be denying you're a woman at all."

No, but confusion is bound to occur with any of us. At the start, you claimed the "scientific" ground. I suggest that any doctor, looking at me and you, would reach the same conclusion - a male *body* modified to appear to be a woman. Perhaps not at first sight, but certainly after a short internal exam.

Are you suggesting that science would regard our bodies as anything else??? And yes, in my opinion you and I are both the same in that regard, together with all other transsexual women. I fail to see that our physical bodies can be anything else.

Willow, you may be naive scientifically, but you're a lawyer, for God's sake. B/B/L is psychological trash which doesn't meet any standards for hard science. The work out of the Netherlands is hard science, published in hard science journals.

No, it is not and maybe never shall be "hard science (but see above, our bodies are). No one claimed it was a hard science. As to the Dutch and other studies, including LaVey) none have been definitive and to present then as any final conclusion is very misleading. The Dutch used. ...I could look it up, but I think it was around 10 brains.

"You seem to think that having lived as a male for fifty years means something significant biologically. It does not. You may be ok with it because you truly are male, or you may be ok with it because you adapted to society as best you could. Scientifically it is irrelevant"

Ah, here we go again. "Scientifically". Might I ask how long you lived within a male physical body? And, as a result, were you not treated as a male, educated and socialized as a male? I did for 50 years and that most certainly has some relevance to me - as does the pre-op item of any transsexual's life. That is when we decide, amongst other life issues, that we feel more like women than like men, inside. Biologically we were male inbody - which is why we seek a change in that body. Unless you grew up in some exotic location, and rather isolated as well, you were also in a male body, assuming you are a transsexual woman as well. That does raise a point. I have disclosed what I am - but have you?

As to "truly a male" - physically, yes. No doubt. Mentally, spiritually - no, far from it. I thought my commentary made that very clear. "Actually, Willow, nothing you have said says to me you are AG. Did you masturbate with women's clothing as an adolescent?<snip>. You must interject the heterosexual object of desire into yourself, and then love that image of yourself, to be AG. You said above that you're in love with your female partner. Doesn't sound like AG to me."

Broadly, yes. Did I love myself then, as a male? No - and that caused some issues. Do I love myself now? Yes. (I hasten to add that such is meant emotionally, not physically). And that comes from a feeling of congruence denied me before. As to a female partner, AG transsexual women may be het (as women) or bi, or homo, or asexual. B/B/L agree there. I happen to be lesbian, which is my *orientation* as opposed to my "gender identity". Did you not proclaim the validity of gender identity as a theory in your first post? "Scientifically"??

"OK. I guess you might very well fit the criteria after all, and I won't pry.



Though according to Bailey you should be proud of your autosexual sex life." You already did pry, and notwithstanding any other consideration, I did reply. Dates and places await an affidavit. I am proud of myself and who I am. Also of "what" I am without the little barb inserted by you above.

"Why, based on everything you've already said, would you consider it an insult? You acknowledged above that you are a male, so you shouldn't be insulted or surprised if people consider you a man. You would have to be proud to stand up and tell the world you're a "male woman." (I don't see how that simplifies anything or gets us closer to the truth, but that's how you self-describe)."

Actually, you come close to a term of endearment my partner uses, but that is not the point. As above, a transsexual woman is a woman. If you wish to use the terminology which now seems common (i.e. any AG is a "man") then go ahead, but I do not do that to others, even you.

"As I said, you're lucky you got your "sex" changed before B/B/L becomes standard."

Yes, I am lucky. Care to be raped and abused over six weeks? That was actually lucky for I was able to discover more of myself as a result. I know, a personal retort, but in keeping with the tone of your post. In fact, under B/B/L I would be approved for surgery as well, by telling my true story. Your statement assumed that your earlier opinion as to the result of the theory in practise is right, and I do not agree that it is. Just a comment. I stated "what this really means, I think, is that I felt like I thought a female felt)". None of us know what someone else "feels" like inside. When we say that we "understand" someone, we make a host of assumptions which may or may not be correct. "You've described here just what many trans women feel -- they feel they are females with a male body. They are actually intersexed. That's the point. Female brain nuclei, male genitalia."

You forgot the reverse. Or the many other variations of intersexuality. And the brain - little if any solid proof. If you say there is, behind the Dutch studies, please state what definitive papers you are referring to - the world would love to know!

