TRANSGRESSIVE GENDER PERFORMANCE:
AN ACT OF PERSONAL AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

by

JOHN HECKEL

A dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

PSYCHOLOGY

MERIDIAN UNIVERSITY

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A transgression, in its most epic form, attacks, destroys, and then replaces an established paradigm. So it is not difficult to grasp the perceived danger inherent in the process of transgression. A transgression has the potential of facilitating the most daring and inventive adventures of the human spirit. Yet this creative aspect of transgression has been almost entirely neglected by Western societies. Even the word “transgression” has been vilified, and its original intent lost. The term comes from the Latin word transgredi, which means an action that carries a person across a boundary, into other worlds, including the mythic realms of demons, gods, and spirits. For me, this ancient definition is far more compelling and complex than its moralistic, modern connotation.

Jamake Highwater

The Mythology of Transgression
ABSTRACT

TRANSGRESSIVE GENDER PERFORMANCE:
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by

John Heckel

This study posed the Research Problem: What subjective states and transformative effects arise when transgressive gender performances are imagined, enacted, and witnessed? The hypothesis stated: imagining, enacting, and witnessing transgressive gender performances may suspend the imaginal structures associated with polarized gender identity. Imaginal Transformation Praxis served as the theory-in-practice for this study.

The literature review engages and considers sources drawn from across a wide array of disciplines, including psychology, sociology, performance studies, and anthropology. The literature reveals a lack of research focusing on the transformative effects of volitional transgressive gender performances.

The methodology, Imaginal Inquiry, exposed participants to experiences that were evocative, expressive, interpretive, and integrative. The primary experience studied was the transformative effects and subjective states that arise when transgressive gender performances are imagined, enacted, and witnessed.
The Cumulative Learning proposes that volitional transgressive gender performances, as viable polarized gender identity interventions, generate the psychic movement necessary to imagine and enact transformative alternative gender identities. Learning One proposes that performance allows us to imagine and observe ourselves and others within the realm of possibility. Performance is an engagement that moves us beyond what is actual and present, into contact with the possible, and when this is embodied, performance brings the possible home. Learning Two proposes that volitional gender performances can bring into awareness the friend and the gatekeeper, and the role they play in transforming the adaptive identity that is gender. Learning Three claims that volitional gender performances, with an engaged and non-critical observing I, question the origins and then expose the imaginal structures that serve as the scripts for our gender identities. Learning Four suggests that volitional transgressive gender performances can momentarily suspend the imaginal structures and dichotomous thinking of our polarized gender identities, facilitating a state of “not-knowing.” This state of “not-knowing” portends a momentary collapse of adaptive identity and may facilitate a shift into participatory consciousness.

The mythic context for this inquiry was grounded by the figure of Tiresias, the blind prophet of Thebes. The transformation of polarized gender identities facilitated by participatory consciousness could have a significant impact on gender relations.
## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................. 1
   - Research Topic
   - Relationship to the Topic
   - Theory-In-Practice
   - Research Problem and Hypothesis
   - Methodology and Research Design
   - Learnings
   - Significance and Implications of the Study

2. LITERATURE REVIEW .................................................................................................. 17
   - Introduction and Overview
   - Perspectives on Gender Identity
   - The Performance of Gender
   - Imaginal Approaches Within Performance
   - Indigenous and Cross-Cultural Gender Diversity
   - Conclusion

3. METHODOLOGY ............................................................................................................ 75
   - Introduction and Overview
Participants

Four Phases of Imaginal Inquiry

4. LEARNINGS............................................................................................................94

Introduction and Overview
Learning One: The Embodiment of the Imaginal
Learning Two: Observing as an Affirmation and a Criticism
Learning Three: Exposures, Origins, and Revelations
Learning Four: A Step into the Unknown

Conclusion

5. REFLECTIONS........................................................................................................147

Significance of the Learnings
Mythic and Archetypal Reflections
Implications of the Study
Recommendations for Future Research

Appendix

1. ETHICS APPLICATION FOR THE USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS .................................................................170
2. CONCEPTUAL OUTLINE ........................................................................................................175
3. CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE ............................................................................................180
4. INFORMED CONSENT ........................................................................................................188
5. FLYER ..................................................................................................................................190
6. A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS EMAIL ..................................................................................191
7. SCRIPT: INITIAL CONTACT VIA EMAIL ..........................................................................192
8. SCRIPT: INITIAL CONTACT VIA PHONE ........................................ 193
9. MAILED QUESTIONNAIRE ......................................................... 195
10. SCRIPT: NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE PHONE CALL .......... 198
11. EMAIL: NOTIFICATION OF NON-ACCEPTANCE ...................... 200
12. LETTER: MEETING NOTIFICATION AND INFORMATION .......... 201
13. SCRIPT: FIRST MEETING NOTIFICATION PHONE CALL ........... 203
14. MEETING ONE: SCRIPT .......................................................... 204
15. MEETING TWO, FIRST HALF: SCRIPT ....................................... 208
16. MEETING TWO, SECOND HALF: SCRIPT ................................. 218
17. MEETING THREE: SCRIPT ...................................................... 222
18. MEETING FOUR: SCRIPT ........................................................ 224
19. SCENE SUGGESTIONS: ONE THROUGH EIGHT .................... 226
20. SCRIPTED SCENES FROM CLOUD NINE ................................. 228
21. LETTER: THANK-YOU ............................................................ 233
22. SUMMARY OF DATA ............................................................. 234
23. SUMMARY OF LEARNINGS ..................................................... 251

NOTES ............................................................................................ 254

REFERENCES .................................................................................. 272
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Research Topic

The general focus area of this study is gender. The term “gender” has traditionally been used to designate the psychological, social, and cultural aspects of maleness and femaleness. Although disagreement exists as to the role of biology in the creation of what we understand as gender, we do recognize gender attribution as being very strongly linked to the decisions we make, most often based on biology regarding someone’s gender.¹ Some gender theorists also hold that gender attribution forms the foundation for the understanding of both gender role and gender identity.² Gender assignment is a special case of gender attribution that occurs only at birth. Gender identity reflects the individual’s own feelings towards whether he or she is a man or a woman, in essence a self-attribution of gender. Gender role is, in this context, related to a set of expectations about what behaviors are appropriate for people of one gender.³

Anne Fausto-Sterling credits sexologists John Money and Anke Ehrhardt with popularizing the separate categories of gender and sex in 1972. According to Fausto-Sterling, Money and Ehrhardt claimed that sex refers to “physical attributes and is anatomically and physiological determined,” while they conceived gender as “the internal conviction that one is either male or female (gender identity) and the behavioral
expressions of that conviction. The academic feminists of the seventies also argued that, while there were some reproductive differences between men and women, no major significant biological sex differences existed that could limit or deter gender identity. Much of the work of those feminists was based on the earlier theories and thoughts of Michel Foucault and his oft-sited *The History of Sexuality*. Walter Williams suggests that an entire group of historians and sociologist have taken inspiration from Foucault in suggesting that it is “inadequate to see sexuality as a biological constant.” Feminist sociologist Ann Oakley, a member of the group Williams is referring to, echoes the work of Foucault when she defines gender identity as being socially constructed and reflective of a particular culture. Williams also echoes those thoughts in arguing that gender and sexuality are largely influenced by the culture in which a person happens to be born and raised.

Judith Butler and her notion of the “performance of gender” emerge in the popularization of postmodern queer theories of the 1990s. There is no gender except that which is performed as gender, and the performing of gender constructs gender. If gender role is related to a set of expectations about what behaviors are appropriate for people of one gender, then inherent in the work of Butler and her theory of performativity is her speculation that gender is the performance of those embodied expectations. An essential question for Butler and other postmodern queer gender theorists including Adrienne Harris and Jessica Benjamin is: What is the basis of that performance?

*Imaginal Structure*, as defined by Aftab Omer, is one possible answer to that question. Omer defines imaginal structures,
Imaginal structures are assemblies of sensory, affective, and cognitive aspects of experience constellated into images; they both mediate and constitute experience. The specifics of an imaginal structure are determined by an interaction of personal, cultural, and archetypal influences. 

*Schema, script* and Wilhelm Dilthey’s *Erlebnis* (structures of experience) are parallel concepts that offer clarification and exploration to the inherent meaning in Omer’s imaginal structures. 

According to Butler, gender is the performance of a repetitious set of actions that, by their performances, create the social construct that is gender. Butler defines these performances as both the creation and the demonstration of gender. The performance of gender is one among many approaches to the understanding of gender identity. In this study performance finds most of its definitional basis and understanding in Omer’s Imaginal Transformation Praxis; the Gender Performance ideas of Judith Butler, Jessica Benjamin, and Adrienne Harris; the Performance Theories of Richard Schechner, Victor Turner, Erving Goffman, and Augusto Boal; and the indigenous and crosscultural research of Will Roscoe, Walter Williams, Sabine Lang, Serena Nanda, and Gilbert Herdt.

Throughout this dissertation the phrase *volitional transgressive gender performance* is employed. The choice of *volitional* to describe the voluntary nature of the transgressive gender performances of this study was most deliberate and purposeful. The focus on *choice*, inherent in volitional, brings to mind both the consciousness theories of Julian Jaynes and the mindfulness work of Ellen Langer. According to Langer, “Meaningful choice involves some awareness of the other alternatives that have not been selected. Through this awareness we learn something about ourselves, our tastes and
preferences.” The work of Jamake Highwater provides the foundational support for my use of *transgression*; its purpose as the defining adjective to gender performance in both the title of this dissertation and its Research Problem relates to Highwater’s focus on transformation. He states that “A transgression, in its most epic form, attacks, destroys, and then replaces an established paradigm.”

**Relationship to the Topic**

Imagine, if you will, Des Moines, Iowa sometime in 1965. I am coming to the end of my first year at University. It’s an unusually warm spring Friday evening, I have a date, and all is well with the world. Chris Carvell and I have just finished a late night walk across campus and are now saying our semi-erotic goodbyes, with scores of other young men and women, in front of Carpenter Dormitory. In the midst of last hugs, fondling and kissing, a familiar bell marks the passing of another Friday night as young women march reluctantly into Carpenter Dormitory. Last goodbyes are verbalized and waved as young men venture into the further narratives of the early hours of Saturday morning. I meet my two best friends, Art and Paul, at a designated corner, and in Paul’s car we are off to the International House of Pancakes to drink coffee and discuss Beckett and Brecht until three on that Saturday morning. It wasn’t until some 10 years later, while standing in front of a group of my own university students, that the full impact of that evening and morning struck home. At no time while Paul, Art, and I were looking for clever opportunities to use “nothing to be done ” at the International House of Pancakes, did we notice who was not present. We sat, we talked, we drank coffee, and we solved all
the world’s great problems, all the while failing to see the polarized nature of it all. At no
time during that freshman, or, for that matter, most of my sophomore year, did we
become cognizant of our polarized gender performances. Somehow, our own perception
and performance of what it meant to be young university men included the freedom to be
wherever we wanted to be at three in the morning, not surprising; what is both shocking
and surprising is that we were acting out gender identities based on imaginal structures
that included accepting that women our age did not have the same freedom and needed to
be secluded into Carpenter Dormitory at three on a Saturday morning.

Ten years after that warm spring night in Des Moines, Iowa, while trying to teach the
philosophical implications of the “nothing to be done” monologues of *Hamlet*, I realized the
full implications of that moment in my life, and have ever since vowed never again to not see
the “dormitories.” One of those “dormitories” was, of course, the performance of my feeble
and unenlightened attempts to teach plays such as *Macbeth* or *Hamlet* as if they were filled
with universal truth, as opposed to considering the possibility that they were “guy” stories. I
knew at that exact moment that I had indeed been guilty of teaching the masculine as
universal, and it was this realization that began to tease apart the imaginal structures that
informed those performances at the International House of Pancakes during the spring of
1965. I have shared this story with countless of my own students and have asked them to be
ever vigilant and in search of the “dormitories” in their own lives: the polarized notions of
gender that help create the imaginal structures, which act as the scripts to our insidiously
oppressive performance of gender. In front of my class, attempting to teach *Hamlet* as if it
contained universal truth, and at The International House of Pancakes, attempting to
understand Brecht and Beckett while oblivious to the missing women; both were extreme
experiences of the performance of polarized gender identities. At this juncture of my life and career, it seems most appropriate that my own search for “dormitories” has brought me to this more in-depth examination of gender identity performances.

**Theory-In-Practice**

This study finds its orientation shaped and crafted by *Imaginal Transformation Praxis* (ITP). ITP, as developed by Aftab Omer, consists of principles and practices that take an integrative approach to personal and cultural transformation. A number of key concepts and principles from Imaginal Transformation Praxis are essential to this study.

For this study, imaginal structures, psychological multiplicity, reflexivity, reflexive participation, adaptive identity, and participatory consciousness are among the most significant concepts of Imaginal Transformation Praxis. Omer defines *imaginal structures* as “assemblies of sensory, affective, and cognitive aspects of experience constellated into images that both mediate and constitute experience.”  

*Psychological multiplicity* refers to “the existence of many distinct and often encapsulated centers of subjectivity within the experience of the same individual.”  

*Reflexivity* is “the capacity to engage and be aware of those imaginal structures that shape and constitute experience.”  

Omer describes *Adaptive Identity* as the persona or mask individuals assume given the unavoidable trauma in life.  

*Reflexive participation* is “the practice of surrendering through creative action to the necessities, meanings, and possibilities inherent in the present moment.”  

Omer defines *participatory consciousness* as “states of consciousness which are unobstructed by a delusionary sense of a separate self.”
Some of the principles which Omer uses to elaborate on the before mentioned concepts and their interrelationship are: “Identity transformation, which entails a transmuting of, or shift in, those imaginal structures that mediate self experience.”

Any enduring and substantive change in individual behavior requires a transmuting of imaginal structures. Disidentification is a key dimension in the transformation of identity. “Transformative practices evoke initiatory experiences that integrate cognitive, affective and sensory experience and are concerned with the transformation of identity.”

**Research Problem and Hypothesis**

The Research Problem for this study is: What subjective states and transformative effects arise when transgressive gender performances are imagined, enacted, and witnessed? The hypothesis is: The imagining, enacting, and witnessing of transgressive gender performances may suspend the imaginal structures associated with polarized gender identity.

**Methodology and Research Design**

The methodology that this study employed is Imaginal Inquiry, an element of ITP. There are four phases of engagement in the Imaginal Inquiry process: Evoking, Expressing, Interpreting, and Integrating of experience. The methodology employed four group meetings with eight research participants. The intention of the first meeting was to provide basic introductions, to create an atmosphere of trust and vulnerability, and
to activate and introduce the physical and verbal aspects of performance necessary for the participation in the core evoking experiences. Part of the second meeting (The Gender Café) was designed to facilitate the core experiences. The third meeting facilitated group separation, concluding remarks, and culminating reflective journal writing. All of the meetings, except the final one, were contained within one weekend. The final meeting was held four weeks later, during which initial research learnings were shared and the response of the participants to those learnings were facilitated.

The core Evoking and Expressing experiences were contained within the Gender Café of the second meeting. The methodology for the first part of the second meeting contains preliminary Evoking and Expressing experiences that set the tone, introduced experiences and concepts, and built the trust necessary for full and active participation in the Gender Café. A somewhat unexpected outcome of the preliminary Evoking and Expressing experiences of session two was that they ended up providing key Interpreting aspects for several learnings. All group participation research meetings were videotaped, and that videotape was used in the data collection phase. The methodology for all research meetings also contained handwritten journal responses that were also used in data collection.

The Interpreting aspect of the methodology contains four steps: identifying key moments, responding to those moments, exploring the parallels and differences, and contextualizing in theory and myth. I identified key moments using a combination of the intuitive, narrative, and condensation approaches. Research meetings also included opportunities for the participants to engage in the interpretation phase of this methodology. Initial learnings were shared with the participants (research meeting four)
and their responses to those initial learnings were used in data collection. All research meetings were opened and closed in ritual, facilitating participant integration. Each research meeting contained various and multiple opportunities for participant sharing, again facilitating integration. The possibilities for the integration of the learnings of this study into a wider community are varied and numerous. Environments that value multiplicity (both individual and collective), reflexivity, and reflexive participation will find the learnings from this study valuable.

**Learnings**

A synthesis of the four learnings that resulted from this study found expression in one Cumulative Learning which claimed that: volitional transgressive gender performances, as viable polarized gender identity interventions, generate the psychic movement necessary to imagine and enact transformative alternative gender identities.

Learning One proposes that performance allows us to imagine and observe ourselves and others within the realm of possibility. Performance is an engagement that moves us beyond what is actual and present into contact with the possible, and when this is embodied, performance brings the possible home. During the actual “real time” research sessions, I was often preoccupied and focused on leading the activities causing me to miss key moments. During the data analysis phase of my research I came to rely on the video recording of those sessions more and more. Moments that I only vaguely recalled became vibrant, alive, and detailed in their representations on video.
Learning one emerged from that video and the way my videographer/co-researcher captured the embodiment of affect both during performance and during the group sharing about those performances.

The emergence of Learning Two was facilitated from data again made available by the presence of the camera—this time a more theatrical use of the camera. After the men had had extensive experiences in the witnessing and imagining an enactment of transgressive gender performances, I had the men speak directly to the camera. The men were asked to choose from two possible perspectives: Observing I speaking to the Doing I or the Doing I speaking to the Observing I. The choices the men made and the how and what of their articulations triggered Learning Two, which proposes that volitional gender performances can bring into awareness the friend and the gatekeeper and the role they play in transforming the adaptive identity that is gender.

Learning Three claims that volitional gender performances, with an engaged and non-critical observing I, question the origins and then expose the imaginal structures that serve as the scripts of our gender identities. This learning emerged from very specific times that key intersubjective field moments evoked, in me and my co-researchers, strong affective reactions. One such moment occurred close to the end of the afternoon of the second day. During a gender walking activity, the men filled the room with such projected gender specific energy that all of the co-researchers had expressed having been affected.

The video recording of the men’s transgressive gender performances and their sharing of those experiences provided the triggering moment for Learning Four. The video of the men’s culminating sharings captures the vulnerability, confusion, and
exhilaration seemingly caused by one of the participants total collapse of gender identity. Learning Four suggests that volitional transgressive gender performances can momentarily suspend the imaginal structures and dichotomous thinking of our polarized gender identities, facilitating a state of *not-knowing*. This state of not-knowing portends a momentary collapse of adaptive identity and may facilitate a shift into participatory consciousness.

**Significance and Implications of the Study**

The four individual learnings and the synthesized cumulative learning that emerged from this research suggest some implications and significance for a number of different constituencies. Having studied psychology as a young undergraduate student in the sixties, having spent almost 38 years doing and teaching theatre, and then at late mid-life returning to school to experience Imaginal Psychology not to mention spending the better part of seven years developing, facilitating and researching this study, I would like to begin by exploring the significance and implications this study had for its designer and facilitator, that is, myself.

After completing my class work at Meridian University in 2005, I began an internship with Catholic Charities in Eureka, California. I was fortunate enough to ultimately provide over 1,200 hours of therapy for Catholic Charities clients. I very quickly found a fascination and developed a skill in working with couples and with young boys who had culturally defined gender issues. It was during these internship
hours at Catholic Charities that I was also developing, researching, and structuring this research study.

I had always suspected that I might really enjoy couples therapy, but it took my work with Catholic Charities to clarify that suspicion, and it took my work with the men in this research study to clarify why I found couples work so stimulating. The energy dynamics of three people in a therapy session can best be understood and experienced in the way my participants experienced the Doing I, the Observing I, and the more theatrical Witnessing I during this research study. My experiences and learnings through this study have had a profound effect on how I do couples therapy. It is my understanding and appreciation of the Witnessing I that keeps part of me in tune with both partners, regardless of which partner is externally active at any moment. This study’s work in articulating a gender stance that finds its home in performance has also strongly influenced my work with couples. I have incorporated and assimilated the performance of gender into the context of Dan Wile’s work. I had Dan as an instructor for a couple’s therapy course at Meridian and participated in several training workshops with him in the intervening years.

This study and its learnings have also had a strong affect on how I approach and work with young boys who have culturally defined gender issues. While at Catholic Charities, I began to work with a number of young boys through court-mandated therapy. I remember very clearly the parent of a young 11-year-old boy I was seeing who was upset at discovering that his son was dressing up in his mom’s underclothes when he went to bed at night. After listening to dad’s concerns and finding out that my young client was secretly going through Mom’s dresser to search out her underclothes, I
suggested that Dad not be so concerned about his son’s nighttime attire, but instead he might suggest to his son that secretly going through Mom’s dresser was not the thing to do, and that if the son wanted, he, the dad, would take him out shopping to select and buy the underclothes he wanted. My response in that moment to the scared and confused dad came from pure instinct. It was instinct contextualized by the work I was doing structuring this study around gender as a performance.

While going to school, the nature and dimension of paradox, the intersubjective field, and the pitfalls of dichotomous thinking had all been more or less academic understandings. I found Smith and Berg’s *Paradoxes of Group Life* a profound reading experience. Their theories and speculations on the nature of paradox and the intersubjective field of group life were thought provoking. I was especially intrigued by the concept that one member of a group can express feelings held unconsciously by other members, or the group as a whole, as articulated by Smith and Berg: “It is possible for an individual to express a feeling on behalf of all the members of the group; since that member has expressed it, others are free to have different feelings.”  

It took my work with the participants of this research study to fully and somatically appreciate those words. Bill (pseudonym), one of my research participants, echoed the words of Smith and Berg after a particularly vulnerable group sharing: “He said it, so I didn’t need to, I was free to share other feelings.” It was in that moment that I, as group facilitator, began to fully experience and hold the paradox of the intersubjective field. This has had a liberating affect on my work with groups and couples.

My discoveries about the nature of adaptive identities and the nature and origins of dichotomous thinking, of which gender may very well be the most basic, have also
strongly affected the way I approach therapy. I found my discoveries echoed in the words of Stephanie Dowrick:

You can encourage in yourself a vital flexibility of perception which mocks the dualistic thinking (right/wrong; black/white; woman/man; rich/poor; deserving/undeserving) upon which racism, sexism, and social and economic exploitation depend for their (non) sense.  

The men of this study taught me the nature of letting go of long-held binaries; they modeled for me the ability to venture into the unknown and exist in the not-knowing world of gender and to discover new gender possibilities in that world. I enrolled at Meridian University for a number of different reasons, one of which was that, there, my experiences as a theatre practitioner were valued. I was thrilled at the opportunity of exploring the various merging points of theatre and psychology. Once enrolled and actively engaged with my cohort, I became drawn to the different and varying concepts inherent in Imaginal Psychology. I soon found a home for the convergence of the arts and psychology. It is my hope that this study and its learnings join the conversational dialogue of Imaginal Psychology that is being explored and further developed at Meridian. Within the context of what Jessica Benjamin articulates and this study suggests, “The frame of gender creates a false identity,” the exploration of gender as an adaptive identity might add to the understanding of all constructed adaptive identities. The work of this study in the exploration of performance as a vehicle for a more comprehensive understanding of the origins and nature of imaginal structures might help in the further development of Omer’s Imaginal Transformational Praxis. My exploration of the performance triad of the Doing I, Observing I, and the Witnessing I might also inform and contribute to the core curriculum’s ongoing exploration in the Imaginal Process course sequence, of the archetypal Friend and the gatekeeper figure.
Imaginal Psychology, with its post-modern inclusiveness, values a wide variety of approaches to the doing of therapy. I would also like to think this study has significance and relevance within this world of the doing and participating in therapy. The gender as performance stance, that this study explores, has implications for any therapist working with the ever increasing culturally suggested issues triggered by gender related concerns. The work of drama therapists might be significantly affected by the suggestions and learnings from this study with transgressive gender performances study. The work of this study with those same transgressive gender performances would also seemingly have implications for the ever increasing number of men’s groups and their desires to find new and effective ways of dealing with tolerance and acceptance.

Tolerance and possible acceptance of and towards any disenfranchised group is greatly enhanced through personal interaction with that group. The very nature of our multicultural and multiethnic society invites successful movements towards acceptance and tolerance. As we indeed become more of a global community, we are ever encouraged to understand, tolerate, and value a wider array of cultural and life style perspectives. The ability to make those changes, to have those insights, and value those perspectives, can be brought about by a movement towards reflexivity that allows for the transmutation or deconstruction of the imaginal structures that constitute experience. As psychologists deal with ever more present polarized gender issues, gender inequality, and gender-based violence, as our society continues its struggle with same sex marriage, and as we continue to struggle with and understand child and spousal abuse, the need for ever less polarized gender identities becomes clear. Might not the imagining, enacting, and witnessing of transgressive gender performances facilitate expressions of gender
identities that speak to inclusiveness and not polarization? Transforming the definition of what it means to be a man is a key step in the move towards gender equality and reducing gender-based violence.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction and Overview

The Research Problem posed in this study was: What might be the transformative effects on heterosexual male gender identity when transgressive gender performances are imagined, witnessed, and enacted. The literature review that follows attempts to move through the relevant discussions towards an understanding of the context of that Research Problem. The literature review is divided into the following sections: Perspectives on Gender Identity, The Performance of Gender, Imaginal Approaches within Performance, and Indigenous and Cross-cultural Gender Diversity.

The first section, Perspectives on Gender Identity, attempts to examine and summarize theories and writings that articulate perspectives informing how gender identity takes shape, how gender roles are prescribed, and how gender assignment decisions are made. This section examines some of the major biological theories that many credit for holding the basis for gender decisions and also examines the arguments that support the direct links between sex assignment and gender assignment. The theories in this section do ultimately support the notion that gender identity is primarily socially constructed and open to both change and intervention.
The second section, The Performance of Gender, uses as its focus the works and theories of Judith Butler, Jessica Benjamin, Adrienne Harris, Mary Watkins, et al. to give meaning and focus to the concept of gender performance. This section attempts to examine the literature that precedes and informs the gender performance theories of Butler and explores some of the theories that have been influenced by Butler’s work, in particular the work of Jessica Benjamin, Adrienne Harris, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. This section elucidates the commonalities and differences in various approaches to Butler’s theories of the performance of gender. Also examined, in this section, is the work of those attempting to describe and understand what exists as the basis for any performance of gender, in consideration of the apparent contradictions within some of Butler’s later writings.

The third section, Imaginal Approaches within Performance, investigates the theories of Erving Goffman, Richard Schechner, Victor Turner, Wilhelm Dilthey, Jerzy Grotowski, et al. from an Imaginal Transformation Praxis perspective. This section is divided into two sub-sections: Performance Theory and Imaginal Approaches to Performance. An attempt is made within this section to demonstrate the influence and revised thinking that has occurred since the articulation of the post-modern theories of Butler, Schechner, Turner, et al. and how their thoughts, concepts, and ideas parallel those of Omer’s post-modern Imaginal Transformation Praxis.

The fourth and final section, Indigenous and Cross-Cultural Gender Diversity, investigates the research and theories of Herdt, Roscoe, Lang, Williams, and Nanda. This section is also divided into two sub-sections: Gender Diversity in Native North America, which examines gender diversity within native societies of North America; and Cross-
Cultural Gender Diversity, which examines gender diversity among the people of Siberia, India, and Polynesia. Examining both indigenous and cross-cultural variations of gender diversity facilitates a consciousness towards the cultural construction of both sex and gender in all cultures. An attempt is made to examine gender diversities and identities, which might be “practically unimaginable to people of different cultures,” with an aim to de-stabilize binary, dichotomous, and hegemonic western gender categories.\(^2\)

**Perspectives on Gender Identity**

The general focus area of this section is gender and gender identity. This focus examines and summarizes the theories that articulate perspectives on how gender identity takes shape, how gender roles are prescribed, and how gender assignment decisions are made. This section also examines some of the major biological theories that many credit for holding the basis of gender identity, and, additionally, examines the arguments that support the direct links between sex assignment and gender assignment. The section then examines theories critical of any direct gender/sex link.

The term gender has traditionally been used to designate the psychological, social, and cultural aspects of maleness and femaleness. Educators in the field, during the 1960s and the early 1970s, were careful to draw a clear distinction between sex and gender. Sex, they told their students, was the purview of biology, anatomy, and hormones while gender was an achieved status, constructed culturally, psychologically, and socially.\(^3\) In doing so, these theorists took their lead from one of the earliest separation of sex and gender theorists, Karl Ulrich. Ulrich’s objections to paragraph 143 of the Prussian Penal
Code of April 14, 1851 resulted, in 1864, in a pair of “pseudonymously” self-published pamphlets. Ulrich’s devoted opposition to P.143, which stipulated harsh punishments “consisting of up to five years at hard labor and accompanied by the loss of civil rights during the punishment for anyone convicted of unnatural fornication between people and animals, as well as between persons of the male sex,” was based on his personal devotion to the belief that he himself “had a male body but a female mind.”

Disagreement exists as to the role of biology in the creation of what we understand as gender. We do recognize gender attribution as being very strongly linked to the decisions we make, most often based on biology, regarding someone’s gender. Gender theorists Kessler and McKenna hold that gender attribution forms the foundation for the understanding of both gender role and gender identity. Gender assignment, they argue, is a special case of gender attribution that occurs only at birth and gender identity reflects the individual’s own feelings towards whether he or she is a man or a woman, in essence a self-attribution of gender. They also argue that gender role is, in this context, related to a set of expectations about what behaviors are appropriate for people of one gender.

Anne Fausto-Sterling, as stated previously, credits sexologists John Money and Anke Ehrhardt with popularizing the separate categories of gender and sex in 1972. It was Money, according to Rachel T. Hare-Mustin and Jeanne Marecek, who concluded that there were four “biological imperatives that can be related to human sex—menstruation, gestation, and lactation for females and impregnation for males.” According to Fausto-Sterling, they claimed that sex refers to physical attributes and is anatomically determined, while they conceived gender as the internal idea that one is
either male or female (gender identity) and the behavioral expressions of that conviction.  

Momin Rahman and Stevi Jackson credit Money and Robert Stoller as first using the term gender as a social concept in the 1950s and 1960s. They used the term to describe “socially learned aspects of male and female behavior as distinct from the biological categories male and female.” The incorporation of the term gender into psychological, sociological, or anthropological discourse did not happen overnight. Ann Oakley is also given some credit for introducing the term gender into popular academic discourse with her 1972 publication, Sex, Gender, and Society, in which she argued for gender to be understood as being a product of culture, rather than one of biology. Gayle Rubin’s work on marriage, kinship, and reproduction published in an article in 1975, entitled The Traffic in Women: Notes on the “Political Economy” of Sex, was also considered influential in shaping the sex/gender discourse. As late as 1978, however, one can still find informative and oft-cited material, such as Peter Farb’s Humankind, that theorizes about male and female relationships without ever using or defining the term gender.

The academic feminists of the seventies also argued that, while there were some reproductive differences between men and women, no major significant biological sex differences existed that could limit or deter gender identity. The feminist arguments of the seventies, and the hopeful optimistic indicators of change like those reviewed and listed by Beoku-Betts and Grant, would seem to indicate a movement away from searching out sex differences. According to Fausto-Sterling, however, the hunt for sex differences to explain gender continues its “long and sorry history.”

By all accounts, Simon Baron-Cohen, with his 2003 book The Essential Difference, is one of the latest academic psychologists or sociologists to submit his
thoughts and research regarding the profoundly difficult questions of gender.\textsuperscript{14} Other entries and examples of course exist, but Baron-Cohen’s work is the most cited by others who believe in significant biological sex differences and is scorned and criticized by those who do not. It should also be added that his entry, and not that of others, was the subject of a cover story in Time magazine. Rosalind Barnett and Caryl Rivers, for example, entitled their 2004 entry into this conversational enclave \textit{The Same Difference} in reference to Baron-Cohen and suggest: “despite some outlandish statements, Baron-Cohen is widely cited on the issues of gender differences in the brain.”\textsuperscript{15} Louann Brizendine, in her commercially popular 2006 \textit{The Female Brain}, cites four of Baron-Cohen’s studies but none of the work of Fausto-Sterling.\textsuperscript{16} Deborah Rudacille, also in 2006, cites Baron-Cohen as one of her primary sources in \textit{The Riddle of Gender}. She devotes some six pages to his ideas and research and suggests in her introduction:

\begin{quote}
I’ll have more to say about Baron-Cohen’s hypothesis later, but for now it’s enough to point out that it does provide an explanation for the kinds of everyday differences we notice between men and women—and that the hypothesis is viewed as reactionary by those who deny any essential biological difference between male and female brains.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

There are of course also those who cite the work of Fausto-Sterling and do not recognize Baron-Cohen and his research at all. Lesley Rogers’s \textit{Sexing the Brain} is one such exploration of the science of sex differences.\textsuperscript{18}

With the entry of Cordelia Fine’s \textit{Delusion of Gender} in 2010, some seven years after Baron-Cohen’s influential entry into the sex/gender conversational enclave, we have the first Baron-Cohen/Fausto-Sterling critical comparison documented in one source. Fine’s work is extremely well researched and documented. She takes each of Baron-Cohen’s arguments for biological male/female brain differences and poses plausible
alternative hypotheses.19 A central and oft-cited Baron-Cohen theory is that women are better at empathy according to his developed empathy quotient scores. Fine’s counter arguments rely on, among others, the studies of Nancy Eisenberg and Randy Lennon in affective empathy, Mark Davis and Linda Kraus in good empathizers, and William Ickes, who suggests in his book *Everyday Mind Reading* that “most perceivers may lack the kind of metaknowledge they would need to make valid self-assessments of their own empathic ability.” 20 In the end, Fine debunks what she refers to as the “pseudo-scientific myth” of hardwired differences between men and women’s brains and introduces the phrase “neurosexism” to describe the work of Baron-Cohen, et al.21

Before defending the theories that male and female brains are significantly different, Baron-Cohen attempts to articulate his own awareness of the political incorrectness of those theories: “the subject of essential sex differences in the mind is clearly delicate.” 22 Baron-Cohen believes that compelling data exist to demonstrate that the brains of men and women are designed to perceive the world differently. He goes about methodically reintroducing theories of the sex differences of brain size, sex differences in the size of the corpus colossum, sexual differences when it comes to fetal testosterone, sex differences regarding the amygdala, and of course the previously cited empathic differences. A careful comparison between the sources used by Baron-Cohen and those critiqued and questioned by Anne Fausto-Sterling and Cordelia Fine indicate Baron-Cohen brings not much that is new into the discussion.23 Amanda Schaffer points out that there is something strange about equating empathizing with the female brain, when “the majority of women do not claim to have a predominately empathizing focus.” 24 According to Fine, Schaffer asked Baron-Cohen about this, he “admitted that
he’s thought twice about his male brain/female brain terminology, but didn’t disavow it." 25

The reports by Baron-Cohen, Brizendine, Rudacille, et al., which purport to advance neuro-scientific evidence suggesting significant gender differences hardwired into the brain, raise some ethical concerns. Thomas Morton, at the University of Exeter, asked one group of participants to read an article that presented gender differences in thinking and behavior as biological, stable, immutable, and as scientific facts. Another group read a similar article, but one that presented the material as a debate among the scientific community.

The fact article led people to more strongly endorse biological theories of gender difference, to be more confident that society treats women fairly, and to feel less certain that the gender status quo is likely to change. It also left men rather more cavalier about discriminatory practices; compared with the men who read the debate article. Interestingly, for men who tend to view that sex discrimination is a thing of the past, the appeal of essentialist research is enhanced by evidence that the gender gap is closing.26

On a similar note, Carol Dweck and colleagues have discovered that what you believe about intellectual ability—“whether you think it’s a fixed gift, or an earned quality that can be developed”—makes a significant contribution to the shaping of your behavior, persistence, and performance.27

Fine articulates and references these neuro-science ethical concerns by suggesting that, once these supposed facts are out in the public, they become part of the culture and that here they reinforce and legitimate gender stereotypes, “helping to create the very gender inequalities that the neuroscientific claims seek to explain.” 28 Kessler and McKenna summarize both their passion and the intellectual argument concerning these
ethical issues when they suggest the following hope and warning in their oft-cited and influential *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach*:

As long as the categories ‘female’ and ‘male’ present themselves to people in everyday life as external, objective, dichotomous, physical facts, there will be scientific and naïve searches for differences, and differences will be found. Where there are dichotomies it is difficult to avoid evaluating one in relation to the other, a firm foundation for discrimination and oppression. Unless and until gender, in all its manifestations including the physical, is seen as a social construction, action that will radically change our incorrigible propositions cannot occur.  

As far as Brizendine and her book, *The Female Brain*, which cites hundreds of studies and adamantly supports Baron-Cohen, a review of the book and her research, by R. M. Young and E. Balaban in a 2006 edition of *Nature*, suggests “despite the author’s extensive academic credentials, *The Female Brain* disappointingly fails to meet even the most basic standards of scientific accuracy and balance. The text is rife with facts that do not exist in the supporting references.”  

It may very well be that the kind of scholarship Baron-Cohen, Brizendine, Rudacille, et al. consider valid and significant is the very reason that Fausto-Sterling published a revised edition of her *Myths of Gender: Biological Theories about Women and Men* in 1992, the original of which was published in 1985. Once having decided to “fight this particular battle,” Fausto-Sterling does so by adding a new chapter specifically addressing the sex differences of the brain and an afterward that attempts to clarify the point that, even if there are some minute sex differences in the brains of males and females, without complete social equality, we cannot know for sure what they are.  

As asked by this author via email whether she had read Baron-Cohen’s 2003 work and whether she was willing to comment on that work, Fausto-Sterling replied that she had not read Baron-Cohen’s work. It may very well be that Fausto-Sterling was no
longer interested in giving energy to this particular aspect of the gender discussion and was heeding the advice of Hare-Mustin and Marecek when they suggest:

The energies of feminists are deflected from questions of their own choosing in order to counter exaggerated claims of difference, refute claims of female deficiency, and oppose policies and practices based on those claims. Moreover, continued attention to debates on gender differences heightens the importance of those debates. By joining the debate on “female nature” and “women’s place”, feminists inadvertently lend credence to that debate.³³

Fausto-Sterling’s next book, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*, which took her some six years to write, allowed her to follow what she was then truly interested in: the construction of sexuality. Her contention is that any theory of sexual construction that is based on the binary opposites of male and female is by its very nature heterosexually based and oppressive to any other gender performances. Her investigation of transexualism leads her to articulate theories based on a limited number of multiple sexualities.³⁴ Fausto-Sterling takes an interesting turn by introducing the critical voice of Suzanne Kessler to suggest some major problems with her own multiple sexual theories. Fausto-Sterling then becomes an advocate for Kessler’s “non-discrete category” sex theory, that is, all genital categorization are “phenotypes with no particular clinical or identity meaning.”³⁵ In *Gender Matters*, Bill Maurer, while discussing the works of Oakley, Butler, and Beauvoir, suggests that sex, like gender, must also be seen as “constructed and social.”³⁶ This point of view is also shared, of course, by Fausto-Sterling and any number of her colleagues.³⁷

The various arguments concerning the relationship of gender and sex owe much to the research involving transgenderism and transexualism. Much of this work is highlighted in Belinda Sweeney’s “Trans-ending women’s rights: The politics of trans-
inclusion in the age of gender” published in *Women’s Studies International Forum*. The basis of her article is an all-inclusive examination of *The Trans Inclusion Policy Manual for Women’s Organizations* that was published and sponsored by the British Columbia Human Rights Commission in 2002. Sweeney clearly interprets the *Trans Inclusion Policy Manual for Women’s Organizations* to contain wording that protects gender expression as a human right, and thus, the right of men (sex) to gender identify as women (gender), and that these rights should be protected through “gender identity anti-discrimination legislation.” 38 The idea that gender can and might be protected as a human right causes great concern from any number of perspectives. Feminists, who long have struggled for “women-only spaces,” see their goals of lowering the incidents of violence against women in danger by allowing “men” as transgendered women access to those “women only spaces.” Sweeney, in her concluding remarks, argues for safe transgendered or transsexual space and argues against allowing trans people access to women’s safe space. Her arguments would seem to support the “limited category” gender theory that Fausto-Sterling first submits but then rejects. The biology of sex difference and its effect on gender is, of course, also raised again with any consideration of “trans people.” Sweeney, in referring to the manual in question, focuses on the section entitled *Gender and the Brain*:

According to the theories of brain sex study, the brain supposedly undergoes a ‘hormone wash during a crucial stage in fetal development. An abundance of testosterone will create a boy brain, while a lack of testosterone will ensure a ‘girl brain’. This theory... allows for the possibility of a ‘male’ brain to be situated in a female body, and a female brain to be located in a male body, thus, as they put it, ‘making trans people natural in that sense’. 39

Thus, the paradoxical dilemma: transgendered people using a biologically restrictive argument for the liberation of gender. While the dilemmas of transgendered
and transsexual peoples evoke understanding and empathy, they do not shake the foundations from which feminists such as Oakley, who is credited with introducing the term gender as early as 1972, construct their notions of gender. Once having defined the masculine and feminine as not being biologically-given conditions, she goes about doing a very thorough examination of what may be the results of the “acting out” of “normal” gender identities. She describes, for instance, that the only explanation that accounts for the totality of male aggression and violence is that this is incorporated into what men take as “normal” gender relations.40 These characteristics of aggression and violence, according to men, are a normal part of what they do as part of their performance of male gender identity.41

This section has traced the literature that places gender identity into a context, its relation to the biological factors around sex, and ultimately comes to the conclusion that gender identity is mostly socially and culturally constructed and consequently open to restructuring and intervention. Much of this conversation focuses on the work and examinations of Anne Fausto-Sterling: the literature attempts to demonstrate her influences and contributions to the post-modern conversation surrounding gender identity.

The Performance of Gender

This section explores the literature around and theories involved with the concept of the performance of gender. The articulation of gender performance relies mainly on post-modern feminist scholar Judith Butler and various other relevant gender theorists
such as Jessica Benjamin, Adrienne Harris, and Carol Gilligan. Significant theories pertaining to what exists before any acting out of gender takes place are also examined. An examination of the influence Butler’s post-modern gender performance theories have had on understanding, both the sociological and psychological aspects of gender relationships, is also examined in this section. Hanne Blank sources Butler and her work in the 1990s with her definition of gender in 2012:

Gender refers to all the manifestations of masculinity or femininity that are not immediately, demonstrably biological. These include mannerisms, conventions of dress and grooming, social roles, speech patterns, and much more. A useful way to think about it is that we have biological sex—it is inherently present in our bodies—but we do gender.  

Moya Lloyd finds that Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* was one of the most influential books of the 1990s, suggesting that it “was routinely cited in disciplines from literature theory to cultural studies, sociology to political theory, philosophy to performance studies.”  Another critic cites Butler as the “single most cited feminist theorist of the 1990s.”  Another critic suggests that *Gender Trouble* “rocked the foundations of feminist theory.”  Lloyd suggests that Butler is credited with defining “the way that the relation between feminism and post-modernism has played out but also with setting the terms of the feminist debate about identity both in the US and elsewhere.”  

The concepts of *acting out* gender by Oakley, the *performance of gender* and the *doing of female and male* by Kessler and McKenna, the *doing of gender* by West and Zimmerman, and that gender is something that we *do and perform* by Blank, are all based on and reflect the thoughts, spirit, and theories of Judith Butler, considered by many the most controversial and influential gender theorist of the last 30 years.  It is not that she
was the first to articulate the concept of performing or doing gender; social psychologist Carol Travis often uses the phrase “doing gender” in her ground-breaking book, *The Mismeasure of Woman*. Butler was, however, the first to contextualize the doing of gender in a post-modern queer theory perspective. One of the better overviews and analyses of Butler’s work is done in *Theorizing Gender*, by Rachel Alsop, Annette Fitzsimons, and Kathleen Lennon. Lloyd also does a complete review of Butler’s post-modern gender theories in her addition to the Key Contemporary Thinkers series: *Judith Butler*. Another outstanding overview of Butler’s theories, and especially her connections with the work of Foucault, is contained within William Turner’s *A Genealogy of Queer Theory*. Donald Hall can find an excellent overview of Queer Theory and Butler’s role in its post-modern articulation in *Queer Theory*. Hall credits Butler with strongly influencing the American Psychoanalytic Association and the American Psychological Association in reassessing some of their stances on homosexuality. An overview of Butler’s theory of performativity and its relationship to post-modern performance theories is outlined in *Professing Performance* by Shannon Jackson.

Judith Butler herself did not envision the storm of controversy her *Gender Trouble* would create when it first came out in 1990. In the introduction to the 1999 version, which is the basis for this essay, she goes to some length to explain what she in fact had in mind when she first published *Gender Trouble*: There is no gender except that which is performed as gender, and the performing of gender constructs gender.

If the desires and needs of transgendered people created a stir among the feminist gender community, so, too, did Butler’s gender performative theories. If nothing exists
before the performance of it, and if only the performance of it makes it so, then there are
no women as such within the feminist community.\textsuperscript{55} Joanne Trevenna’s interpretation
seems both accurate and precise; Trevenna argues that Butler believes there is no
\textit{established subject} prior to gender acquisition, since gender identity is a fundamental
aspect of the formation of the social subject. If that follows, then what becomes the basis
of feminism, if in fact there is no such a priori subject position as woman?\textsuperscript{56} Butler
herself argues, and Turner explains much of her argument, that there really is no choice
in those performances, in that all the performers of gender have had a gender assignment
made about them previous to the performance, and so no one inhabits society without
having already become gendered ala Kessler and McKenna’s gender assignment.\textsuperscript{57} If we
then admit that any performance of gender is based and informed by a gender assignment
that has been made at birth, what does, in fact, exist before the performance of gender?