'Oh, please, Willow! Now you're being foolish. You have as much chance of having the word "deviant" shorn of its negative connotations.<snip>., If you're proud of being a male sexual deviant, good for you. But I don't like it, my friends don't like, and it could be deadly to the next generation of trans women (and men)."

Now really. Law, medicine and every study uses jargon. When a word is used in a certain field of study, it has a limited meaning. In law, we use specific words which we define in a specific way, as happens in every discipline. As it happens, the definition of "Deviant" was taken from a general sue dictionary, not a medical one. The subjective connotation is vastly different, I agree. No, scientifically how do you use the word? No your day to day usage, but as a doctor and surgeon.

"Well, good luck to you, because if you get banned from the Women's bathroom, you'll have no one willing to help you out."

Now, I should have mentioned that I serve as an advocate - without charge - for transsexual women and men. I have indeed helped people with this specific issue. And if it happened to me, I would use president already established in this jurisdiction and yes, do it myself - as I happen to be the only TS lawyer that I know in British Columbia. I would hope that my community would help me as well, but am not optimistic in that regard. They lack the necessary skills.



And I would hope that others in our community would be there to assist as well - even if you are not. Oh yes, by the way, I would indeed assist you if such was required - I have a long history of doing just that - even for those I disagree with. Your point was?????

"Now we're getting ugly."

Really. And have you been sensitive to my feelings earlier in your post?? I this case, I did not make the accusation against you, but rather against a broad class.

"As I said, maybe you're safe and sound where you live, but you are not being realistic. And, no, there are no scientific tests just yet that can "prove" that I am who I say I am, pre-mortem. And without such proof, is your opinion "scientific"? No more than mine, or Blanchard's, I suspect. The scientific mantle is lost - you are just another one of us with a differing opinion.

"That is the fundamentalist position."

Let's just agree to differ on that usage.

"That doesn't change anything. Bailey calls us out-and-out liars. He doesn't say he understands why we had to lie in the past, as you do. He just says we lie, whenever we don't fit into his thesis."

Please, a quotation that confirms that. I believe Bailey states that we "lie" in very specific circumstances, to validate what we do - and thus to get SRS. As stated earlier, this is an accusation of long standing.

"You're a fool if you can't see that in this political climate."

Well, we do have budget cuts everywhere, granted. But the religious and other opponents are still the same - they do not differ drastically, nor shall they. The question is would you oppose a correct statement merely to ease the pressures on a minority? Of course, that opens to a much wider issue, which I shall ignore.

Check out the work of the Dutch neuroanatomists, and you'll see scientific "proof."

Ten +/- brains does not prove - in any science. Also, check out both

"Myths of Gender" and "Sexing the Body", both by Anne Fausto-Sterling, a world recognized biologist, who makes short work of the Dutch studies and others.

"Many people have done work on this, and you've acknowledged it as well by saying that you felt like a boy growing up. That's your gender identity.

I did not state that. I said I was a boy - meaning physically. I believe I took pains to point out that I did not feel comfortable in that body. You have distorted things, I fear. My gender identity is very different but it seems to me another use of the male insult as has occurred before in your post.

"Actually, I wish I could agree with you. On many issues, such as anti-discrimination law I think we can mix all gender variance together. As for legal rights, that's a whole different thing, and as I've said I don't care to be labelled a male sexual deviant, so, no, I don't care to be lumped together. Bailey is too obsessed with "grand theory" to even acknowledge the neuroscience, which makes him, as a psychologist, a pretty poor scientist.



Transgender Map

Now, I have to point out that earlier, you were prepared to grant a document change to anyone who lived as a woman (but not me). Here, you pull out the argument against granting a document change to others that you do not like. And why do you not like them? Or "not care to be lumped together". Are your issues showing, just a bit???

"And I don't care to label myself as superior to crossdressers, but I am a woman, they are men. Give us that, and I would bet most trans women would have no problem with crossdressers."

They do, all the time. Have you talked to any???

Fun??? I am not sure, Dana. If I were to call you a "quack" as a doctor, would that sound like fun to you? I feel that without stating anything about yourself, you have had a free ride to attack my life and times. No, not fun. And one difference is that I can respect your needs in that regard.

Regards,
Willow