Any serious attempt to argue for the existence of “the something” that is, in the
Butler sense, performed and would in fact be the a priori subject position of woman,
would ultimately turn to Sandra Bem’s gender schema theory and G. D. Levy’s ideas
around gender scripts.\textsuperscript{58} According to Bem, there are gender schemas that exist prior to
the performance of gender, and these schemas inform the performance of gender to which
Butler refers. Gender may actually be created by the performance of gender, as Butler
argues, but that performance is based on the perceptual lens (schema) for which Bem
argues.\textsuperscript{59} Other researchers, such as Levy, have supported and expanded the work of
Bem, with the introduction of terms such as “gender scripts.”\textsuperscript{60} Levy argues that
children begin at a very young age to sort and categorize their world from these scripts,
and that gender scripts are particularly important to the thought processes of developing
children. He further argues that any occurrence that is inconsistent with a gender script is likely to be ignored, and this script is largely predetermined by the previously mentioned gender assignment. He would argue that these scripts are in fact the basis for Butler’s performance of gender. 61

While Butler recognizes various aspects of what actually constitute gender performances in *Gender Trouble*, her later works, as represented by her article “Burning Acts: Injurious Speech,” published in Parker and Sedgwick’s *Performativity and Performance* (1995), go into much greater detail in deconstructing the very nature of those performances. She writes, “What does it mean for a word to not only name, but also in some sense to perform and, in particular, to perform what it names?” 62 Butler’s gender performing deconstruction of language echoes other research and theories in the field. Robert Hopper, for instance, in his well-documented account of linguistic issues, voices many of Butler’s concerns. 63 Though Butler is given a great deal of the credit for coining the phrase “gender performativity,” sociologist Erving Goffman is given credit for formulating many of the concepts of “identity performances,” upon which many critics assume Butler bases much of her gender performance work. 64 According to Goffman, speakers are actually constructing narrative performances in their attempts at communication; they are not involved in giving information, but in giving shows. All identities, according to Goffman, are situated and accomplished with an audience in mind. 65 Not all of Butler’s critics assume the inherent Goffman influence. Lloyd among others suggests that to assume that Butler’s account of performativity “was indebted to that of sociologist Erving Goffman” is erroneous. 66
Bringing into question Butler’s notion that the doing is the it, what is there, then, before the doing of it? Butler herself states; “Gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original; in fact, it is a kind of imitation that produces the very notion of the original as an effect and consequence of the imitation itself.” Belinda Johnston comes up with an interesting thought. She speculates, after the following quote from Butler, “the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all,” that these acts are performative through physical gesture and other discursive methods, be those methods called scripts or schemas, but they are not manifestations of the soul. From Johnston’s perspective, what exists before the performance of gender and before scripts or schemas, the essence that exists before any doing of it, or before any performance of it, is the soul, and that somehow any attention given those scripts, schemas, and/or performances must account for the matters of the soul.

The work of Eve Kosofsky Sedgewick and its relationship to that of Butler deserve special consideration within the context of this literature review. In *Performativity and Performance*, which she edited with Andrew Parker, she gathers together a selection of articles, including, as previously stated, one by Butler, that focus on the relationship between the Butler/Austin sense of performativity and its connection with a more traditional theatrical sense of performance. In *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, written in 2003, she further explores the connection of the various meanings of the ideas of performativity and performance. She continues and expands performativity theories from where Butler et al. left off, and she articulates, with the help of Butler, Michael Fried, et al., the paradox of the extroversion of the actor (performance) and the absorption of the signifier (performativity). At this intersection
of introversion and absorption—or, stated in other terms, at the mid-range of performance (external) and performativity (internal)—lie the keys to unlocking the secrets to using transgressive gender performances as viable interventions within a gender polarized population of heterosexual men. There is a connection, as yet somewhat vague, between this mid-range performance and performativity and the work of Mary Watkins in her book *Invisible Guests: The Development of Imaginal Dialogues.*

Watkins suggests that it is “through dialogue that one breaks out of the bureaucratization of mind, where there can be a rupture from previously established patterns.”

This “bureaucratization of mind” is aptly described by social psychologists Brian Nosek and Jeffrey Hansen:

> The implicit associations of the mind can be thought of as a tangled but highly organized network of connections. They connect representations of objects, people, concepts, feelings, your own self, goals, motives, and behaviors with one another. The strength of each of these connections depends on your past experiences (and also, interestingly, the current context): how often those two objects, say, or that person and that feeling, or that object and a certain behavior have gone together in the past.

Watkins is referring to the dialogue that may occur between the before-mentioned performance and performativity when she quotes Paulo Freire: “In fact, there is no creativity without *ruptura*, without a break from the old, without conflict in which you have to make a decision.”

According to Watkins, “experience of self can change through dialogue with an imaginal other.”

The performance nature of the imaginal dialogues she describes, the internal and external aspects of those dialogues, and her reliance on the earlier mentioned work of Erving Goffman certainly place her and her work in the general dialogue that is potentially enlightening towards the articulation of a performance-based gender intervention. Her definition of those dialogues, as containing both the literal exchange between two or more parties and as the goal of relatedness in a
descriptive Martin Buber sense, begin to sound very similar to the words expressed by Sedgwick in *Touching Feeling*.

Her articulation of the *imaginal* and her reliance on the thoughts of Henry Corbin lead, if not in a somewhat circuitous manner, towards Aftab Omer’s definition of Imaginal Structures and his own reliance on the work of Corbin.

The before-mentioned scripts and schemas, as developed in the work of Bem and Levy, and the definition of the “bureaucratic mind” as previously stated by Nosek and Hansen are alternative or parallel concepts to that of imaginal structures, and with the thoughts and ideas of Omer, Watkins, and Johnston, we have brought the issue of soul into the dialogue. Omer defines soul as, “the mysterious aliveness, stillness and otherness at the core of being.”

Butler’s theories bring into question the very notion of psychotherapy. Derek Hook extends many of Butler’s criticisms of the world of psychotherapy in his article “Psychotherapy and ‘Ethical Sensibility’: Towards a History of Criticism,” published in *The International Journal of Psychotherapy* (2003).

Hook argues that if gender is created through the performance of it, then psychotherapy is guilty of prescribing traditional gender roles for the basis of any such performance. Bem and Levy would argue that psychotherapy is guilty of contributing to the creation of the limiting schemas and scripts that might be the basis for the performances for which Butler argues.

Both Hook and Butler would suggest psychotherapy goes a long way towards writing the *script* of socially accepted gender performances. In Butler’s words, therapy itself becomes a vehicle for traditional gender construction. Ellyn Kaschak also argues a kind of Butlerian critic of psychotherapy. While Hook spends most of his time articulating
critical aspects of psychotherapy, Kaschak expresses many of the same aspects, but becomes somewhat more optimistic about the future of psychotherapy, while describing a sort of Butler-based feminist form of psychotherapy.\textsuperscript{82}

Many of the before-mentioned arguments questioning well-honed gender assumptions have been used to shed new light on those assumptions.\textsuperscript{83} Mahaffey, for instance, questions the commonly held belief that adolescent girls’ self esteem rates the status of a social problem. She suggests that the promotion of self esteem may in fact be supporting something that is more significant to young boys than it is to adolescent girls, and that what we should be doing instead is teaching adolescents about the interplay “between social structure and individual agency as contributors to gender inequality.”\textsuperscript{84}

Ryan, David, and Reynolds question the theory that gender differences in moral reasoning are due to differences in self concept, with women feeling connected to others and using a “care approach” and men feeling separate from others and adopting a “justice approach.”\textsuperscript{85} This reasoning is very similar to the suggested systemizing and empathizing differences that Baron-Cohen attributes to gender. Ryan, David, and Reynolds offer an alternative analysis, however, and suggest a “view of the self and moral thinking that is flexible and context dependent.”\textsuperscript{86} Parks and Robertson question the long-held belief that sexist language and its use is gender specific.\textsuperscript{87} Their discoveries would conclude, however, that sexist language is much more related to the held cultural construct of attitudes towards women. They conclude that sexist language may be “symbolically important to young people who either consciously or unconsciously still believe in the superiority of men.”\textsuperscript{88}
Butler’s performativity theories, can also, if examined from a perspective similar to one Moya Lloyd takes, lead to insightful psychoanalytic perspectives. From Lloyd’s point of view, Butler suggests that “what is performed works to conceal, if not disavow, what remains opaque, unconscious, unperformable.”89 Lloyd suggests that what a subject can do is affected by what is blocked or disavowed from consciousness. In Bodies That Matter, Butler introduces the idea of psychic restraint, suggesting that what is performed cannot be “assumed to express an inner truth about a person, rather there might be a difference between the appearance of gender and what it means.”90

Butler and her colleagues have also had a profound impact on rethinking non-binary gender systems. Butler’s thinking is often cited in the current re-examination of the Native North American berdache phenomenon. Both Will Roscoe and Serena Nanda cite Butler influences in their re-examinations of early berdache anthropological field work.91 Roscoe cites Butler when unpacking the sex/gender binary arguments made by Callender, Kochems, and Whitehead.92

There can be little doubt that the works of Butler, Fausto-Sterling, Oakley, and other feminist gender theorists have had a profound impact on our re-evaluation of long-held gender stereotypes.93 They have been instrumental and influential contributors to recent literature on the assessment of femininity and masculinity. Their insights have helped shape a new discourse, a discourse that includes questioning tests that do not in fact “measure sex-role orientations” but more likely test personality attributes that are “conceptually independent of gender.”94

It must also be argued that there is some evidence of interventions that have successfully altered and expanded the comfort zones of mainstream college students
towards marginalized gender groups. These interventions, though not specifically crediting Butler or Sedgewick, come remarkably close to gender performances. It should also be added that evidence would suggest that people who are rigidly masculine or feminine across all situations are less healthy, mentally and physically, than people who can adapt to the best qualities associated with both extremes. Psychologist Vicki Helgeson conducted an in-depth study of both men and women who had experienced heart attacks and found that the doing or performing of extreme polarized gender identities led to more severe heart attacks. Recent studies have also concluded that men engaged in polarized gender identities are less likely to seek medical help at all.

Certainly Sedgewick and Butler would, if they examined the work done by the likes of Ceglian, Lyons, Helgeson, et al., attribute the word performance to the active involvement of the cross-dressers who were asked to interact with those college students and recognize that more adaptable and flexible performances of gender lead to healthier human beings. When it comes to those more adaptable and flexible gender performances, Butler issues a call for action:

The critical task is to locate strategies of subversive repetition enabled by those constructions, to affirm the local possibilities of intervention through participating in precisely those practices of repetition that constitute identity and, therefore, present the immanent possibility of contesting them.

Any discussion of the conversational enclave of post-modern gender theories and their influences would be incomplete without some examination of the concept of paradox. If, as Smith and Berg suggest, something such as “group life” is inherently paradoxical, then the post-modern notion of gender (group life) may also be inherently paradoxical. Hughes and Brecht, as cited by Smith and Berg, provide a formal
definition of paradox: “A statement or set of statements that are self-referential and contradictory and that trigger a vicious circle.” 101 Smith and Berg also cite a more poetic definition by Mary C. Morrison. She describes paradox as the art of balancing opposites in such a way that they do not cancel each other but shoot sparks of light across their points of polarity. It looks at our desperate either/ors and tells us they are really both/ands—that life is larger than any of our concepts and can, if we let it, embrace our contradictions. 102 To suggest, in the spirit of Smith and Berg, that gender is inherently paradoxical is to suggest that paradox is contained within the very core of the conception of gender and that gender’s paradoxical nature needs to be understood along with all the other aspects of gender. 103 The post-modern feminist gender work of Butler, Kessler, Mckenna, Harris, Benjamin, Sedgewick, et al. embrace and explore gender as a paradox. Harris, speaking of her colleagues, suggests in the introduction to her *Gender as Soft Assembly* that all “the writers and theorists I engage with in this book struggle with both the necessity and the instability of many powerful but unsatisfying binaries: self—other, inside—outside, male—female, performed—real, core—variation, empty—full…” 104 Most of her colleagues admit to and explore the thoughts of Joan W. Scott when she suggests that at the heart of feminist gender theory is paradox: “this paradox—the need both to accept and to refuse ‘sexual difference’—was the constitutive condition of feminism.” 105 In their work they take a significant step away from the hegemonic either/or of gender and enter the realm of the more marginalized paradoxical world of gender. Hare-Mustin and Marecek suggest that any representation of gender based on male-female difference is paradoxical and that any non-paradoxical approach to gender
does not “effectively challenge the gender hierarchy,” ultimately making the possibility of transcending the status quo impossible.\textsuperscript{106}

This section has explored the literature defining and articulating Judith Butler’s gender performance theory. The section has also attempted to examine the literature, which defines the context in which we view those theories, the influence Butler’s ideas have had on various other post-modern gender theorists, and possible polarized gender interventions suggested by Butler’s work. The impact Butler has had on our understanding and framing of gender identity seems clear: a thorough exploration of the implications of her work to possible gender performance interventions has yet to be done.

\textbf{Imaginal Approaches within Performance}

The focus of this section is two-fold and thus divided into two sub-sections. The first sub-section examines and articulates post-modern performance theories. Entitled Performance Theory, this sub-section examines the post-modern conversational enclave created by Victor Turner, Augusto Boal, Richard Schechner, Wilhelm Dilthey, Erving Goffman, et al. The second sub-section entitled Imaginal Approaches to Performance, examines the work of the previously mentioned post-modern performance theorists within the context of Imaginal Psychology. The articulation of Imaginal Psychology relies on the voices of James Hillman, Mary Watkins, and Aftab Omer.
Performance Theory

Victor Turner, who suggests that performance is a legitimate object of study for post-modern anthropology, provides a useful anthropologically-based introduction and definition of performance in *From Ritual to Theatre*. The term performance, Turner suggests, comes from the Old English *parfournir*, meaning “to furnish completely or thoroughly.” According to Turner, to perform is to bring something about, to complete something, or “to carry” out something, as in a play, an order, or a project. But in the carrying out, Turner maintains, something new may be created. The performance and the performer transform themselves “to hitherto unprecedented insights” and the performance may “generate new symbols and meanings, which may be incorporated into subsequent performances.”

Augusto Boal presents, in his groundbreaking *The Rainbow of Desire*, a succinct yet thought-provoking theatrical and political introduction into the provocative world of performance theory:

The theatre has nothing to do with buildings or other physical constructions. Theatre—or theatricality—is this capacity, this human property which allows man to observe himself in action, in activity. The self-knowledge thus acquired allows him to be the subject (the one who observes) of another subject (the one who acts). It allows him to imagine variations of his action, to study alternatives. Man can see himself in the act of seeing, in the act of acting, in the act of feeling, the act of thinking. Feel himself feeling, think himself thinking.

The idea that theatre has nothing to do with physical construction is a stance not taken by a number of theorists, David Kaplan being one of the more prominent. In *Clinical and Social Realities*, he devotes an entire chapter to the relationship of the traditional performance space with the audience space. He articulates in psychological
terms the effect the empty performance space has on the gathering audience and how that contributes to the performance dynamic once the actual performances have begun.

Boal, however, goes on to explain what he means by performance and what subsequently parallels the theories of performance as articulated by Richard Schechner, et al. In the beginning performer and spectator were one. The point at which they were separated, when some became specialized actors and others informed and conscious spectators, marks the beginning of the theatrical forms we know today. Boal’s life work was a deliberate and inspiring attempt to bring spectator and actor back into a reflexive, unified whole. Boal dedicated his life this reflexive quality of volitional performance to bring to a political and transformative practical reality. According to Boal, “therein lies the essence of theatre,” in a human being’s ability to observe oneself. Observing ourselves, we observe what we are, speculate what we are not, and imagine what we can become. We perceive where we are and where we are not, and imagine where we could be. “A triad comes into being: the observing-I, the I-in-situ, and the not-I, that is the other.”

Boal’s attempts were geared towards bringing this triad into being within the full experience of reflexivity ignited within and by transgressive performance. It was within these politically and socially transgressive performances that Boal’s “oppressed” populations became fully conscious of what they could become and what it would take to attempt any such change.

While Boal’s work was political, therapeutic, theatrical, and reflexive in nature, it took the work of Richard Schechner to bring together, both in theory and practice, psychology, anthropology, sociology, and performance. Boal credits Schechner for
providing him with much of the basis of his work: “Reading (Schechner’s) Performance Theory is like meeting an old friend and finding out how much of him/her has been with you along the way.” 117 It was Richard Schechner in collaboration with anthropologist Victor Turner, who created what is considered today the first major post-modern performance theory conversational enclave. That enclave found much of its international voice in the first “World Conference on Theatre and Ritual.” 118 For the first time ever, for one week in New York in August of 1982, an attempt was made to bring together the thoughts, theories, and practices of the likes of Wilhelm Dilthey, Erving Goffman, Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz, Mihali Csikszentmihalyi, and Richard Schechner.

Unlike Boal, whose understanding and descriptions of performance are political and therapeutic, Schechner’s understanding and articulation of performance tend to be more spiritual in nature.

Performance originates in impulses to make things happen and to entertain; to get results and to fool around; to collect meanings and to pass the time; to be transformed into another and to celebrate being oneself; to disappear and to show off; to bring into a special place a transcendent Other who exists then-and-now and later-and-now; to be in a trance and to be conscious. 119

Both, however, find the exact moment and experience of volitional performance to be reflexive in nature. It was Schechner who spent his energies and time attempting to understand this reflexive moment, this “detached vision,” this “reflexive self-understanding” that exists at the center of performance. 120

Herbert Blau, one of the participants in the “World Conference on Theatre and Ritual” and a contributor to Schechner’s By Means Of Performance, describes this reflexive moment of performance as transformative and suggests, “That it has the capacity to transform seems to be universal.” 121 Edward Bruner, who co-edited with
Victor Turner *The Anthropology of Experience*, describes this reflexive and transformative moment of performance as one in which we “re-experience, re-live, re-create, re-tell, re-construct, and re-fashion our culture.”

In that same anthology, Barbara Myerhoff describes that moment of performance as the moment in which we become “the authors of ourselves” and make sense of ourselves by showing ourselves to ourselves by “rendering visible actual and desired truths” about ourselves.

Psychotherapist Stephanie Dowrick describes this moment of performance as a moment that mandates a response not only to your external events, but to your inner impressions of those external events. Blau, Brunner, Myerhoff, and Dowrick are all describing the moment of reflexive/transformative performance, which Wilhelm Dilthey describes as the moment “in which the subject discovers himself.”

In her examinations of the imaginal dialogues that occur in this transformative space, Mary Watkins quotes G. H. Mead: “When playing at being someone else, the self comes to realize its own nature at the same time it realizes the nature of the person whose role is being played.”

Gilbert Herdt goes one step further in describing this liminal transformative aspect of performance: “it is within this liminal space that culture is created and transformed.”

Harris describes this as a moment containing both multiplicity and authenticity. She writes:

> Splitting allows an opening, a space for self-reflection and a necessary space for some sense of subjective agency. But what internally or interpersonally triggers shifting states? Defensive dissociation seems one mechanism, but equally a sense of trust and playfulness may occasion an experience of being between spaces, of feeling both multiplicity and authenticity.

Schechner suggests that this moment of transformation lies at the heart and center of what is performance. Schechner, being a theatre person, suggests that his work in the
theatre has discovered that it is the special task of performers to “undergo a temporary rearrangement of their body/mind,” what he calls a “transportation.” This “transportation,” this shift in the performer’s body/mind is necessary, according to Schechner, to facilitate the transformation within performance that Herdt, Mead, et al. are advocating. In referring to specific experiences in the theatre and working with specific performers, Schechner comes to call this moment, a moment of “reflexive self-understanding.”

Schechner suggests that within this moment of reflexive self-understanding, this moment of “betwixt and between,” as Turner describes it, a moment Harris likens to “splitting,” and Omer refers to as an “as if” moment lies the capacity for change. Within the moment of playing, of performing rather than the real doing of, this playing according to Schechner “causes changes to both performers and spectators.” This moment of playing, according to Harris, contains both the known and the unknown, which creates a state of double awareness and that this double awareness creates internal conflict that may lead to the creative moment of change. Harris also brings in to play the idea of the “transgressive” in performance when she states that “there can be the freedom and excitement that come with a performance that feels somewhat transgressive.” Though Schechner never articulates or uses the phrase transgressive performance when speaking about the nature of transformative, reflexive performance, he certainly does articulate its meaning and purpose. “To perform acts that are otherwise forbidden-punished, taboo, unthought-of, is a way of making fun.” This play, this making fun of, Schechner suggests is “a way of enacting the forbidden.” According to Schechner, performances are about acting out interactions “which are problematical in society, interactions of a
sexual, violent, or taboo kind concerning hierarchy, territory or mating.” Schechner goes on to suggest, “in my view drama is not a model of all human action, but of the most problematical, difficult, taboo, liminal, and dangerous activities.” For Schechner performance condenses around the “I-want-but-can’t/shouldn’t-do.”

William Labov suggests that part of the reason performance—and particularly performance as described by Schechner as the enactment of the forbidden—facilitates transformation is that in performance, “we are freed from personal responsibility for the acts we are engaged in.” Omer and Turner have a slightly different, yet related, take on this liminal/transformative and reflexive moment. Turner suggests that this moment occurs with the performer’s “liberation of the human capacities of cognition, affect, volition, creativity, etc., from the normative constraints incumbent upon occupying a sequence of social statuses.” Turner calls what happens in this moment Communitas. Gloria E. Anzaldua describes this moment as stepping across a threshold. She states that to be “stripped of the illusion of safety because it moves us into unfamiliar territory and does not grant safe passage. To bridge is to attempt community.” Omer labels this moment “Participatory Consciousness” and suggests it “refers to states of consciousness which are unobstructed by a delusionary sense of a separate self.”

This sub-section has explored the literature defining and articulating performance theory. The section has also attempted to examine the literature that defines the transformative, liminal, and reflexive nature of those performance theories. The impact Schechner, Turner, and their colleagues have had on post-modern performance theory is
clear. The impact they have had on post-modern Imaginal Psychology and Omer’s Imaginal Transformation Praxis is less clear and deserves further examination.

**Imaginal Approaches to the Performance**

This sub-section attempts to take the theories and ideas previously developed and articulated around performance via Schechner, Boal, Turner, Dilthey, Harris, et al. and examine them through the lens of Omer’s Imaginal Transformation Praxis. Imaginal Transformation Praxis allows for a unique articulation and examination of the performance of gender.

The basis of Imaginal Transformation Praxis can be found in the history of the word *Imaginal*. James Hillman credits and adopts his own use of the word *Imaginal* to Henry Corbin. Michael Vannoy Adams, in his article, “The Archetypal School,” published in *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*, articulates a very concise and cogent argument for the relationship of Imaginal, Corbin, Hillman, and Imaginal Psychology. According to Adams, for Hillman, “imagination is reality, he prefers ‘imaginal’ to ‘imaginary,’ which pejoratively connotes ‘unreal.’” For Hillman imagination is every bit as real as “reality;” that what seems most literally real is, in fact, an image with “potentially profound metaphorical implications.” Since the word imaginary carried the notion of “less Real,” he employed the use of the word imaginal. The hallmark of Hillman’s Imaginal Psychology is “stick to the image.” Imaginal Psychology advocates multiplicity, imagination without interpretation, prefers literary over scientific discourse, is a soul psychology (both individual and the world), and is post-modern in
thought and scope. The power of the imaginal for transformation is what Boal is getting at when he describes “the extraordinary power, the intense and effective energy, of the theatric event in domains outside the theatre: the political, the social, and the fields of education and psychotherapy.” Turner is also describing the imaginal process when he describes performance’s ability to create new symbols and meanings, which may then be incorporated into subsequent performances.

Stephanie Dowrick’s “Adaptive self” is a truncated way of describing someone whose behavior is restricted by the belief that thoughts and opinions about one’s identity from the outside hold more weight than whatever information or somatic knowing a person has on the inside about his or her own self. Her adaptive self is similar to Omer’s adaptive identity. Omer suggests that adaptive identities are the persona or masks individuals assume given the unavoidable trauma in life. Unlike performances, which take the performer into the unknown, Omer suggests that adaptive identities keep individuals in the known regions. Omer introduces the term Reflexive Participation “the practice of surrendering through creative action to the necessities, meanings, and possibilities inherent in the present moment.” Performance is a practice uniquely situated to facilitate states of reflexive participation, or as Robert J. Landy suggests in his work on drama therapy, which is based on a discipline developed by J. L. Moreno, to develop the “Spontaneous Individual.” Landy defines the spontaneous individual as …the most liberated. He chooses to behave as he does. He is aware of the social context before him, but he is able to risk the possible disapproval of others in presenting an authentic role of himself. Spontaneous behavior has an existential quality, as it is based in a present, here-and-now time frame. It has a creative quality as it transforms the usual into the unique.
One of the pioneers of anthropological research on gender, Margaret Mead, examined the profoundly confusing and reactive relationship between the sexes in post World War II American culture in her 1949 book *Male and Female*. She titled the concluding chapter of that study “To Both Their Own.” In that concluding chapter, Mead outlines her hopes for a new and developing relationship between the sexes. She does so in a linguistic and investigative style absent of the post-modern articulations of gender. She does, however, present a clear and moving argument for what Omer and his post-modern Imaginal Psychology would label *Participatory Consciousness*.

Carol Lee Flinders also seems to be arguing the need for a Participatory Consciousness when she articulates her thoughts and aspirations for a “rebalancing” or what she refers to as a restoration of an ancient equilibrium of the genders. Her discussions regarding collectivity, consciousness, and the adaptive circumstances around gender relations approach Omer’s defining aspects of Participatory Consciousness:

*Participatory Consciousness* refers to states of consciousness which are unobstructed by a delusionary sense of a separate self. Non-participatory states of consciousness are adaptive to stressful and traumatic circumstances and subsequently maintained through the gatekeeping mechanisms of adaptive identity.

Flinders argues that it is exactly this “delusionary sense of a separate self” and the accompanying gatekeeping that has served to create the polarized gender identities that stand in the way of the “rebalancing” of gender that she advocates. Turner suggests the use of the term *Communitas*, which comes remarkably close to Omer’s “states of consciousness which are unobstructed by a delusionary sense of a separate self,” to cover what he (Turner) describes as “the social dimension of the individual, essentially a liminoid, voluntaristic mode of relating, a choosing of one another by total, integral
human beings with limpidity of consciousness and feeling.” ¹⁶¹ In this state, achieved in performance, articulated as Participatory Consciousness by Omer and Communitas by Turner, profound change is possible. According to Turner, this state can bring about “the spontaneous generation of new ways of seeing or being.” ¹⁶²

When it comes to the exploration of this state of being by actual theatre practitioners, both Turner and Schechner highlight Jerzy Grotowski and his Poor Theatre. In the written introduction to Turner’s The Anthropology of Performance, Schechner suggests that “what Jung wrote about Grotowski is trying to do. Namely, identify and perform ‘archetypes’ of human ritual action.” ¹⁶³ In both theory and practice, Grotowski, according to both Schechner and Turner, had moved to include what Omer labels participatory consciousness as a primary goal for both his actors and his audience. Grotowski’s performance goal, according to Turner, was “self-discovery and an unmediated contact with and understanding of others.” ¹⁶⁴

According to Turner, both Grotowski and Schechner, if not all directors of post-modern experimental theatre, advocate the supreme importance of the rehearsal process. ¹⁶⁵ The rehearsal process brings the unconsciousness of Goffman’s “performance of everyday life” into a consciousness that holds the possibility of Omer’s participatory consciousness and Turner’s Communitas. ¹⁶⁶ Grotowski’s and, in some sense, Schechner’s performance and rehearsal objectives are clear: “Let us create a liminal space-time ‘pod’ or pilgrimage center where human beings may be disciplined and discipline themselves to strip off the false personae stifling the individual within.” ¹⁶⁷ Grotowski himself gives credence to the hard work necessary for any possible moment of transformation that might occur during the participatory consciousness of performance
when he states “preparing productions for many years, step by step we were approaching such a concept of active man/actor, where the point was not to act someone else, but to be oneself, to be with someone, to be in relationship.”

Schechner seems to echo both Grotowski and Turner when he speaks of the hard work associated with performance: “performance behavior isn’t free and easy. Performance behavior is known and/or practiced behavior or twice behaved behavior, restored behavior.” Performance behavior tends then always to be reflexive, always doubled, referring in to itself and outwards to others. Omer must have had some sense of this hard work, this practice when he renamed Imaginal Transformation Theory to Imaginal Transformation Praxis.

What Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi articulates as the paradox of flow, what Turner argues for with Communitas, and Omer argues for with the potential of Participatory Consciousness, may all be experienced in the “reflexivity of performance.” Turner in examining Csikszentmihalyi’s flow, suggests,

The group or community does not merely ‘flow’ in unison at these performances, but, more actively, tries to understand itself in order to change itself. This dialectic between ‘flow’ and reflexivity characterizes performative genres: a successful performance in any of the genres transcends the opposition between spontaneous and self conscious patterns of actions.

This transcendence implies an awareness and possible transformation of Omer’s imaginal structures that mediate self-experience. This transcendence is possible within the potential of participatory consciousness, which is the consciousness of disciplined and practiced volitional performance.

This sub-section has attempted to take the theories and ideas previously developed and articulated around performance via Schechner, Boal, Turner, Dilthey,
Harris, et al. and examine them through the lens of Omer’s Imaginal Transformation Praxis. Imaginal Transformation Praxis and Imaginal Psychology allows for a unique articulation and examination of the performance of gender, and within performance we find a new and unique exploration of the post-modern articulations of Imaginal Psychology.

**Indigenous and Cross-Cultural Gender Diversity**

The focus of this section is two-fold and thus divided into two sub-sections. The first sub-section examines and articulates North American indigenous gender diversity. Entitled *Gender Diversity in Native North America*, this sub-section examines the conversational enclave created by Sabine Lang, Serena Nanda, Herdt, Roscoe, and Williams. The focus is an examination of the berdache tradition from what Roscoe would suggest is a post-modern and non-positivist feminist “methodology capable of analyzing these larger processes without relying on such analytical dichotomies as sex/gender, nature/culture or domestic/public.” 172 The second sub-section, entitled *Cross-Cultural Gender Diversity*, brings into the conversation the works of Waldemar Bogoras, Niko Besnier, Robert Levy, Deborah Elliston, and Wendy O’Flaherty with the previously mentioned theorists within the context of a geographical and cultural diversity, following Roscoe’s suggestion that the next step in “berdache studies will be the recognition that gender diversity is not an isolated feature of North American societies.” 173 This sub-section examines the *mahu* of Polynesia, the *hijra* of India, and the *yirka-la ul* of eastern United States. 
Siberia. The attempt with both sub-sections is made in the spirit of Gloria Anzaldua in that:

Gathering people from many geographies in a multicultural approach is a mark of inclusivity, increased consciousness, and dialogue. This inclusivity reflects the hybrid quality of our lives and identities—todas somos nos/otras. Living in multicultural communities and the complexities of our age demand that we develop a perspective that takes into account the whole planet.  

**Gender Diversity in Native North America**

Serena Nanda opens her text *Gender Diversity: Crosscultural Variations*, an overview of 20 years of ethnographies and histories on alternative gender roles aimed at students of gender studies, human sexuality and cultural anthropology, with:

In contemporary Euro-American cultures sex and gender ideologies are based on binary opposites—male and female, man and woman, homosexual and heterosexual, indeed the binary opposition of sex and gender itself. Although many anthropologists argue that binary thinking is part of human nature, and that the male/female binary is among the most basic thought patterns of human culture, sex and gender binaries are not universal and in fact have not always dominated European culture.

That non-binary gender identities have existed within the cultural context of what are the indigenous populations of North America is clear: this examination of those gender identities is careful to heed the two primary cautions stated and restated by Serena Nanda, Roscoe, Williams, and Lang. One is that language choices used to describe non-binary gender identities forge the lens through which we view and judge those identities, and the second is that, when dealing with the native people of North America, generalizations are often made but very rarely accurate. Roscoe credits many of the current language choices and linguistic understandings of the berdache tradition
specifically to Butler and her feminist colleagues: “It took the emergence of feminist theory and its critique of biological determinism to make serious reevaluation of the berdache role possible.” He suggests that what had been previously written about the berdache tradition “reflects more the influence of existing Western discourses on gender, sexuality and the Other, than what observers actually witnessed.” Kessler and McKenna suggest that most of the non post-modern examinations of the berdache tradition “rest on the assumption that there are two genders. It does not question that dichotomy.” They then ask what might be an essential question for any examination of the berdache tradition: “what would we accept as evidence that gender for a particular group of people was not dichotomous, that instead it was trichotomous, or that it was fluid or that as a classification it had no meaning.” Charles Callender and Lee M. Kochems are also skeptical of early berdache research calling it “scanty, fragmentary, and often poor in quality” and “descriptions of berdaches sometimes contain much more denunciation than data.” Nanda finds that current berdache research contains “important shifts in perspectives on sex/gender diversity among American Indians.”

Lang, in Men as Women, Women as Men, establishes that berdaches have existed within some 133 North American Indian groups; she warns, however, against generalization and encourages the hearing of individual tribal stories. Nanda also argues against easy generalizations when considering the nature of multiple sex/gender systems among the “many variations in North American Indian gender diversity.” She also warns against treating the berdache “as a unitary phenomenon across North America,” encouraging an attention to and appreciation of the role gender variance played in individual Indian groups. The term “berdache” originates from the “Arabic-
speaking region, where *bardaj* or *barah* meant ‘kept boy’ or ‘male prostitute.’”  

The term was adapted by the French and first used sometime in the eighteenth-century by French travelers to describe supposedly “passive homosexual Native American males.” According to Kessler and McKenna, “although the term is technically reserved for American Indian societies, berdache-like people have been found in Alaska, Siberia, Central and South Asia, Oceania, Australia, Sudan and the Amazon region.” Lang suggests that both Native Americans and anthropologist have rejected the term as “inappropriate for persons of either sex.” Lang settles for the terms ”women-men” and “men-women.” Nanda also argues for the inappropriateness and insulating nature of the term “berdache” and its application to North American Native gender diversity. Nanda also rejects the often-used term *two spirit*, a term coined in the 1990s by urban American Indian gays and lesbians. She rightfully points out that the term two-spirit emphasizes the “Euro-American gender construction of only two genders.” She finally argues for the culturally neutral terms *variant genders* and *gender variants* to describe the multiple sex/gender systems found in many but not all American Indian societies. Roscoe historically documents and justifies the use of the term: “berdache has become the accepted anthropological term for these roles despite a rather unlikely etymology.” He also introduces the terms “third and fourth genders.” His “third gender” is the same as Lang’s “women-men,” that being a male “berdache.” Roscoe’s “fourth gender” parallels Lang’s “men-women,” those then being the female “berdache.” Lang argues for the significance of the adopted gender coming first. Williams anthropologically justifies and demonstrates no need to re-examine the term “berdache,” and defines it as follows:
Briefly, a berdache can be defined as a morphological male who does not fill a society’s standard man’s role, who has a nonmasculine character. This type of person is often stereotyped as effeminate, but a more accurate characterization is androgyny. Such a person has a clearly recognized and accepted social status, often based on a secure place in the tribal mythology.

Given the context of this literature review and research project, I will use the terms reflective of their particular theorist and, when possible, terms specific to certain tribes as in the Werkern of the Yurok, and the tw!inna’ek of the Klamath; when no theorist or specific people are cited, I will, however, use Nanda’s terms “gender variants” and “variant genders,” believing they most accurately express the lens from which I approach this topic. Here I offer one last comment about language and terminology. Throughout this literature review, the terms “Indian” and “Native American,” following Lang, will be used interchangeably. Lang’s contention is that current anthropological writings in the United States seem to “more or less exclusively employ the term Native American.” My own discussions within the local university Native American community suggest that both terms find their advocates.

Inherent in Williams’s definition of berdache is the concept of “gender mixing.” Gender mixing suggests a combination of masculine and feminine gender statuses as opposed to a complete shift or change from one to the other, with the implied rejection of former gender. Williams’s implied assumption is shared by numerous anthropologists and is also supported by specific Native American terms for variant genders such as the previously cited Yurok term werkern. Callender and Kochems define “berdache” as a “person, usually male, who was anatomically normal but assumed the dress, occupations, and behavior of the other sex to effect a change in gender status.” They, like Williams, also suggest that this shift in gender status was not complete and that it was a
change to a somewhat intermediate status that combined “social attributes of males and females.” Nanda also finds the “gender mixing” distinction important. She argues “It is important to note here that berdache thus refers to variant gender roles, rather than a complete crossing over to an opposite gender role.” Roscoe summarizes the significance of the “gender mixing” debate:

In sum, if berdaches are to be understood as simply exchanging one gender for another, then they can indeed be interpreted as upholding a heterosexist gender system. If they are to be understood as entering a distinct gender status, however, neither male nor female, then something more complex is occurring. A multiple-gender paradigm makes it possible to see berdache status not as a compromise between nature and culture or a niche to accommodate “natural” variation but as an integral and predictable element of certain sociocultural systems, not a contradiction in Native American beliefs but a status fully consistent with them.

While Williams restricts his investigation and explanations to Native American men when defining and discussing the role of the berdache, Roscoe, Lang, Herdt, and Nanda detail both native men and women under their berdache rubric. Within the context of this research, the focus will be primarily on gender variance among Native American men. Male gender variant roles were among the most shared features of North American Indian groups. Lang cites 133 separate tribes, Nanda cites between 110 and 150 tribes, and Roscoe documents male gender variants for 155 groups. It is estimated that in about one third of these groups, some formal status was also given to women who practiced a man’s lifestyle. Roscoe posits a slightly higher number of female berdaches, closer to 50 percent. Roscoe also estimates that, at the time of European contact with North America, there existed altogether some 400 diverse tribal groups. According to Williams, gender variance was most established among tribes in four areas: 1) the Prairie and western Great Lakes, the northern and central Great Plains, and the lower Mississippi Valley; 2) Florida and the Caribbean; 3) the Southwest, the Great
According to multiple sources contemporary ethnography views gender variance (multiple sex/gender roles) as a normative part of North American Indian sex/gender systems, rather than as a “marginal or deviant part.”

Much of western thought is caught in the trauma of binary thinking, dichotomies of “groups perceived to be mutually exclusive,” black and white, right and wrong, male and female. Most American Indian worldviews are generally more accepting of paradox or non-binary perspectives. Williams suggests that “Acceptance of gender variation in the berdache tradition is typical of many cultures approach to life in general.” Roscoe suggests that documentation exists to suggest that gender variance existed in nearly half of the 35 Indian societies in the costal region between Northern California and Alaska. Among the local tribes of Northern California and Southern Oregon (Humboldt, Del Norte, Mendocino, and Klamath counties), evidence suggests the existence of gender variance among the Hupa, Wiyot, Yurok, Mattole, Tolowa, and Klamath. No evidence can be found to suggest gender variance existed among the Northern California Karok Indians, close neighbors of both the Yurok and Hupa Indians.

The campus of Humboldt State University, which graciously permitted me the use of their facilities for this research project, has been situated in Northern California for over 100 years, but only in the last decade has it recognized the indigenous people on whose land it sits: the Wiyot Native Americans. When the university created that recognition a context shifted. Students now study and live within a structure and context that recognizes its history in a visually effective way. Students and faculty now have
visual reminders on campus of the history and culture of the Wiyot people, for thousands of years the caretakers of the land, on which the university sits. This context shifts the nature and quality of the education the students receive. This research study was also done on Wiyot land. In recognition and honor of that fact, all specific references to native gender variants will be in the context of the stories of the Hupa, Wiyot, Yurok, Mattole, Tolowa, and Klamath people, all Native People who have occupied this part of what is now Northern California for thousands of years.

According to Lang, Williams, and Roscoe, the single most reoccurring similarity among all gender variants among North American native people was their inclination and desire to participate in the activities, work, sub-culture, and companionship of the opposite sex and not the desire “for sexual relations with members of their own sex.” 214

According to Williams, among the northern California Yurok, an interest in grinding corn and weaving baskets were among the first signs of wernkm identity among young boys. 215 Lang also suggests that, among the Yurok, women-men like women were responsible for the processing of gathered food, cooking and grinding acorns, and weaving baskets. 216 Williams argues that instead of being discarded, “the unique energies of the berdache were put into productive labor, work of benefit to the family.” 217

Interest in the work and activities of the opposite sex does not indicate a desire to become or adopt the gender status or even “gender category of that sex—that is, to become a member of the opposite sex.” 218 Much of the post-modern, post- feminist theory-based examination of gender variance experience among North American Indians focuses on this distinction, arguing that this differentiates gender variance from most
transsexuals in Western cultures: “a polarization into masculine and feminine gender status does not tolerate any ambivalence.”

Lang summarizes:

Where an ambivalent gender status is available for the expression of a ambivalent identity, there arises neither the subjective feeling of being a personality imprisoned in the wrong body nor the desire for physical adaption to the opposite biological sex by means of surgical removal of the primary and secondary sex characteristics.

Lang and Williams both argue that there is no evidence suggesting the existence of any cases of self-castration among North American Indian women-men and that the feeling that there is a “discrepancy between one’s physique and one’s psyche can only come into being against a background of two polarized gender statuses.” In addition to women-men’s inclination and desire to participate in the activities, work, sub-culture, and companionship of the opposite sex, it has also been frequently reported that women-men generally behaved like women. Lang cites early anthropological statements such as “act like women,” “had women’s manners,” and “behave like members of the opposite sex,” describing the behavior of various Indian societies. Lang goes on to suggest that when this adopted feminine behavior was further commented upon, authors frequently mentioned that the pitch of the female voice was imitated. Among the Klamath, women-men adopted “woman’s way of speaking;” the female high-pitched voice was imitated, a manner of walking typical of women was adopted, gesticulations the culture had assigned as being specifically feminine were imitated, and Klamath women-men wore their hair longer than men.

Lang suggests that, in Western cultures, homosexual relationships are defined as occurring between people of the same biological sex, “whereby the two partners change neither their gender status nor their gender roles.” The partnerships entered into by
the Native North American women-men and men-women differed from Lang’s western model. Women-men entered into relationships with men as an essential aspect of their feminine gender role. In the context of these relationships, the woman-man was accepted as nonmasculine and his partner was seen as masculine. According to Lang, these relationships were always “culturally constructed and viewed as hetero-gender.” 226

Hetero-gender is a term Lang borrows from Chrys Ingraham. Ingraham suggests that heterosexuality “serves as the organizing institution and ideology . . . for gender” 227 Ingraham proposes the term heterogender to capture the ways in which the “heterosexual ordering of gender is implicated in the operation of all social institutions at all levels of society, from family to workplace to the state.” 228 According to Lang, a survey of sources indicates that, within Native American societies, various kinds of hetero-gender relationships were condoned and institutionalized and homo-gender relationships such as woman-man with woman-man were not. 229 According to Roscoe, both women-men and men-women were active sexually with their own sex and that this was part of the cultural expectations of their role. 230 There is common agreement on the role of women-men taking an interest in and responsibility for many of the jobs normally assigned to women. There also seems to be consensus regarding the commonality of the earliest signs of potential gender variance among Native men being an interest in the work, culture, and responsibilities of women. The nature and extent of women-men’s sexual activity seems also to be fairly well agreed upon and understood.

There is less agreement and understanding regarding the shamanistic, holy, or sacred aspects of the berdache. Lang suggests that women-men’s participation in the roles of shaman, medicine man, or other healer must be viewed in the context of the
“sexual division of labor and ideas concerning supernatural powers” of any given Native Society. Lang points out that, in California, several different forms of shamanism existed, often different forms being practiced by men and women. Among the Yurok, almost all shamans or healers were female. Lang speculates that, for this reason, the Yurok werkern (women-men) shamans would have modeled themselves after their female shamans. Lang also points out that, among the Wiyot, women dominated healing activities, and it is likely the same principle applied. Roscoe suggests that there is also some evidence that the Hupa had women-men shamans. Among the Klamath, no relationship between gender role change and healing activity existed. The majority of healers were male, and spiritual powers were attributed to male shamans. Lang, somewhat supported by Roscoe’s conclusions, summarizes:

Where women dominated healing activities, the women-men’s adoption of the healer’s role was most likely related to their gender role; the “shaman” role was part of their quasi-feminine status. This also explains why women-men typically did not assume the healing role in groups in which male “shamans” predominated. It was not that women-men were not allowed to be “shamans,” but rather that this occupation was simply uninteresting to them: it was an aspect of the masculine, and not of the feminine, gender role.

Most sources indicate that, once a person becomes a berdache, it is a lifelong status: directions from the spirits determine everything. Williams cites one documented case in which a nineteenth-century Klamath berdache, named Lele’ks, had a supernatural experience that led him to leave the berdache role. Williams notes, “What is important is that both in assuming berdache status and in leaving it, supernatural dictate is the determining factor.” Lang suggests the existence of a number of related cultural patterns associated with the initiation of males into the woman-man gender category. In those cases in which visions or dreams were considered essential for gender role change,
a “standardized vision or dream experience served to legitimate and consolidate the
gender role change.” 237 If dreams and visions had an influence, but were by themselves
not enough to consolidate a new gender role, either a test or a ritual ensued which, if
successfully completed, legitimated the new gender role. If dreams and or visions played
no role in the granting of the status of woman-man, the boy was subjected to a test.
According to Lang, “If during the test, he decided in favor of the symbols of the feminine
role, the status of woman-man was conferred on him. The test, rather than a dream or
vision, legitimated his status.” 238 Sometimes an individuals desire to assume the role,
and most often the clothing of the opposite sex was sufficient to legitimate the gender
change. “Dreams, visions, tests, or rituals were not required.” 239 While Lang, Roscoe,
Nanda, et al. speculate as to why and how these gender changes occurred, the search for
an exact and ultimate cause for the desire of a gender role change seems to not have
brought forth much interest or enthusiasm on the part of the members of the pertinent
Native American cultures themselves; “one merely accepted the child’s non-masculinity
as a part of the latent personality or potential with which the child had been endowed by
nature.” 240 Since a third gender status (often times a fourth) was institutionalized in most
of the native American cultures under discussion, “a radical divergence and subsequent
chasm between sex of birth and chosen gender role was not regarded as deviant and so
did not require an explanation.” 241 From a Native American perspective, someone who
is different offers advantages to society precisely because they are freed from the
restrictions of the usual. It is a different window from which to view the world. The next
step in berdache studies will be the recognition that gender diversity is not an isolated
feature of North American societies but a world wide phenomenon, represented in most culture areas as well as in certain historical periods of western society.

**Cross-Cultural Gender Diversity**

North American Indian societies are not the only known cultures to grant special gender status and often respected roles for individuals of gender variance. Williams suggests that “many societies, in various areas of the world, have a special gender category which seems to be generally comparable to the berdache role.” 242 The Hijras, who Nanda describes as “neither man nor woman,” of India, the gender variant roles of the Mahus of Polynesia, and the gender variant yirka-la ul, among the reindeer-herding peoples of Siberia, all have similarities to the gender variants of Native North America. 243 Williams argues that the practices of the Siberian ancestors of Native North Americans are closest to that of the berdache phenomenon. 244 He suggests that the ancestors of Native Americans migrated from the areas of present day Siberia some 15,000 to 30,000 years ago and that practices similar to those of the berdache among the Siberians would suggest that at least some form of this role has existed among Native people since their arrival in North America. 245

**The Yirka-la ul of Eastern Siberia**

Williams relies on the work of Waldemar Bogoras, a Russian anthropologist, for many of his theories regarding the berdache practices of early Siberians. Williams
documents that Bogoras lived and did fieldwork among the Chukchi of eastern Siberia from 1890 to 1901. Bogoras suggests that the people of eastern Siberia refer to gender variant males as *yirka-la ul*, meaning “soft man, meaning a man transformed into a being of a softer sex.”  

Notable, and very similar to the gender variants of Native North America, is the reference to the transformation into a gender variant role, not the assumption of the role of the opposite sex. Bogoras suggest the Siberian “soft man” took on many of the jobs and responsibilities of the women, “taking care of the house and performing all domestic pursuits and work.” The soft man keeps his masculine name, but otherwise abandons the style and mannerism of his own sex to adopt those of a woman. Bogoras describes one Chukchi named Tilu Wgi as being “most remarkable.” He describes this 35-year-old, with his hair styled like Chukchi women:

> Wholly masculine and well developed besides, his faced looked very different from masculine faces…All the ways of this strange creature were decidedly feminine…I heard him gossip with female neighbors in a most feminine way, and even saw him hug small children with evident envy for the joys of motherhood.

While there is clarity and general agreement that the earliest signs of North American Native male gender variance is signaled by an interest in the work of the females, among Siberian Chukchi the earliest signs of transformation seem to be spiritually based. Williams suggests that this transformation of gender role takes place between the ages of eight and fifteen, a critical period, according to Williams, in which “shamanistic aspiration usually manifests itself.” The Chukchi believe that this transformation is spiritually based and due to powerful spirits. As far as sexual preferences, Bogoras wrote that a soft man “seeks to win the good graces of men, and succeeds easily with the aid of the spirits.” Similar to accounts of male gender variants among the native North Americans, Chukchi gender variants were not strictly
sexually engaged with men. Bogoras documents a case of one soft man who had a female wife and then later took on a male husband. He documents another soft man who, in the 1890s, created a problem because all the eligible bachelors “beset him with their courtship to the great detriment and offense of the lawful (female) beauties.” In choosing a husband, Bogoras wrote,

the marriage is performed with the usual rites, and I must say that it forms a quite solid union, which often lasts till the death of one of the parties. The couple live much in the same way as do other people. The man tends his herd and goes hunting and fishing, while the “wife” takes care of the house, performing all the domestic pursuits and work.

Rather than being judged, chastised, or scorned, having a soft man for a “wife” gained high status for the husband. Both Williams and Bogoras argue that the yirka-la ul excelled at shamanism in part due to their close association with the spirit world which, according to Bogoras, made them “dreaded even by the untransformed shamans.” In marriage, the soft man’s personal spirit was, according to Borgoras, “said to play the part of the supernatural husband . . . This husband is supposed to be the real head of the family, and to communicate his orders by means of his transformed wife.” Williams concludes that, in the context of that family structure, the voice of the “wife” dominates. According to Williams, the Chukchi of eastern Siberia are only one of many people that institutionalized the gender variance of soft men. He suggests that the Koryak, Kamchadal, and Asiatic Eskimo societies all had recognized male gender variance.
The Hijras of India

In modern India, the most notable example of gender variance is a cult of males who dress and live as an alternative gender and are known as hijras. Nanda, who has done field work and interviews with hijras in Bangalore and Bombay, suggests that the cultural notions of hijras as “intersexed” and “eunuchs” emphasize that they are neither male nor female, man nor woman. At a more esoteric level, the hijras are also man plus woman, or erotic and sacred female men. Hijras are devotees of bahuchara Mata, one of many versions of the Mother Goddess worshipped throughout India.259 Their performing as mediums for female goddesses gives them special status and roles at weddings and after births. Williams suggests that the documentation is unclear and disagreement exists among anthropologists as to the extent of their sexual activity with men. Nanda suggests that hijras are “an example par excellence of the cultural construction of gender, being both ‘neither man nor woman’ and ‘man and woman.’”260

The most important context for understanding sex/gender diversity in Indian society is Hindu religious concepts.261 Despite the importance of the basic opposition of male and female, in Hinduism, sex and gender variants and transformations are also acknowledged. According to Nanda, Hinduism has a “great capacity to allow opposites to confront each other without necessarily resolving the opposition.”262 According to Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty, Hinduism “celebrates the idea that the universe is boundlessly various, and . . . that all possibilities may exist without excluding each other.”263 Nanda maintains that the presence of gender variants in Hinduism lends affirmative meaning to the lives of many individuals with a “variety of alternative gender
identifications, physical conditions, and erotic preferences." Among this variety of alternative gender identifications, the most visible and institutionalized are the hijras. Richard Herrell, in an unpublished typescript to Williams, describes the hijras of India as having an “intermediate or additional sexual identity, but they are not ‘unnatural’ because of it. Male and female are poles on a continuum rather than two types with a fixed boundary between them.” According Nanda and Williams, hijras are neither man nor woman. They are born as males and, unlike the North American berdache, the eastern Siberian yirk-la ul, or the Polynesian mahus, they “through a ritual surgical transformation become an alternative, third sex/gender category.”

According to Besnier, this ritualized surgical emasculation give North Indian societies a clear normative notion of hijra status. Besnier points out that, while it is true that many hijras have not had the operation, they consequently “live under constant fear of discovery when they perform rituals expected of hijras,” because the idealization of the hijra as surgically emasculated is a necessary aspect of hijra identity. Hijras take on many aspects of the typical north Indian feminine gender role. According to Nanda, they wear women’s dress, take on women’s hairstyles; they seem to imitate women’s walk, gestures, and voice and facial expressions. They take on feminine names as part of their ritualized gender transformation and, according to Nanda, use “female kinship terms for many of their relationships with each other, such as sister, aunty, and grandmother.”

Nanda points out, however, that although hijras take on many of the aspects and qualities of women, they are not women. He suggests that their feminine attire and mannerisms are often performed as exaggerations and their “aggressive female sexuality contrasts strongly with the normatively submissive demeanor of ordinary women.” Like the
native North American gender variants, hijras do have frequent sexual relationships with men. Nanda, however, argues that neither the native North American berdache or the Indian hijras are defined by their sexual practices. Nanda goes on to point out that, while hijras are not defined by their sexual practices, they do define themselves as “men who have no desire for women.”

The Mahus of Polynesia

The central aspect of gender diversity in Polynesia involves “males who appropriate certain feminine characteristics.” The practice of some males adopting the attributes associated with women is, according to Nanda, “deeply embedded in the dynamics of Polynesian cultures and societies.” These gender-liminal roles have different names in different parts of Polynesia. The best known terms are the Tahitian and contemporary Hawaiian terms *mahu* and the Samoan term *fa’afafine* meaning “in the fashion of a woman.” Mahu is translated as “half-man, half-woman,” but, according to Nanda, it is not a well-defined third gender such as the hijras of India or the gender variants of Native North America. Deborah Elliston defines the mahu in Tahiti “as a gender category for persons who deploy and participate in complex combinations of masculine and feminine gender signs and practices.” According to Nanda, the most important of these gender practices is engaging in women’s work. Besnier’s thoughts on mahu liminality are based on fieldwork he conducted in Tonga and Tuvalu between 1978 and 1991. Besnier writes of the linguistic choices regarding Polynesian gender variance,
When speaking generally, I avoid the term “berdache,” which is strongly identified with Native North America, and the labels “transvestite,” “transsexual,” “homosexual” and “gay,” which at best capture only one aspect of the category and at worst are completely miscontextualized. Rather, I use the expressions “gender liminality” and “gender-liminal person,” which turn out to be much more than conveniently neutral labels.279

He credits Arnold van Gennep with first theorizing the notion of liminality and then sources Turner as elaborating on that notion. Turner, as mentioned earlier, is of course also instrumental in developing the notion of liminality within performance. Besnier cites Turner’s three major characteristics of liminal events and people, their “betwixt and between locus, outsider status and social inferiority” when describing the Polynesian mahu.280 Besnier also cites Turner’s other liminal perspectives on performance and ritual in describing the gender variant role of the mahu.281

Like the gender variant populations of Native North America, the gender liminal men of Polynesia are thought to excel at women’s tasks: “His mats are said to be particularly symmetrical and regular in shape, his domestic chores singularly thorough, and he is more resilient to tedium than the average woman.”282 Besnier maintains that, in urban settings, liminal men are “superb secretaries and coveted domestic help.”283 Urban centers also present gender liminal individuals with ample opportunity for cross-dressing, although, as Besnier points out, there are no reports of any cross-dressing on a permanent basis anywhere in Polynesia.284

Unlike the gender variant men of Native North America, Siberia, and India, there is no evidence to suggest that Polynesian gender liminal individuals “were or are associated with religious life.”285 The generally recognized shamanistic aspects of gender liminality of the North American berdache and the Siberian yirka-la ul are simply non existent in the case of Polynesian gender liminality.286 According to Besnier,
particular Polynesian gender liminal individuals can be medical practitioners, but there is no “particular link between gender liminality and curing knowledge.” The one exception to this generalization might be the mahu of contemporary Hawaii, where, as Besnier points out, they are often represented as kahuna-like. He suggests that there might be some historical basis for this in that the mahu have been closely linked to hula performance, “which has always had certain ritual functions.”

According Nanda, Elliston, and Besnier, an important aspect of Polynesian gender liminality is homosexuality, but all three also agree that homosexual activity is “neither a necessary nor a sufficient criterion for gender-liminal status.” According to Nanda and Elliston, same sex relations alone do not define Polynesian gender liminality. Elliston suggests the Polynesian mahu is consistently associated with gender and his sexual activity is consistently placed in the background. Nanda suggests that, however background the sexual activity may be, Polynesian gender diversity is nevertheless associated with particular kinds of sexual activity. Nanda goes on to suggest that no stigma or shame is attached to a gender liminal’s sexual partner. The same is not true, however, for the gender liminal individuals themselves. Nanda suggests that the derogation of the gender liminal male is related to his feminine role in sexual relations. Nanda points out that a liminal male gender’s sexuality is viewed “as inherently promiscuous, transient and lacking significance.” Besnier suggests that “the gender-liminal sexual partner, like the woman of loose virtue, is considered an eminently discardable and exploitable object.”

The institutionalization of a variety of gender role alternatives, rather than the narrow landscape of binary restrictive gender roles found among many Native North
American cultures and among some cultures within India, Polynesia, and Siberia, to cite only a few, makes possible a freedom to develop and organize a gender role that corresponds more directly to one’s personal inclinations and abilities. They also serve the possibilities that Kessler and McKenna ask for when they suggest that, “People must be confronted with the reality of other possibilities, as well as the possibility of other realities.” These structured and institutionalized alternative gender roles often allow for a “crossing” out of conventional gender roles, without the attached stigma of deviance, but, rather, creating an experience of acceptance and “frequently even a considerable degree of esteem and respect.”

**Conclusion**

The preceding literature is divided into four sections: Perspectives on Gender Identity, The Performance of Gender, Imaginal Approaches within Performance, and Indigenous and Cross-Cultural Gender Diversity. The section entitled Imaginal Approaches within Performance is divided into two sub-sections: Performance Theory and Imaginal Approaches to Performance. The section entitled Indigenous and Cross-Cultural Gender Diversity is also divided into two sub-sections: Gender Diversity in Native North America and Cross-Cultural Gender Diversity.

The section on gender identity explores the literature that helps define and shape the major conversations around gender and gender identity. Much of this conversation focuses on the work and critical examinations of Fausto-Sterling; the literature attempts to demonstrate her influences and contribution to the post-modern conversation.
surrounding gender identity. This section also traces the literature which places gender identity into a context, its relation to the biological factors around sex, and ultimately comes to the conclusion that gender identity is mostly socially and culturally constructed and consequently open to restructuring and intervention.

The section on the performance of gender explores the literature relevant to an understanding of Butler’s post-modern gender performance theory. This section also attempts to examine the literature that defines the context in which we view those theories, the influence Butler’s ideas have had on various other post-modern gender theorists and possible polarized gender interventions suggested by Butler’s work. The impact Butler has had on our understanding and framing of gender identity seems clear; a thorough exploration of the implications of her work to possible gender performance interventions has yet to be done.

The section Imaginal Approaches within Performance is divided into two sub-sections. The first, Performance Theory, examines the literature that helps define and shape the frame and context from which we derive this study’s understanding of performance. The thoughts and exploration of Schechner, Turner, Boal, and Grotowski are particularly relevant to this conversation and support and encourage the intervention possibilities inherent in transgressive performances.

The second sub-section, Imaginal Approaches to Performance, examines the thoughts and ideas inherent in the concept of performance through the lens of Omer’s Imaginal Transformation Praxis and Imaginal Psychology. This sub-section examines key Performance Theory concepts and finds their similar and parallel constructions in Imaginal Transformation Praxis. It also makes a strong argument for concepts stemming
from hard work and practice, the process of leading to any moment of transformation within performance. This section ultimately focuses the conversation on the intervention possibilities inherent in that narrow band in which performance theory and Omer’s Imaginal Transformation Praxis meet: Participatory Consciousness. In that meeting we find the need for the research this study proposes to execute.

The fourth and final section, Indigenous and Cross-Cultural Gender Diversity, investigates the research and theories of Herdt, Roscoe, Lang, Williams, and Nanda, among others. This section is also divided into two sub-sections: Gender Diversity in Native North America and Cross-Cultural Gender Diversity. Examining both indigenous and cross-cultural variations of gender diversity from a non-positivist and post-modern perspective, facilitates a consciousness towards the cultural construction of both sex and gender in all cultures. An attempt is made to examine gender diversities and identities, which might shed a non-western, non-binary perspective on the meeting of performance theory and participatory consciousness.

This study seeks to contribute to the conversation on the performance of gender. Specifically, this study chooses to examine the intervention possibilities inherent by making the performance of gender volitional, through the performing, imagining, and enacting of transgressive gender performances. This study poses the Research Problem: What subjective states and transformative effects arise when transgressive gender performances are imagined, enacted, and witnessed.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction and Overview

The Research Problem for this study is: What subjective states and transformative effects arise when transgressive gender performances are imagined, enacted, and witnessed? The hypothesis is that imagining, enacting, and witnessing transgressive gender performances will transmute or cause a shift in those imaginal structures that mediate a polarized gender identity.

The foundation for this research is Imaginal Inquiry, a methodology developed by Aftab Omer. Imaginal Inquiry is situated within a participatory research paradigm. Imaginal Inquiry consists of four phases: Evoking Experience, Expressing Experience, Interpreting Experience, and Integrating Experience. It should be noted here that the Evoking and Expressing phases are sometimes not easily separated nor isolated from one another when it comes to performance. Turner, Schechner, and Baol suggest that the very nature of performance mandates an organic back and forth shifting between these states. Consequently the design of the core evoking experience incorporates this shifting between expressing and evoking states. In many parts of this methodology description, an Expressing activity or an Evoking activity is referred to by marking it as an
Evoking/Expressing activity to remind the reader as to the circular relationship of the two.

The research of this study included three meetings spread out over one weekend and one further meeting, to share initial learnings, four weeks after the primary research weekend. The primary intentions of the first meeting and the first half of the second meeting included: introductions and the building of trust between the participants, the introduction of performance and improvisational comfort and the introduction of both the theory and the experience of the doing I, the observing I and the witnessing I. The second half of meeting two, on Saturday night, facilitated the core evoking and expressing experiences (*The Gender Café*). This work centered on the witnessing and enacting of scene performances from Caryl Churchill’s play *Cloud Nine.* The third meeting of the weekend was scheduled for the following morning and focused on integration and closure. As stated earlier, the final research meeting occurred four weeks later, and the intent was to share some initial learnings and to provide an opportunity for the participants to respond to those learnings.

The evoking phases of the methodology were carefully designed to systematically and cautiously lead to the core evoking experiences of Saturday night. The evoking experiences were sequenced in such a way that performance concepts, reflexivity concepts, and the nature of transgressive gender performance were safely and carefully experienced and sequenced. The evoking phases started with simple physically and verbally induced expressions and moved slowly towards more thematic and character induced performances and improvisational activity. The intent was to lead to and prepare the participants for the more complicated and multidimensional evoking experiences of
Saturday night’s Gender Café. During this core evoking experience participants were invited to respond performativity to the evoking performances of the four scenes of *Cloud Nine*.

The nature of all the expressive phases of the research study, except for the hand written journaling, were performative in nature. The expressive/performative phases were contextualized within evoking phases to move and lead theoretically and experientially to the core evoking/expressive experience of the second half of meeting two on Saturday night. Data for this study was collected in the form of video-recordings of all performative and sharing interactions of the participants, the hand written journaling of the participants reactions, and the handwritten response to initial learnings collected during meeting four.

The research meetings included in their design ample opportunities for participant and researcher interpretation. All sessions included opportunities for the participants to identify and share with each other and the researchers’ key experiential moments. The form for this interpreting existed within the shape of both simple verbal group sharing and the more affect based Focal Space Techniques. The participants’ hand-written journalyzed responses during the first three meetings and to the shared initial learnings of meeting four were also used by the researchers in their interpretations. My co-researchers and I identified key moments using each of the following approaches: intuitive, narrative, and condensation.

All research meetings were opened and closed in ritual space facilitating the participants’ experiences of integration. Many of the participant group sharings, while suggesting a focus on interpretation, were also meant to be integrative. The use of *Focal*
Space, a method used in Meridian’s approach to Transformative Learning, and its sequential and cumulative effect were also meant to serve an integrative function. The method was never labeled or named as such with research participants. A Focal Space may be defined as a space in which one or more people speak and/or act from a subjectivity not their own personal identity. Almost the entire purpose and goal of meeting three is integration and closure.

Three co-researchers were involved in all phases of this study. They were Janet Patterson, a colleague from Meridian; Michael Nickerson, a graduate student in psychology at Pacifica Graduate Institute; and Montel VanderJones, a former graduate student in Film at Humboldt State University who served as the videographer for this study. The study’s vision of videographer as co-researcher entailed viewing their camera movement and lens decisions the same way the study made use of the other two co-researchers’ notes taken during group research meetings (i.e., identifying key moments). The videographer’s camera activity, movement, and focus while shooting the working research meetings were vital data for the interpretation and discovery of those key moments. When necessary one of the co-researchers helped model particular activities with me to help clarify that activity for the research participants. The identification of key moments by the two other co-researchers and myself were recorded in more traditional journaling methods. All three co-researchers were knowledgeable, both experientially and theoretically, with Imaginal Inquiry and, as a professor of theatre and film, I trained the videographer/co-researcher.

One of my co-researchers was a woman. There was a great deal of discussion, self-examination, and consultation that took place before the final decision was made to
include a woman as a co-researcher. One of the final deciding factors was that the core evoking experiences set into motion by the guest performances of Cloud Nine mandated the presence of a female in one of the roles of that play as determined by the playwright Caryl Churchill. We, the researchers, decided as a group that the sudden presence of a woman, as mandated by Churchill, could be placed into a contextual perspective by having a woman co-researcher present throughout the weekend. Judging from the participants’ journaled feedback, we seemed to have made the right decision.

The limitations imposed by the research design included but were not limited to: inhibitions and limitations to performance activities that may have been caused by having all research sessions videotaped by my videographer/co-researcher; having my other two co-researchers ever present and journaling might have also inhibited participant performance and self-disclosure; my participants’ required performance and improvisational comfort and self-disclosing comfort may have influenced the data; the presence of a female co-researcher may have inhibited self-disclosure and group sharing; and collective working sessions in which people wait their turn to participate might have resulted in a loss of the immediacy of experience. Every effort was made to honor participant confidentiality during the guest performances of Cloud Nine. The lighting of the performance space was designed so that the guest performers were not very likely to see the audience, aware of their presence yes, but facial recognition was not very likely. Nevertheless, the mere possibility of being recognized by a member of the small community that is Humboldt County may have had an effect on participant comfort, group sharing, and self-disclosure. The delimitations of the study were the restrictions that I purposely imposed on the study’s design. I limited the core evoking experience
phase to focus on four scenes of *Cloud Nine* written by Caryl Churchill and those scenes mandated the presence of one female actor. I limited the study to incorporate the responses of only heterosexual men and I also left the determination as to whether my participants were gender polarized to their own self-determination. I designed the research weekend to include prolonged times in which the men were separated from each other and possibly profoundly affected by people and events outside the boundaries of this study. Feedback from some of the men suggested that some outside influence did occur, while other feedback suggested the breaks were necessary and welcomed.

**Participants**

The screening process for this research study resulted in finding eight active participants. During the screening process, it quickly became apparent that a larger initial pool might be necessary to account for any possible attrition; it was not. The prime motivating factors of potential participants included: a desire to work in a collective creative, performance, and improvisational environment; and a desire to explore the nature of gender identity. Potential benefits resulting from participating in this research study included: an increased sense of self-confidence around performance, an increased sense of the observing I while engaging the doing I (reflexivity), an increased understanding and appreciation of the construction and fluidity of gender identity, and an increased theoretical and experiential awareness of the relationship of performance and the construction of gender identity.
The recruiting of potential research participants was done within the confines of the greater Northern Humboldt County area. Recruiting procedures included flyers, word of mouth, email notices, a radio show on the local University/NPR station, and an advertisement in the North Coast Journal. Flyers were posted and distributed on the campus of Humboldt State University and three local co-op/health food stores. Email notices were posted on several university listservs and one Unitarian Church listserv. Both the radio show and the article in the North Coast Journal were guided by and reiterated the information contained in the email and flyer postings (Appendix 5 and 6).

Demographically, potential participants consisted of self-defined gender-polarized heterosexual men. These men ranged in age from 28 to 65, and an attempt was made for ethnic, economic, and educational diversity. Heterosexuality and polarized gender identity were the primary necessary characteristics of potential participants. Desired characteristics included: an ease and willingness to self disclose, a willingness to move into the vulnerability contained within improvisation and performance, and a desire and willingness to explore the nature of their own gender identity.

The first contact with potential participants occurred during the preliminary telephone screening process. Some personal and limited email contact, by necessity, preceded the first telephone-screening interview. Any such activity was limited to setting up a time for that first telephone interview. A detailed questionnaire was mailed to participants who successfully met the criteria as set up by the telephone interview. I accepted or rejected the participants based upon the returned questionnaires (Appendix 7 to 13).
The study was described to potential participants as one exploring the nature of the performance of gender and the role the performance of gender plays in the creation and maintenance of gender identity. I did not discuss with potential participants my interest in identifying the subjective states and transformative effects that arise through transgressive gender performances nor my hypothesis that transgressive gender performances facilitate shifts in the imaginal structures that mediate polarized gender identities.

I decided during the initial phone contact whether to reject or continue to screen potential participants. If continued screening seemed advisable, I mailed them the complete screening questionnaire. Final decisions regarding potential participants suitability for this research study were made based on their answers to that questionnaire. If I decided that they were a good fit for this study, I informed them of my decision and asked for a reconfirmation of their desire to participate with a phone call. If they were not a suitable fit, I informed them of that decision in a letter (Appendix 7 to 13).

Confidentiality was discussed during the initial acceptance phone call. Confidentiality was again explained in great detail during the first research meeting. The meaning and nature of confidentiality was explained: the researchers will keep the identity of the participants confidential and the participants are asked to keep the identity of their fellow participants confidential, but that they do not have to keep the identities of the researchers confidential. The safeguarding and confidential nature of the videotapes was also discussed as well as the safeguarding and confidentiality of any participant journaling or writing.
The screening of the potential participants happened via phone and mail; the research meetings all took place in the dance and drama studios of Humboldt State University. It was made clear to the participants that this research study was not affiliated with Humboldt State University but that they had graciously allowed us the use of some of their facilities. The large and comfortable dance studio allowed for the creation of a safe and secure container that the participants and researchers of this study needed. The use of the drama studio allowed for a separate set up space for dinner and the guest performances of *Cloud Nine*. Informed consent forms were sent to the potential participants via the mail and reviewed in detail and signed at the first research meeting (Appendix 4).

**Four Phases of Imaginal Inquiry**

As mentioned earlier in this section, Imaginal Inquiry provided the primary methodology for this research study. This methodology consists of four phases, spanning data collection and its analysis, as follows: 1) evoking experience; 2) expressing experience; 3) interpreting experience; and 4) integrating experience. As also mentioned earlier, the Evoking and Expressing phases of performance were not easily separated and isolated from each other. Within the realm of performance, the two phases seemed more circular. It seems crucial to the understanding of this study of transgressive gender performance that the case be made for the evoking-expressing-evoking-expressing cycle. It seems that this cycle is inherent in Butler’s idea that the performance of gender is the expression of gender and that that expression then becomes gender.
The primary evoking experience occurred during the performance experiences and theatricality of what I have entitled *The Gender Café*. The evoking of the core experiences occurred during the second half of research meeting two in which the intent was for research participants to experience the subjective states and transformative effects that arose when transgressive gender performances were imagined, enacted, and witnessed. Participants were invited to respond to four cross-gendered performed scenes from Caryl Churchill’s play *Cloud Nine* (Appendix 22). The intent and purpose of the evoking experiences of the earlier research meetings was to prepare the participants for the experience of the core evoking experience.

The primary purpose and goal of any evoking experiences during the first meeting was to establish the collective comfort of the group while maintaining a heightened sense of individual participation. The sequencing of the evoking experiences began with the men walking through the space shaking each other’s hands in silence. I then asked them to repeat the walking and shaking hands activity only this time asking them to use their own first names as a way of introduction (Appendix 14). The simple and direct nature of these two introductory, evoking experiences invited the participants to make direct contact with each other and to experience an introductory version of the observing I - while-doing I practice of reflexivity. These two activities and my questions about them were also meant to introduce the participants to the experience and concept of tracking various levels of their own awareness. Meeting one also introduced the experience of working while being videotaped. The combination of introductory activity and the presence of the camera were meant to bring about a comfort level that would later prove necessary.
The first half of the second research meeting culminated with the first performance evoking activities meant to engage issues around gender identity. The bus stop performance improvisation was meant to evoke affects around how one defines for oneself notions of masculinity. The plan was to do so in an introductory non-invasive way. By playing both men—the one who always took the bus and the one whose car has broken down and was consequently a first time bus user—the hope was that some nonthreatening masculine status issue would be evoked and then shared (Appendix 15).

The bus stop activity was immediately preceded with an aware walking activity. The hope was that the participants would carry the observing I, in which they had had ample opportunity to connect during the aware walking activity, into the slightly more performance oriented activity of the bus stop exercise. The intent and purpose of the preliminary evoking activities of meeting one (partner walking word association, partner gesture sound sequence, and partner dialogue sequence) was to bring into focus performance and improvisational sharing and dependencies. The second half of research meeting two facilitated vital preliminary evoking experiences: the gender walking activity, the gender pharmacy scene, and the core evoking experiences of Saturday night’s Gender Café (Appendix 17).

These preliminary evoking experiences incorporated a more provocative and self-aware sense of gender. The previously mentioned aware walking activity of Saturday morning’s meeting two was meant to lay the ground work for the evoking of the doing I and observing I selves around gender evoked by the gender walking activity. The gender pharmacy scene work was intended to add a heightened sense of performance to the observing I and doing I selves of gender performance, adding the idea and experience of
being witnessed (witnessing I) by an audience. This sense of audience solidarity became a vital aspect of the core evoking experience, part of which was facilitated by being part of the audience witnessing the guest *Cloud Nine* scenes. The technique of how we got into those gender pharmacy performances (participants could choose which gender or could draw a slip of paper from a hat that determined which gender they played) was meant to help ease participants into their own comfort level of participation and set the ground work for techniques used during the Gender Café activities (Appendix 16).

The evoking activity of the gender pharmacy scene also included, for the first time, the use of the prop/costume box, introduced during preliminary evoking experiences so that its use during the later core experiences felt familiar. The work around the evoking gender pharmacy scene also involved focal space (though never labeled as such to the participants), evoking and expressing moments which for the first time separated the doing I from the observing I and encourage expressions from each perspective (Appendix 16).

The second half of research meeting two (Saturday night’s Gender Café) contained the core evoking experience. Participants were invited to respond to four scenes from Caryl Churchill’s play *Cloud Nine*. Churchill’s play included cross-gender casting mandated by the playwright. The ground work for the doing I, the observing I, and the witnessing I as an audience was done by the work of the participants in the gender pharmacy scenes. After the guest cast of those four scenes of *Cloud Nine* left the research space, research participants were invited to respond by choosing an improvisational scene (Appendix 21). Participants were asked to choose from eight
undisclosed possibilities, all of which in some way responded directly to the scenes just witnessed and also involved cross-gender performance suggestions.

This evoking experience manifested two slightly different versions. The first round was a direct response to the witnessed scenes. The second round allowed for further elaboration by participants to the scenes already performed by other participants in round one. Both rounds of this evoking experience also included the choosing of a prop/costume from the prop/costume box. The final evoking/expressing activity of the evening involved participants addressing the video camera from either the doing I speaking to the observing I or the observing I speaking to the doing I. The men addressed the camera one at a time and in privacy from the other men. The activity took place on the stage of the guest Cloud Nine scenes and the men’s improvised responses to those scenes.

The primary purpose of meeting three was to facilitate integration and closure. The meeting did however contain the opportunity for final culminating journaling. The primary purpose of meeting four was to share the initial learnings and as such that sharing of learnings is the primary evoking/expressing experience. Participants were invited to do handwritten journaling in response to hearing those initial learnings and to share with the group from those writings.

All research meetings were videotaped. All aspects of the expressing phase of this research were videotaped. The videotapes included, in them, the videographer’s intuitive responses, expressed by his camera work, which aided in the identification of key moments. The combination of the video recordings and my co-researcher/videographers intuitive responses also made it possible to track the circular relationship of evoking
experiences and expressing experiences inherent in the performance modality. Where those shifts became apparent on the video became useful data points. Data, in the form of handwritten journaling expressions during all meetings, were collected and interpreted. The subjective notes by the other co-researchers and me were added and compared to the work of the videographer/researcher as data.

Though the first research meeting contained some activity that may be considered expressive in nature (mirroring, sculpting, and word association activity), they were primarily meant to establish trust, performance confidence, and a sense of collective dependence, and were not meant to be expressive units of collectable data. The primary unit of expression of research meeting one is journaling and group sharing from what was journaled.

The core evoking/expressive experience of the first half of meeting two was the bus stop status improvisation. The men are asked to experience both characters and the situations they found themselves in; this activity was previously described in the Evoking section and can be fully examined in Appendix 16. This was the first evoking/expressing experience of the weekend in which some subjective states around masculinity and status may have been evoked and expressed. As it turned out, this activity provided a major triggering towards Learning One, and that triggering was partially caused by the cycling of the evoking and expressing experiences for one particular participant. The groundwork and preparation for this expressing experience, of meeting two, was accomplished with the expressive responses experienced in the word association, sound/gesture, and two line dialogue activities of meeting one. The evoking and expressing of the doing I and the observing I, accomplished through the aware walking activity, is also an essential
preparatory step for the bus stop activity. As previously mentioned, the first half of meeting two also introduced the idea and experience of Focal Space expressions. The introduction of the Focal Space activity was done in a language comfortable and easily understandable to the participants.

The second half of research meeting two opened with the gender walking activity, the evoking and expressing of which was prepared for by the earlier aware walking activity. The hope was that the subjective states evoked and the participants’ expressions based on those subjective states were expanded and deepened with the evoking/expressing experiences of the gender pharmacy scenes. The further involvement with the expressions of the observing I/doing I relationship was also meant to prepare participants for the evening’s Gender Café. The gender pharmacy scene was meant to be a final preparatory experience and expression to facilitate the participation in Saturday night’s Gender Café (Appendix 16). The gender pharmacy scene introduced a more formal audience observing perspective to the expressings necessary for the later witnessing of the scenes from *Cloud Nine*.

Saturday evening’s Gender Café provided the core evoking/expressing experience. The expressive activity of the Gender Café centered on two improvisational opportunities, one handwritten journaling and group sharing based on that journaling. The first round of the evoked and improvised expressions were meant to respond to the guest performed scenes of *Cloud Nine*, participants were asked to choose an undisclosed scene suggestion, read it out loud, choose an item from the costume/prop box, and then improvise the suggested scene. The second round was meant to respond to both the guest performed scenes and the previous round of participant expressions. In this the second
round, participants had the ability to choose a scene previously performed by another participant and expand upon or add their own unique expression to that previously performed scene. Close to the end of the evening of the Gender Café, participants were asked to speak directly to the camera from the perspective of either the Observing I speaking to Doing I or the Doing I speaking to the Observing I. An examination of these expressing experiences and how they were represented on video was a triggering point to Learning Three. Once again this activity demonstrated the circular nature of the expressing-evoking sequence, in this case the expressing experience triggered an evoking experiences which in turn triggered another expressing experience.

The primary intent of meeting three was integration and closure. The modality of handwritten journaling expressions was an integral part of meeting three. The participants were asked to respond to the previous night’s activities from the doing-I, observing-I, and the witnessing I perspectives. The intent of meeting four was to meet with the participants after initial and preliminary data analysis had taken place and to share with the participants some preliminary learnings. This took place four weeks after the research weekend. Handwritten journal responses to the initial learnings were collected.

The Interpreting Experience of Imaginal Inquiry entails the following four steps: identifying key moments, responding to key moments, exploring differences and parallels, and contextualizing with theory and myth (Tiresias). Key moments were identified by the participants, by my co-researchers, and by me.

The sequencing of interpretations by the participants were meant to include several modalities, foster a collegiality and a full sense of participation, and aid in data collection. Participants identified key moments via vocal/verbal sharings with each other
and the researchers in all four meetings. Key moments were also identified via handwritten journaling in all four meetings. As previously stated, one of the primary purposes of meeting three was to provide sufficient time for the participants to identify the key moments of the previous night’s core evoking experiences of the Gender Café.

Participants had responded at the end of the previous night with journaled identifications of key moments. Those identifications took place, however, at the end of a long day of work. The journaling during the morning of the next day during meeting three were not rushed and contained a slightly more reflexive quality.

During all working research sessions, two of my fellow co-researchers journaled their immediate moment to moment reactions of the intersubjective field. After each research meeting, my co-researchers and I met to journal, discuss, and compare our intuitive findings of key moments. After the completion of the first three research meetings, my co-researchers and I met for a weekend data analysis session to respond to the collected data. That data took the form of over 12 hours of video and the handwritten journaling from the first three meetings. At this phase of interpretation, we examined the intuitive key moment identifications done by the videographer/co-researcher and compared it to our intuitive identifications using the more traditional during and after-session-journaling. We then attempted to find video sequences that appeared as metaphorical phrases or turning points in the participant’s stories and performances (Narrative Approach). We also attempted to define video sequences that presented similar and/or recurring themes and expressions by each participant (Condensation Approach).

We responded to the identified key moments, explored parallels and differences, and contextualized with theory and myth (Tiresias). After meeting four, my co-researchers
and I met for another data analysis weekend and incorporated the participants’ handwritten journaling and the video recording of meeting four into the data collection. During this second data analysis weekend, my videographer/co-researcher and I started the process of separately editing the 12 hours of video down to an hour and a half of key moments. During the next month, we got together three times to compare and contrast each other’s collected highlights. This process proved extremely useful in the totality of the interpretative process of this study.

Omer’s Imaginal Transformation Praxis was the primary theoretical lens used to interpret the data. Performance Theory based on the work of Schechner, Turner, Goffman, Watkins, and Boal also served as an essential theoretical perspective from which to look at and interpret data. These two theoretical lenses were used to look at gender identity as a performance in the context of concepts and principles related to subjectivity, reflexivity, reflexive participation, imaginal structures, adaptive identity, and participatory consciousness.

Participant and researcher integration was an essential component in the planning and organization of each of the four research meetings. Each meeting opened and closed in ritual, facilitating the transitions into and out of the research meetings. Each meeting contained ample opportunities for the participants to share and express their feelings and responses to the various activities with their co-participants. During all group sharings, the men separated and acknowledged each other’s comments with a group hum. Once introduced to this concept, the men were able to consistently adhere to its practice without reminder. Hearing the shared feelings and thoughts of their fellow participants became an essential facet of integration. Almost all the activities described in this
methodology included sharing observations and feelings. The goal and purpose of meeting three was closure and integration. As stated previously, meeting three also included the use of culminating hand written journaling which enhanced participant integration.

The shared meal towards the end of meeting two, its design, quality, and atmosphere were all intended to facilitate participant integration. The quality of the food and its presentation were meant to create an atmosphere of professionalism, appreciation, and an increased sense of intimacy.

An unexpected integrative experience occurred with the speaking to the camera activity at the close of the Gender Café. As previously stated, the men were asked to speak to the camera from either the doing I speaking to the observing I or the observing I speaking to the doing I perspective. Reviewing the video of this activity, it became clear that the men took advantage of this activity to integrate concerns and feelings that had built up throughout the day.

The researchers integrated their experiences by attending review meetings at the end of each day, reflective journaling while participants were doing their own journaling, video screenings, and group debriefings. The two weekends of data analysis also served as major integrative experiences. Co-researchers stayed at my house, cooked and shared meals, and shared observations and feelings triggered by the screening of the video recordings.
CHAPTER 4

LEARNINGS

Introduction and Overview

The Research Problem examined in this study was: What subjective states and transformative effects arise when transgressive gender performances are imagined, enacted, and witnessed? It was hypothesized that imagining, enacting, and witnessing transgressive gender performances may suspend the imaginal structures associated with polarized gender identity. All references to participants are done by using the convention of pseudonyms, which serve to preserve the participants anonymity.

The Cumulative Learning proposes that volitional transgressive gender performances, as viable polarized gender identity interventions, generate the psychic movement necessary to imagine and enact transformative alternative gender identities. Most of the concepts in which this research was situated can be found within Imaginal Transformation Praxis, as developed by Omer. Key to this study were concepts of *imaginal structures, psychological multiplicity, adaptive identity, and participatory consciousness*. Omer defines imaginal structures as “sensory, affective and cognitive aspects of experience clustered into images which both mediate and constitute experience.” ¹ According to Omer psychological multiplicity refers to the existence of “many distinct and often encapsulated centers of subjectivity within the experience of the
same individual.” ² Omer articulates the concept of adaptive identity as “personas or masks people assume given the unavoidable traumas of life.” ³ According to Omer, these self-images persist as an “adaptive identity into subsequent contexts where they are maladaptive and barriers to the unfolding of soul.” ⁴ Omer’s concept of participatory consciousness refers to “states of consciousness which are unobstructed by a delusional sense of a separate self.” ⁵

As the emerging of learnings evolved, ecstatic experience and psychic movement became essential to the articulation of those learnings. Psychic movement owes its operational definition within this study to Lopez-Pedraza as “moving, hermetically, that part of the psyche that has been paralyzed by the person’s history or experience.” ⁶ Ecstatic experience refers, according to Omer, to experiences “noted by the absence of those dynamics, called gatekeeping dynamics, that restrict experience.” ⁷ According to Paul Verhaeghe, “Ecstasy, literally means standing outside yourself.” ⁸

Four major learnings emerged from the data collection and analysis over the span of this study. Learning One proposes that performance allows us to imagine and observe ourselves and others within the realm of possibility. Performance is an engagement that moves us beyond what is actual and present into contact with the possible, and when this is embodied, performance brings the possible home.

Learning Two proposes that volitional gender performances—imagined, witnessed, and enacted—can bring into awareness the friend and the gatekeeper and the role they play in transforming the adaptive identity that is gender. Learning Three claims that volitional gender performances, with an engaged and non-critical observing I—imagined, witnessed, and enacted, question the origins and then expose the imaginal
structures that serve as the scripts of our gender identities. Learning Four suggests that volitional transgressive gender performances can momentarily suspend the imaginal structures and dichotomous thinking of our polarized gender identities, facilitating a state of “not-knowing.” This state of “not-knowing” portends a momentary collapse of adaptive identity and may facilitate a shift into participatory consciousness.

Learning One: The Embodiment of the Imaginal

Learning One proposes that performance allows us to imagine and observe ourselves and others within the realm of possibility. Performance is an engagement that moves us beyond what is actual and present into contact with the possible, and when this is embodied, performance brings the possible home.

What Happened

Learning One emerged from the first thoroughly performance-oriented evoking activity of the weekend: The Bus Stop Improvisation. This performance activity took place one hour into our second session and included for the first time performing for an audience. The men served as an audience for each other, taking turns shifting between performing and witnessing.

The Bus Stop activity was preceded by six non-audience performing activities. The three activities during the first session were mostly introductory in nature, their purpose being to build trust and collective support. The three activities immediately
preceding the Bus Stop activity were an attempt to clarify and focus on the distinction between the Observing I and the Doing I of performance. Preceding the Bus Stop activity, the men had also experienced several journaling and group sharing sessions.

The Bus Stop activity is simple in design and scope. The simplicity is meant to facilitate, on the part of the participants, an awareness of the observing I of performance. The scenario was described to the men using the following outline: Two men meet at a Bus Stop. One takes the bus regularly; for the other, this is his first time taking the bus. The man who always takes the bus is already situated at the bus stop as the man who never takes the bus enters the scene. The man who always takes the bus observes the other man and then speaks one line of improvised dialogue. The man who has never taken the bus then responds with one line of improvised dialogue, to which the other man then responds and, after a bit of a pause, exits the scene. This exit leaves the man who has never taken the bus alone at the bus stop, and thus ends the scene. The technical requirements and restrictions of the activity are meant to encourage if not mandate the active participation of the observing I of performance. During the activity, the men all had the opportunity to play both roles and to play the scene with each of the other seven men.

During the set-up and instructional phase of this activity, the men asked several questions regarding its order and procedure. The men were initially paired up. After two rounds, which allowed each man to play each role, they proceeded to voluntarily enter the scene, guided by my instructions to play each role with each of the other men.

It was during the second round in a scene between “Roland” and “Chris” (pseudonyms) that the triggering moment of Learning One occurred. Roland performed
the role of the man who always takes the bus. Shifting to present tense, we see Roland sitting on the bus stop bench when Chris enters the scene. After a few seconds of observing Chris pacing back and forth, Roland’s mouth drops open and he generates a very large and noticeable smile. Roland observes Chris pacing for another 10 seconds and then begins with great enthusiasm his improvised dialogue line:

Excuse me, this is really the...I take this bus everyday but this is really my favorite time of my whole day because there is always something different going on, and you’re really different here, there’s been other people who have been different sometimes, but you’re unique, and I’ve never seen you before. It’s fabulous. It’s like a whole book opening up right in front of me. It’s...I don’t know you, (audience laughter) there could be all kinds of information. I would like to know more about who you are, (speed of words and phrasing noticeably increasing) why you wear your side, (performing with great enthusiasm with both voice and gesture) what are they called…sideburns, longer than most people I know? (Audience laughter.) And how did you damage that frame (referring to Chris’s glasses)? I’m just (moves towards Chris on bench) fascinated to meet someone new. My name’s Roland. (Holds out hand for Chris to shake.)

At this point Roland’s arm and hand are extended towards Chris. Chris takes a pause of some five seconds and then responds with his improvised dialogue line: “Are you f...king high?” At this point there is much audience laughter followed by three seconds of absolute silence. Roland’s arm falls and his body seems to collapse in on itself. Roland then responds with the third and final improvised dialogue line: “This is really a terrible part of my day.” This last line seems to be followed by a sound coming from Roland similar to a cry or exclamation of disbelief. Roland exits the scene and Chris remains at the bus stop for some five seconds before he also exits.

The Bus Stop activity triggered multiple data collection opportunities. Immediately after the activity, the men were asked to journal about their experiences and were then asked to share with each other some aspect of what they had journaled. The group sharing was followed by a focal space experience in which the men had a chance to
express and experience any unresolved issues around the Bus Stop activity. The Bus Stop activity itself, the sharing and the focal space experience, were all videotaped with the videographer/co-researcher’s reactions (angle, zooming, focus, and perspective) contained within the video. The other two co-researchers were engaged in real time journaling during all the above-mentioned activities.

All three co-researchers responded in real time to the significance of Learning One’s triggering moment. The videographer/co-researcher responded with camera movement and the other two co-researchers responded with *realtime* entries in their journals. I, on the other hand, responded to Roland’s group sharing of the experience as recorded on videotape. The following is what Roland shared with the other men as seen on the videotape:

I guess it was the last scene that I did, it was with you right (referring to Chris)? I…ah, when I’ve done similar exercises, and I can do them by myself too, it amazes me…I started to cry when you…when you…I mean it was…I had no expectation of crying, no plan of crying, so I wasn’t…wasn’t planning on a scenario where I could be observed crying, but I didn’t feel embarrassed or like I should hide it, you know, it was just beginning, so I don’t know if it really was observed…(Emphasis) I observed it. (Stronger emphasis)…I observed it …it surprised me…like I really reached out to you…it felt authentic to me…like…man … (grunt of pain)…aah…man, I really did like this day…and you really smashed it…God…(emphasis) it’s so real…(Stronger stress) It’s just so real.

I was drawn to Roland’s “I observed it!” and “God…it’s so real…it’s just so real” on the videotape. It was the specific moment of “It’s just so real!” during the sharing, as recorded on videotape, that led me back to the actual moment that Roland had experienced, also as recorded on videotape, with Chris in the Bus Stop activity.

Roland’s journal entry, written immediately after his Bus Stop performance experience and used as the basis for his sharing with the other men as documented above, follows:
I really started to cry. Why? What power? Why not? I want the other part, with an opposite feeling, from the assumed feeling. Friendship, why not or the very least, why not a good relationship—a positive experience to remember. I want to make it real—observed or not. Why can’t he observe me accurately, I do, but do I really observe him accurately?

The videotape recording of the men sharing, after their journaling of the Bus Stop experience, clearly shows Roland referring to what he has written, as cited above.

Roland’s experience of the Bus Stop performance was also cited in his culminating journal entry. As the third and final weekend session came to an end, I asked the men to reflect on the entirety of the weekend. I asked them to journal what stood out for them as affective highlights from each of the following perspectives: the doing self, the observing self, and the witnessing self. Describing the affective highlight of the weekend for his doing self, Roland stated:

Doing self: I was man A, the man who always takes the bus. in my scene, I was so excited, so open, so looking for connection. I bubbled over with curiosity and sharing and questions—man B yelled at me. Put me down, shut me down. Emotionally and verbally abusive—He caught me completely off guard—I cried and started to go into my serious depression—“curdled”—I was ashamed, guilty, I must go far away.

Two of the other men, when asked to journal the affective highlight of their weekend from the witnessing self experience, mentioned witnessing Roland’s bus stop performance.

Although Roland’s partner, Chris, only had one line of dialogue in the Bus Stop activity—“Are you f..king high?”—his reflective journey after the experience provides further data. His journal entries about the experience do not directly refer to Roland or his performance. Chris does, however, refer to Roland’s experience when asked to share with the other men some highlight of his journaling. It should also be noted that Chris’s
sharing followed immediately after Roland’s. There is no journaling basis for the following comments he shared with the other men.

I have this sensation watching from the observing I (Bus Stop Scene), it’s...it’s less of an inventing a character or something like that …more of a taking aspects of my personality that are already present and just sort of cropping and modifying them and skewing them until they fit something more like what the script or the improv situation…ahm…demands or asks for…and that also raises for me some interesting questions about authentic self (he laughs) and what exactly that means (long pause, then Chris turns to Roland)…and I actually felt like kind of a jerk. (Referring to his part in their bus stop scene.)

Chris felt the need to elaborate or explain further his part in the scene when it came time for the focal space expression. I asked the men to take the opportunity to express any thing that needed expressing, anything they felt that was left unsaid about the bus stop activity. The videographer/co-researcher intuitively shot the video of Chris making the following comments with Roland in the background, and by studying the video it is possible to examine Roland’s reactions to everything Chris says.

So here’s the thing…Sometimes I just want to be left the hell alone! (Group laughter except for Roland) (Roland’s hands go up in the air then drop back down on his knees and his head nods) Right?...And I don’t think sitting down next to someone necessarily means that’s an open invitation to start a conversation about some sh.t that we will probably never remember because (with increased intensity) I’ll go your way, you go my way…you know…and will never talk to each again...(speaking more and more quickly) it’s like getting a hair cut, I don’t necessarily want to talk to you…I just want to get my hair cut…I just want to ride on the bus…I’d rather take my car frankly. Sometimes I don’t want to talk to people!

The camera work itself and the choices made by the videographer and co-researcher add yet another layer of data in support of Learning One. His framing of Chris’s focal space response includes Roland’s outward expressions of his affective experiences during that response. An examination of the camera work for Roland’s bus stop performance itself reveals another significant video journaling moment. Roland
responds to Chris’s line, “Are you f..king high?” first with a moment of silence punctuated with physical gestures, then with the line, “This is really a terrible part of my day,” and finally with a sound similar to a cry or an expression of disbelief. Instinctively, my videographer/co-researcher then follows Roland as he exits the scene, zooms in for a tight shot of his face, and visually stays with Roland, capturing and highlighting his affective response as Chris is only heard finishing the scene off camera.

How I was Affected

Pertaining to Learning One, my first affective response was to the video of Roland’s group sharing, not to the actual or video recording of his bus stop experience. It was my affective experience of his “I observed it!” and “It’s just so real!” in his group sharing, as recorded by my co-researcher/videographer, that led me to articulating Learning One. It was the combination of joy, pride, and shame that I felt and still do feel when watching the videotape of Roland’s group sharing that provided the stimulus and encouragement needed to examine the various data points of Learning One.

Although I saw and heard, on video, Roland’s “I observed it!” and “It was so real!” moments sequentially, I experienced affectively the second moment first. It was my affective experience of the video of Roland making his observation and plea “It’s just so real!” that led to my examination of his declaration “I observed it!” From this declaration, I then went back to his actual experience of the bus stop scene as recorded on video. This, then, outlines my affective journey of joy to pride and finally to shame.
When I experienced Roland’s “It’s just so real!” moment on video, I was overcome with a feeling of child-like, vulnerable joy. It was the kind of joy I would experience when some 10-year-old play pal of mine finally got the nature of some game I was inventing. Working with the video, I was able to shift between the “it’s just so real!” moment and the “I observed it!” moment, and, as I shifted back and forth, my feeling of child-like, vulnerable joy shifted to a more adult-like sense of pride. As I became aware of this shift, I purposely instigated its occurrence. This shifting between child-like joy and adult-like pride led to the discovery that when Roland increased the emphasis between his first “I observed it.” and his second “I observed it!” He was doing so because he was actually realizing the profound significance of his discovery then and there, while he was sharing it. When I fully realized the significance of his discovery and that we had captured it on videotape, the adult-like pride became dominant. It was with this sense of pride that I turned to the investigation of Roland’s bus stop experience.

It was during the examination of the video of the bus stop scene that my sense of pride met shame. Having purposely shifted between joy and pride and finding it insightful, I attempted the same thing with pride and shame. As I examined the video sequences of Roland’s group sharing and his actual bus stop performance, I came to the following discovery. I felt pride for what I had created and shame that I had not been the one to discover the moment first.
Imaginal Structures

During my movement with Roland from joy to pride and then to shame, I experienced what I have long been aware of: that my more significant imaginal structures and their existence and power have a meaningful relationship to my self-perceived shortcomings. I have studied and created theatre since I was 16 years old. In undergraduate school I became intrigued and fascinated with the acting styles suggested by the works of Bertolt Brecht and Jerzy Grotowski; later I participated in workshops examining the techniques of Augusto Boal. The theories and works of these theatre artists stress the observing I, the very observing I, that as a young acting student at Drake University, I could not hold or sustain.

My subsequent life in the theatre has been about helping others find the observing I of their performances. Ever since my father admonished me, “Don’t be so dramatic,” at the family dinner table as I cried and shouted to make some point, I have been incorporating the observing I into my daily life. This over-incorporation has led to an avoidance and fear of the negative affects of my daily life, an over reliance on the observing I, and the often resulting affect of being detached from my feelings. Ironically, I was unable to find the observing I in my theatrical life. I was bringing all of the negative affective experiences of my daily life into my theatrical life. I could not activate the observing I and remain non-reactive in my volitional performances. I was becoming a dangerous actor for others to work with. I knew for the sake of both my own and others psychological well being I had to stop acting.
Theoretical Concepts

According to Turner, performance and the performer transform themselves: creating the possibility for new symbols and meanings, which may then be incorporated into subsequent performances.\(^9\) Turner suggests, for such a transformation to take place and for it to be truly reflexive, the “self is split up the middle—it is something that one both is and that one sees and, furthermore, acts upon as though it were another.”\(^{10}\)

According to Boal, this meeting of the one who observes and the one who acts has the potential to bring about moments that allow both to imagine variations, alternatives not previously considered or felt. For Boal the ability to observe oneself in the doing is the essential quality that defines the core nature of performance. It was within these politically and socially transgressive performances that Boal’s “oppressed” populations became fully conscious of what they could become and what it would take to bring about any such change.\(^{11}\)

It was Schechner who spent his energies and time attempting to understand this reflexive moment, this “detached vision,” this “reflexive self-understanding” that exists at the center of performance.\(^{12}\) Blau, a colleague of Schechner, describes this reflexive moment of performance as transformative and suggests its transformative powers seem to be universal.\(^{13}\)

Schechner suggests that this moment of transformation lies at the heart and center of what is performance. Schechner suggest that performers “undergo a temporary rearrangement of their body/mind,” what he calls a “transportation.”\(^{14}\) Omer suggests that this embodiment, which he defines as “connecting with the somatic and affective
dimension of experience,” is one way in “which one’s capacity for experience may be extended into richer degrees of diversity, depth, intensity, complexity, and sensitivity.” 15 Referring to specific experiences in the theatre and working with specific performers, Schechner comes to call this embodying moment, a moment of “reflexive self-understanding.” 16

Interpretations

Learning One proposes that performance allows us to imagine and observe ourselves and others within the realm of possibility. Performance is an engagement that moves us beyond what is actual and present into contact with the possible, and when this is embodied, performance brings the possible home.

Roland’s performance experience and his ability to verbally and affectively share that experience presents a truly unique opportunity to examine the reflexivity that is possible to experience in moments of performance. The process of self reflection inherent in the journaling process allows for a somewhat sequential examination of the data supporting the acquired reflexivity of his performance.

Roland had less prior performance experience than any other member of the group. Roland also shared early on, as the men introduced each other, that he desired deep emotional experiences. It seems appropriate that Roland should be the one to discover, embody, experience, and then find the words to share the transformative power of performance. He and the group did so at their first opportunity—the bus stop activity. His performance and all of its implication was, as Schechner, Turner, Baol, et al. have
suggested, a witnessing I (The audience), observing I/doing I (Performer) co-creation. It
took the introduction of an audience of his colleagues to help facilitate Roland’s
performance experience.

Roland’s transformative performance experience was mentioned as a witnessing I
highlight of the weekend by several of the men. I would suggest they did so because they
not only co-created it as witnesses, but on some level they took responsibility and pride in
the effect it had on Roland and his ability to share that emotional state. The video of the
bus stop sequence was shot using two cameras. One camera was stationary and covered
the playing of the bus stop scene, the other camera was hand held by my
videographer/co-researcher. The hand held camera was free to respond to the dynamics
of the inter-subjective field. A review of the hand held camera work reveals an audience
(witnessing I) participation level that supports my contention that Roland’s experience
was co-created. Roland came to this research group wanting experiences of deep emotion
and he articulated that desire to the other men. The men, in turn, were open and accepting
of Roland’s vulnerability. They co-created the reactive emotions which Roland
experienced.

Chris, Roland’s bus stop scene partner (The offender), helped to co-create the
scene itself and then helped to advance the sharing and focal space exploration of the
transformative aspects of the scene. Roland communicated to the men the desire for the
emotional involvement Berg and Smith describe as being necessary for the detachment of
self reflection: “to develop the level of detachment necessary for self reflection demands
a kind of involvement that makes detachment appear impossible.” 

In performance, the
capacity to be involved is directly tied to the capacity to be detached. The self-reflection
informs the action, and the action forms the basis for the self reflection. In performance, action and reflection happen simultaneously. We observe while we experience and we experience while we observe. According to Berg and Smith, this is both a group and an individual performance dynamic; it was for Roland, Chris, and the men during their co-created bus stop performance.

Validity

Validity within the participatory paradigm is established through intersubjectivity, which entails accounting for all aspects of an intersubjective field, including researcher, co-researchers, and participants, as well as parallels with relevant existing literature. All activities in which the men were asked to participate were separated by journaling and group sharing from what was journaled. Prior to the key moment that triggered Learning One, the men had had four opportunities to experience the sequence of an activity followed by journaling and sharing with the group. The men were also asked, in a culminating journaling activity, to highlight their most striking experience from the entire weekend from the perspectives of the doing I, the observing I, and the witnessing I. While the participants were journaling, my co-researchers and I took the opportunity to do key moment journaling of our own. My videographer/co-researcher responded with his real time video journaling. His journaling used the language of film in the form of zooms, focus, shifts, camera angles, and frame compositions. My other two co-researchers also journaled in real time. They used the more traditional approach of writing. Given the nature of the activities and my role as facilitator, I was unable to do
any real time journaling. I was however able to track and then later recall some of my major affective responses to what was happening with the help of the video recordings.

Three of the research participants, Roland being one, indicated Roland’s bus stop experience as a key moment in their weekend culminating journaling. Roland mentioned it when asked to highlight his doing experiences, and the other two participants highlighted the experience when asked to speak from the witnessing perspective. Roland also highlights his experience in both journaling and sharing directly after the bus stop scene. Roland’s partner in that scene, Chris, also highlights his response to Roland’s scene in the group sharing directly after the scene. Roland and Chris found it difficult to let go of the energy created by Roland’s bus stop moment. Both used the focal space, after their journaling and group sharing, to further extend the *reality* of Roland’s performance.

The videographer/co-researcher responded and journaled his response on video to Roland’s performance experience. While all the other participants were allowed to leave the frame after the completion of their scenes, Roland was not. The video follows Roland away from the scene and clearly captures the display of his ensuing affective responses. The videographer/co-researcher also documents and journals the extended energy of Roland’s performance. In the video of Roland and Chris’s group sharing, he intuitively senses the continuation of that energy by framing his shots so that both men are in the frame and we can clearly observe the reactions of each to the comments made by the other. The other two co-researchers also highlight Roland’s performance moment in their journaling. As stated earlier, I was not able to respond to Roland bus stop experience while it was happening but was led to the recognition of it as a key moment through his
group sharing as represented on video. My discovery of his performance moment took a more circuitous route, and it all happened after the fact, through and with the video recordings of those events. The relevant existing literature would suggest that Roland’s performance moment occurred in the first activity in which it theoretically could have happened. Theoretically any such performance moment is dependent on the interaction of the doing I, the observing I, and the witnessing I. The bus stop activity was the first activity to include an audience—the witnessing I. Roland’s performance, the triggering moment for Learning One, was a convergence of the “it was just so real” and the “I observed it” witnessed by his fellow participants.

Learning Two: Observing as an Affirmation and a Criticism

Learning Two proposes that volitional gender performances—imagined, witnessed and enacted—can bring into awareness the friend and the gatekeeper and the role they play in transforming the adaptive identity that is gender.

What Happened

The need to investigate and articulate Learning Two came from data made available by an activity the men performed close to the very end of the second day of our time together. After the men had shared a meal with each other, after the men had witnessed the transgendered scenes of Caryl Churchill’s Cloud Nine, and after they had themselves responded with their own transgendered monologues, I had them speak
directly to the camera based on the following instructions: “Based on today’s activities please choose either the observing I speaking to the doing I or the doing I speaking to the observing I, and look into the camera and speak what you need to say to that part of yourself.” The men participated in this activity one at a time, privately and on the set of the previously witnessed and enacted Cloud Nine scenes.

Of the eight participants, five spoke from the observing I to the doing I. An examination of the recorded video of these five men reveals the use of encouraging phrases, affirmative word choices, and reassuring inflection patterns. Jerry, speaking to the doing I, said, “if the observing self were speaking to the doing self, I think it would say that…ahm..lets see…If the observing self were saying something to the doing self…the message from all day would be…to…let go…it’s a fun examination of stuff…just let go…have fun.” When Andy was asked to address the camera, he also chose to speak to the doing I: “and as the doing part…if you could just let that be just a little bit freer and not worry about being perfect.” Ted was very quick to ask to speak from the observing self to the doing self: “Doing self—be open to new things…ahm…allow yourself to look inside yourself for the true meaning of being.” Chris also chose to speak from the view of the observing I. An examination of the video of Chris speaking reveals that he is on the verge of tears when he states: “ I think what my observing self would say to my doing self…ahm…just one thing to say…and that is…Relax.” Terry, the last of the men who chose to address the doing self, was also quick to choose: “Yea I think you’re still unclear about your activities and you’re uncomfortable with them…just try and do the best you can.”
Three men chose to speak to the observing I from the perspective of the doing I—
Ken, Bill, and Roland. Ken quickly and without much hesitation chose to speak to the observing self: “It would be better if you observed in a way that was supportive and didn’t observe in a way that was looking for fault or wondering what everyone else was thinking that…that wasn’t helpful.” Bill was also decisive and clear in that he wanted to speak from the doing self: “Step back a little bit, give me more room…let me go, I know you are not talking to me, but…criticizing me…but just the act of observing, sometimes makes me very nervous.” Roland was almost immediate with his response to my question:

The doing self speaking to the observing self—this is a new relationship and…I guess I am trying it on like a new suit of clothes…I’m not sure I like it, but I want to be open and try to trust it and trust you…I want to trust you that you are there to help me…to work with me and that I am there to work with you…that it’s a…ahm…a mutual relationship…that we are there for each other…in an authentic way.

The five men who chose to speak to the doing I from the perspective of the observing I did so using phrases such as: “just try and do the best you can;” “just one thing to say…and that is…relax;” “don’t worry about being perfect;” “allow yourself to look inside yourself;” and “it’s just a fun examination of stuff.” The inflection patterns of all five of these men while speaking from the observing I was encouraging and comforting. Ken and Bill who spoke to the observing I from the doing I chose phrases and inflection patterns that were critical of the functioning observing I. Roland, as sited above, discussed the relationship between the observing I and the doing I, moving back and forth between phrases and inflection patterns that were either supportive or critical.
How I was Affected

While the men were speaking to the camera, from either the doing I or the observing I perspective, I was experiencing impatience but great satisfaction. The second day of our research time together was coming to an end. The caterer had shown up on time, and the men had enjoyed the meal. The guest performances of Cloud Nine had gone very well, and the men had responded with clarity, imagination, and good humor with their own improvised monologues. The evening was about to come to end, and I was tired, exhausted but feeling very satisfied.

The video of the men speaking from the perspective of the doing I or the observing I does not include visual images of me instructing and advising them, it does however include the audio portion of those moments. Studying my voice on that video clearly suggests I am conflicted.

The satisfaction I experienced was not just from a job well done; it was also the kind of satisfaction I experience when making a discovery or having an insight. It is this satisfaction that leads to further insights and discoveries. My internal conflict was caused by this sense of satisfaction and the desire to move on to the next discovery or insight and, of course, the desire to have the evening end on time. It almost seemed as if I should have done the exercise, I was asking the men to do, myself; I should have had my Observing I ask my Doing I to slow down and relax.
Imaginal Structures

I was born in Germany and came to this country when I was eight years old. Being German and having left Germany for the United States in 1954 (on a ship that was four days late in arriving) have had a profound influence in shaping both the context and direction of my life. As the joke goes: German trains leave on time to the second. I am never late. In fact most times I arrive early. I hate waiting. The irony of course is arriving early compounds the feeling of waiting, and I do not wait well.

I can remember, when I was 11, waiting for my father to come home from work. I would sit by the front room window, one eye on the clock, and without fail I would spot my father’s car coming down the street the same time everyday. Once in the house, my father would light a cigar, lie down on the living room couch, and take a nap. I would sit and watch as the ashes from that cigar (in his mouth) got longer and longer. I knew he would wake up before any of them fell on his chest. He always did, I always waited to see if they would, and they never did. My mother served dinner at the same time every evening. That dinner and the time it was served was the grounding for the independence I so cherished. My mother did not care what I did during the day as long as I was home in time for the evening meal. I always was.

My adult life as an educator (38 years and counting) has been filled with classes that need to start and end at specific times. Within those allocated hours, a certain amount of material is to be covered. During the first class period of each new semester a required syllabus is given to the students detailing what will happen in every class throughout that semester. The teaching of classes was always interspersed with the directing of plays. It
was during these creative, discovery-oriented studio sessions that the awareness of my conflict between time and satisfaction was crystallized. I felt the constant anxiety of people being late to rehearsal sessions. I experienced the satisfaction of creative discovery and I experienced the conflict of affects as I was able to end the studio session on time.

**Theoretical Concepts**

Omer conceptualizes gatekeeping as “the individual and collective dynamics that resist and restrict experience.” He points out that there are individual, group, and cultural gatekeepers, which restrict experience. Boal’s term for a similar concept is the Cop-in-the-Head. Boal describes people who have for some reason or other stopped themselves from taking action as having “cops in their heads” that limit the scope and extent of any possible action. A “voice within each of us that criticizes mercilessly” is what Hal Stone and Sidra Stones define as the “inner critic.” According to the Stones, the inner critic prevents intimacy by shaming and abusing oneself and others. Kalsched’s concept of the daemon or the protector/persecutor as “an internal figure who jealously cut them off from the outer world, while at the same time attacking them with merciless self criticism and abuse,” is a similar idea to that of Omer’s gatekeeper.

In contrast, instead of being limited and self critical, experience can be diversified and deepened, which, according to Omer, are two of the four dynamisms of experience. Deepening experience, according to Omer, entails accepting the friend and gatekeeper as subjectivities that are a part of a larger psychological multiplicity. Omer suggests the
friend refers “to those deep potentials of the soul which guide us to act with passionate objectivity and encourage us to align with the creative will of the cosmos.”

In order for the friend/gatekeeper relationship to bring about a neutral observing I, they must first engage in some meaningful dialogue, a reflexive dialogue which attempts to bring the self into relationship with the existence of the subjectivities of gatekeeper and friend. Engaging the friend and the gatekeeper, in what Omer calls reflexive dialogues, is essential for disidentification to take place. Omer defines reflexive dialogue as “a conversation engaging two or more distinct centers of subjectivity within a field of suspended identification.” Watkins’s imaginal dialogue is a similar concept to Omer’s reflexive dialogue. The Stones also use and articulate as similar term: “voice dialogue.”

Interpretations

Learning Two proposes that conscious gender performances—imagined, witnessed, and enacted—can bring into awareness the friend and the gatekeeper and the role they play in transforming the adaptive identity that is gender.

Most, if not all, of the literature around performance documents the value of the relationship between the observing I and the doing I/performing I. Some of the literature, as previously stated, documents the essential aspect of performance as the meeting of the triad of the performing, observing, and witnessing I. None of that literature however deals with gatekeepers, inner critics, cop-in-the-heads, or the protector/persecutors abilities to neutralize, subsume, or otherwise devour the neutral observing I and the need to engage
that inner critic in reflexive dialogue. The data of Learning Two suggests that the gender performance work these participants were engaged in brought to their awareness a dialogue between the friend and the gatekeeper that each found necessary for a deeper and more individually diversified experience of gender identity.

Bill and Ken, who both chose to speak to their observing I, did so from the gender performance experience of gatekeeping. When asked in various gender performance activities to observe from the neutral observing I, they were unable to do so. In those moments of gender performance, their gatekeepers seemed to go on the attack. They voiced self-criticism. Ken: “My inherent failure of this exercise heightens my self-awareness;” “I experienced performance anxiety;” and “I felt so self-critical, so uncomfortable.” Bill: “Felt really self-conscious;” “I felt self-conscious and uncomfortable throughout the exercise;” “Maybe that’s the result of my own sense of not having reached a very deep level of gender exploration, maybe I’m just hiding from myself. Peek-a-boo;” and “Playing the monologues was really frightening.” Bill and Ken experienced, through their gender performances, the active presence of what I am calling gender gatekeepers and came to the conclusion that, to accomplish further gender exploration, a word or two needed to be addressed to those gatekeepers. Bill and Ken have extensive performance experience in the theatre, so I feel safe in assuming the gatekeepers aroused were those concerning gender and not performance.

Chris, Jerry, Ted, Andy, and Terry, all with various levels of performance experience, chose to speak to their doing selves. They spoke from the observing self in encouraging and comforting tones: “It’s fun, it’s just a fun examination of stuff;” “Don’t worry about being perfect;” “Just try and do the best you can;” and Chris and his emotion
filled “just one thing to say...relax.” As a result of their gender performing experiences, these men had made contact with an internal subjectivity Omer would call the Friend. They were able to make use of the Friend to address, through reflexive dialogue, what their gender performance experiences had revealed and needed to address.

Roland also spoke from the perspective of the doing I, but unlike Ken and Bill, Roland was able to speak with an encouraging and supportive tone. Roland was able to speak about his doing I and express a desire for a trusting relationship with the observing I: “That we are there for each other in an authentic way.” Roland was also able to verbalize the idea and the need for such a relationship.

This was the only activity done in private, in that none of the other men knew who the previous man had chosen to speak to or about what they had spoken. In Learning Two, each man had and expressed their own experience. Unlike the expressions of evoked responses during moments of sharing in which individuals spoke for the group, during this activity the men spoke from the unique aspects of that which each needed to address.

The structure of the activity was planned, the outcome— who spoke to whom and what was said— was not. The result of the gender performances— the doing of, and the observing of the doing— Schechner describes as the essential aspect of theatre that defines theatre. The observing of gender was brought into awareness as a natural result of the doing of volitional gender performances. Once this relationship was formed, it brought the participants into a deep experience of their gender gatekeepers, an experience facilitated through the container inherent in performance. I think it fair to say that the friend/gatekeeper dialogue that ensued was specific to each individual participant’s
relation to gender and to the issue of the performance of gender and not performance in general.

**Validity**

Speaking to the camera from the point of view of the observing or doing I and addressing its counterpart was the only activity of the weekend that was not shared by my co-researchers while it was happening. Given the nature of the videography of this activity, it also did not allow my co-researcher/videographer to comment while shooting. He held the camera steady and composed a very tight shot as each man addressed the camera, and, regardless of what the man said, the camera remained tight, composed, and focused.

The co-researchers experienced the men’s responses for the first time while reviewing the video. Their review of the video supported not only my interpretations as to which men spoke to which internal subjective state, but they also agreed with my interpretations regarding inflection patterns and word choice. Their conclusions supported the notion that the five men who spoke to the doing I from the perspective of the observing I, did so with a more supportive vocabulary and inflection pattern.

Reviewing the entire 12 hours of video reveals that this activity was the most tightly shot of any of the weekend’s activities or of any of the affective reactions the men may have had all weekend. These close-ups allowed for a detailed examination of the men’s affective responses as expressed through facial articulations. Those articulations
were consistent with their word choice and inflection patterns and consistently identified as such by all of my co-researchers.

Another validity consideration was how the participants' choice of which subjectivity to speak from and related to other journaled and shared statements made during the weekend. An examination of the written journal entries of the men does suggest some consistency with how and to whom they spoke to in this activity. Ken and Bill, both of whom spoke to their observing selves, suggest a level of self criticism in their journal entries. Ken, for instance, writes in his journal when referring to his participation after the guest scenes of Cloud Nine: “I remember feeling extremely self conscious. I felt so self critical and so uncomfortable I absolutely blanked on stage about how to play Ellen.” Both are also self critical in various group sharings as recorded on video. Bill is critical of his level of participation all weekend when he concludes in a final group sharing that fear may have kept his work “superficial.” Roland’s comments, which examine the relationship between the doing self and the observing self, also seems to be reflected in other comments he made during the weekend. I think it might be fair to suggest that, out of all the men, Bill and Ken were most critical of themselves, and it was Bill and Ken who chose to speak directly and somewhat critically to their observing selves.
Learning Three: Exposures, Origins, and Revelations

Learning Three claims that volitional gender performances, with an engaged and non-critical observing I—imagined, witnessed, and enacted, question the origins and then expose the imaginal structures that serve as the scripts of our gender performances.

What Happened

Learning Three emerged from a moment that occurred during a group sharing after an introductory hand-shaking activity. As an introductory activity during our first session, participants were asked to walk around the room in silence, meet, make and hold eye contact, and then shake hands with each other. This activity was done in silence and lasted until each man had shaken the hands of all the other men. At the completion of this activity, the men were asked to journal and then share some of what they had journaled with each other. Jerry, sitting directly to my left within the sharing circle, states:

Maybe I think of it… maybe it’s just in the context of the class (referring to our research group), but I…I…but I…I ask myself where did I learn that from…where did I learn this from…you know…that…this strong grip…ehm…handshake…I don’t know…where I learned…I started to ask myself, where did it come from?…Where did I learn that from?

At this point he is looking directly at me, and I, for some reason, ask for clarification by reaching out my hand towards him and asking, “This?” He responds, again looking directly at me: “Yea…yea …I mean it had to come from somewhere…Right?…yea… (He laughs to himself).” Jerry’s response, “ Yea…I mean it had to come from somewhere…Right?” to my question “This?”, affected me at the
moment of it’s happening. This moment and its accompanying affect led me to an examination of the recorded video of the hand-shaking activity itself.

An examination of the video shot by the co-researcher/videographer of the hand shaking activity indicates a focus on the handshaking and not the eye contact aspect of the activity. The video proceeds from footage showing the entirety of the activity, as in men walking around the room, seeing and meeting each other to tight shots containing only images of the hand shaking. The video never focuses on the participants’ eyes or on the act of making eye contact. The co-researcher/videographer found himself drawn to the energy created by or stemming from the handshaking. He was, in fact, able to smoothly move through tight shots of various couples shaking hands. The footage also suggests the actual handshaking grips getting tighter as the activity progresses. Jerry’s journal entry immediately following the hand shaking activity: “I noticed that I still practice that strong gripped handshake that I learned from somewhere…Where did I learn it from?”

My next step was an examination of the gender walking activity. I thought if the men were in fact questioning where the scripts or imaginal structures that serve as the basis of their gender performances came from, I might find additional data generated by the gender walking activity. The structure and format of this activity was simple in design. The men were given a piece of paper, which determined the gender they were to play to start the activity. They were instructed to walk around the room as that gender. All men walked at the same time, and no one witnessed anyone else’s gender portrayal. None of the researchers, including myself, knew which gender the participants had drawn and were to start with. At given intervals the music was stopped, the men were asked to
stop walking and return to being themselves. After some 10 seconds of stillness, the music was started again and the men were asked to switch genders and walk. This sequence was repeated until the men had walked as each gender twice and remained still, as themselves four times.

During the second round of walking, after the first switch over, the video clearly shows Ted, while walking, making a fist with one hand and then hitting his other hand with that fist. By the third round, it becomes apparent that Terry and Roland have also adopted the fist gestures. During the fourth round, Ted has again adopted the fist hitting hand action. Having watched the men on video, I then looked to their journaling and sharing after the gender walking activity for evidence of any awareness or questioning of those actions. Terry sharing with the men:

I might just add that I…I did notice that the one time that I was being a man…I had the urge to pick a fight with somebody…like in this room…like in this group…I don’t know if it was real or not…I don’t think I seriously wanted to get into a fight…but I just wanted to shove somebody and get physical like that some how.

Ted almost immediately responds by reinforcing Terry’s observation:

That went for me too…as Jerry went walking by I wanted to nudge him (gestures with shoulder) but I was a man doing my thing…(makes fist and hits other hand several times), and for some reason I kept pounding my fist…(hits fist again) and doing something with my hand like that…I had to be more aggressive…or more…what’s it called…more…ehm…expressive with my hands to let my presence be known.

I remember being drawn to this moment of reinforcement and affirmation on Ted’s part at the moment of its happening. Watching it on video only reinforced its significance. Throughout the weekend, all of the group sharing was done so that each man’s contribution was separated and registered by a group hum. I had explained its purpose and intent at the beginning of the weekend, in that I thought it would lead to both
an honoring of what each man had to share and it would help us listen and not talk over each other. The technique worked exceptionally well all weekend.

The men only failed to employ its use once. The only exception was the moment cited above. In fact it was the only moment all weekend in which the men referred to each other or expanded on what one of them had previously stated.

Bill was also drawn to question where particular male or female performance scripts came from. His journal entries after the gender walking activity highlights his questions: “I wonder where we get the preconceptions that we played out…that when you are playing a male…you’re more aggressive…more domineering, when you’re playing a female you’re more nurturing…Where does that come from? I don’t understand that.” Bill’s culminating journal entry also contains references to the scripts or imaginal structures that inform gender performances. When asked to highlight the weekend’s activities from the observing I, Bill continues to question where those scripts come from. Andy also closed his final sharing session questioning the imaginal structures that inform his gender identity. His approach is to put his doing of gender in the context of his shared relationship with his wife, what she will and will not allow him to do. Andy’s sharing was highlighted by all of the co-researchers as a key moment of the final group sharing.

Jerry returns to his attempt to understand the imaginal structures or scripts from the basis of his performance of gender during the closing sharing circle on Sunday:
It’s like a long time since I… I’ve had a psych class…but it’s like classical conditioning…kinda …ehm..like rewarding them…and the reward is not being ostracized …ya know …that’s the reward…you’re…which says a lot, I think, about being human. But it also brings up a lot of questions, what about people, what about people who don’t do that? There are a lot of people out there who make an effort to be non gender specific or like gender ambiguous or there’s trans gender community…and I think it’s really interesting…it’s really interesting, what are the reasons, why are they not caught in that same cycle of reward…it’s really interesting...a lot of questions have been coming up for me in regards to gender.

Jerry seems to momentarily have discovered an answer; a study of the video however reveals that, in the pause between “same cycle of reward” and “it’s really interesting,” he lets go of that answer and moves back to being present with the questions and not-knowing.

How I was Affected

There were only two incidents over the course of the research weekend in which I may have improperly spontaneously inserted myself into the mix. Both are relevant to Learning Three. During the sharing portion of the pharmacy scene activity, I volunteered an observation: “I was not able to detect the gender of the pharmacists, maybe since he/she has the power and since we associate power with being male, we perform the female pharmacists like we do men.” The second intrusion occurred when I inserted myself into Jerry’s sharing about performing being a man. He was attempting to articulate his questions about gender scripts around tight handshake grips when I stuck out my hand and asked: “This?”

A careful examination of the video recordings of the sessions reveals that Jerry is the least articulate of the men during the sharing portions of their work. I also remember
and noted that his verbal struggles strongly affected me during the moments of their occurrence. His focus on trying to find the imaginal structures that formed the basis for his performances of gender and his difficulties with those articulations evoked in me a paternal and pedagogical pride.

My affective experience of Jerry’s verbal struggles to articulate what I so wanted him to share and express was the triggering moment for Learning Three. The confluence of Jerry’s age, his quest for understanding, his struggles with language, and my own imaginal structures around language and teaching led to my experience of paternal and pedagogical pride and then to my need to help Jerry articulate his questions. This combination was also the driving force behind the justification and articulation of Learning Three.

My other potentially improper and biasing spontaneous insertion into the men’s work occurred during the sharing around the pharmacy performances. The men had randomly chosen a gender to play either someone wanting a prescription filled or the pharmacist who filled that prescription. The men took turns playing both roles and both genders. Questions surrounding where the imaginal structures, that form the basis of how we do being men or women, come from, again, surfaced during their sharing after the activity. As I witnessed the men playing various combinations of genders and roles, I noticed that all the men playing the pharmacists played them as if they were male, or so I thought. I had purposefully designed the activity to engage status with gender. As I listened to the men sharing observations, I remember waiting patiently for someone to verbalize what I had noticed. No one did. The pride I felt in both my observational
abilities and my abilities to design that activity turned to vanity, and, suddenly, I was verbalizing my observation to the group.

**Imaginal Structures**

Upon arriving from Germany, we moved to the near north side of Chicago. It did not take me long to realize that a large part of my survival was dependent on getting rid of my German accent and learning to speak English as quickly as possible. I remember deciding early on that I might not be physically able to defend myself but, that if I mastered English, I was pretty sure I could defend myself with the use of language. In second grade, I noticed the weekly visits of a speech therapist and that some of my fellow second graders got excused from class and got individual speech/language attention. I faked a stutter so that I too would gain that help and attention. Those earliest memories of school in Chicago help clarify the imaginal structures I have around language, especially spoken language.

Language is a system which is uniquely suited to attack and defend. I spent much of my early childhood in the United States defending myself and attacking others with language. I learned words and phrases other children my age did not understand and used them quit efficiently to make them feel stupid. I mastered inflection patterns that, when used, made other children feel confused and anxious. I learned to say one thing and subtextually imply another.

Some during the eighth grade watching and listening to Mr. Kukla, my science teacher, I came to the realization that I too wanted to teach. I promptly announced to my
parents that night: “I know what I want to be, I want to be a teacher!” I had recognized in Mr. Kukla’s voice an entirely new set of powers. I responded to his voice and its capacity to encourage, support, and motivate. His inflection patterns were also sub-textual, but his sub text was one which gently suggested you could do better, one which lead you to discover things for yourself. His voice was one filled with the pride taken in the accomplishment of others.

These two apparently paradoxical relationships to language have triggered many of the most significant moments of my life. When I have reverted to the childhood survival tactics of attack and defend with language, I experience great sadness and remorse. When I find the sub-texts of support and encouragement in my voice and share that with my own students, I experience the pride taken in the accomplishments of others.

**Theoretical Concepts**

Omer’s imaginal structure is a key concept to the understanding of Learning Three. According to Omer, imaginal structures are “assemblies of sensory, affective, and cognitive aspects of experience constellated into images; they both mediate and constitute experience.” 25 Ellen Langer expresses a parallel concept to Omer’s imaginal structures with her *premature cognitive commitments*, which are like “photographs in which meaning rather than motion is frozen.” 26 Gatekeepers maintain imaginal structures and cognitive commitments and attempt to restrict or prevent any aspect of experience that does not fit within a particular structure. The subjectivities trapped by the gatekeepers attempt to free themselves by enacting symptomatic behavior. For Omer, imaginal
structures are constructed from personal, cultural, and archetypal influences.\textsuperscript{27} This means any transformative attempt at an adaptive gender identity will need to respond to the cultural and archetypal influences informing gender identity.

A similar if not parallel concept to Omer’s imaginal structures is the term \textit{script}. Oatley suggests “the idea of a script to describe the outlines, or frames, for interpersonal relations that is set up by an emotion: happiness sets up a script for cooperation, anger sets up conflict, and so on.”\textsuperscript{28} Bem also uses the term scripts when positing the origins of gender identity, suggesting they are the basis of the repeated behavioral patterns that create and define gender.\textsuperscript{29} Tomkins has also developed the idea of “emotion based life” script. Outlined by Oatley, Tomkins’s approach to scripts can be articulated in three parts. First, he argued that emotions are the real motivator to behavior. Second, when an emotion is active, it engages entire processes in the brain and the body to articulate a response. Third, according to Oatley, Tomkins argues “that people act according to scripts to solve certain kinds of emotional problems in their lives. Once a person is lodged in a particular script, it becomes a core component of the personality, in which a sequence can be triggered by any one element.”\textsuperscript{30}

Omer describes adaptive identity as the persona that individuals adopt given the unavoidable trauma of life. Adaptive identity, claims Omer, is formed by a complex of imaginal structures. Imaginal structures, the lenses through which we experience the world, can feel like the self; they are however not the self.\textsuperscript{31}

Omer’s concept of \textit{Reflexivity} is the capacity to “engage and be aware of those imaginal structures that shape and constitute our experience.”\textsuperscript{32} Schechner describes a concept similar to Omer’s reflexivity as a performance’s moment of “reflexive self
understanding.” 33 Disidentification with imaginal structures that form adaptive identity, according to Omer, is essential in the transformation of identity and is associated with the emergence of a “spacious awareness free from frozen images of the self.” 34

**Interpretations**

Learning Three claims that volitional gender performances, with an engaged and non-critical observing I, question the origins and then expose the imaginal structures that serve as the scripts of our gender identities.

Learning Three was triggered by an introductory activity. The hand shaking activity was not designed as an evoking experience. When I asked the men to journal after the hand shaking activity, I expected them to highlight aspects of the activity that made them uneasy, the eye contact or the hand shaking. I also expected them to focus on aspects of the activity that informed them about each other. I was not prepared for the focus of the group sharing, which followed the journaling time, to be the imaginal structures that inform our performances of gender.

My interpretation of what occurred during the hand shaking activity is based on a review of the entire activity on video. I think what happened was that the men, in greeting each other, naturally brought the unconscious aspect of Goffman’s performances of everyday life into a more conscious performance mode. The handshake became a signature part of that performance, and as the interactive nature of the conscious performance escalated so did the intensity of the handshake. The shared questioning: “Where did we
learn that from?” resulted from what turned out to be a spontaneous conscious interactive performance.

The videographer/co-researcher experienced that interactive performance intensity. His visual representation of that activity indicates a shifting focus not to eyes meeting but to hands shaking. The footage clearly indicates a growing preoccupation with the intensity of hand shaking. What is also striking and revealing is that there is no humor contextualizing the hand shaking. There is intensity and focus. A study of the video would suggest the hand shaking had become a kind of group gender gesture, a physicalization of group intent or an externalization of group subtext. The internal gender questioning field existed; it needed only the experience of an external physically shared embodiment to be brought to consciousness. Once brought to consciousness through embodied performance, the imaginal structures asked to be questioned.

The gender walking activity, on the other hand, was an evoking activity. The video indicates that many of the men began to embody and create physical extensions of imaginal structures or scripts they held around gender. The further the extension into embodiment the imaginal structure was carried, the more it needed sharing and questioning. The fist pounding gestures and their extended emotional experiences increased in intensity until they were expressed and diffused in group sharing. The fact that, during the group sharing after the gender walking, the men talked over each other and expanded on what another had said is significant. That was in fact the only time all weekend over-talking or duplication of observation occurred. The energy around the imaginal structures that form the basis of shared male aggression and potential gender based violence was too much for one man to hold.
It seems as if Jerry turned out to be the individual who held these questions the longest. Smith and Berg might suggest that Jerry held the questioning of the imaginal structures of gender for the entire group. The group, once recognizing that Jerry was going to continue asking those questions, was free to explore other aspects of gender performance. Jerry’s final group sharing indicates that he has and continues to question the imaginal structures that inform gender identity. Jerry does, however, often contextualize his questions in a somewhat academic setting. It was Andy who took those performance triggered questions of the imaginal structure that informed his gender identity out of Jerry’s somewhat abstract academic world and into his own non-academic personal life. He shared those thoughts with the men during the closing session on Sunday.

After I left last night’s session and after all of the things we did yesterday…doing the gender transference…the male, female. I had a bit of an epiphany, actually it was like an elephant in the room, my wife picked me up, because she had the car, I realized once I got into the car and I started talking to her. She is the male in our relationship. She talks like a male….

Andy goes on to question how it is that he can perform being a man with his wife. He lists typical male behaviors that his wife allows him to perform. He ends questioning how he can perform or activate those imaginal structures influenced gender behaviors that currently have no possible outlets in his relationship with his wife.

**Validity**

A validity consideration for Learning Three mandated that I consider whether the data supported a separate learning around imaginal structures or whether this learning
might simply be a significant step to yet another learning. An examination of the intersubjective field, including co-researchers and participants, led me to the articulation of Learning Three. An examination of the paradoxical nature of my own imaginal structures around language and the fact that my two spontaneous, possibly improper, insertions into the men’s sharing concerned aspects of Learning Three led me to this particular consideration of validity.

The data clearly supports the significance of the process of revealing and questioning the imaginal structures that inform how we perform gender. The men responded to various activities, throughout the weekend, focused on questioning where they learned the scripts from which they do gender, such as journal entries, highlighting experiences and reactions, and questioning and revealing imaginal structures around gender. An examination of culminating journal entries and the journal entries articulated six weeks after the weekend finally led me to the conclusion that the data existed to support the separate significant learning that is Learning Three.

In those concluding journal entries it becomes clear that, for some of the men, the conscious performances of gender they enacted, imagined, and witnessed led them to question the basis of those performances. They highlighted that questioning was a major experience of the weekend. Andy, in the closing sharing circle, questions and articulates what his wife allows and does not allow him to do regarding his doing of gender. Jerry, who triggered Learning Three, ends his culminating journal entry after a brief period of time thinking he has an answer and questions his imaginal structures around gender. Bill ends his culminating journal entry for the observing self with “Where did that come from?”
While it is clear that questioning and teasing apart the imaginal structures that inform our gender identity is part of a process that does and can lead to rendering them powerless and making it possible to momentarily drop our polarized gender identity, it also seems clear that the questioning of those imaginal structures around gender from the unique perspective of having experienced their embodied presence through performance leads to a separate and distinct learning.

**Learning Four: A Step into the Unknown**

Learning Four suggests that volitional transgressive gender performances can momentarily suspend the imaginal structures and dichotomous thinking of our polarized gender identities, facilitating a state of *not-knowing*. This state of not-knowing portends a momentary collapse of adaptive identity and may facilitate a shift into participatory consciousness.

**What Happened**

Close to the end of the second day and shortly after having witnessed and responded to the guest performances of *Cloud Nine*, when asked to share some of what had been journaled from a witnessing perspective, Roland stated:
The whole gender thing...it was fascinating to get really confused, I mean upstairs we each played men and women, we’ve walked as a man and walked as a woman, and then there is suddenly...there is another man being a woman very convincingly and there is a real woman, when she walked in, it was like...ooh...wooo...that’s a real one...(group laughter) and I found it sort of...she was a little like...it’s only been like a half a day...but it was like...she is quite amazing...a magic creature...and...then I got...it got more confusing...the man kissing Betty didn’t seem to really kiss her, he seemed to give her one of those stage kisses, where you couldn’t really see his lips, so he didn’t kiss the woman, but then the real woman was falling in love and did kiss a man who was actually playing a woman and I thought...ooh my...my antenna for gender is getting a bit lost.

Roland’s comments as experienced by me in real time and as later experienced on video served as the triggering moment for Learning Four. A brief overview of the activities Roland is referring to is necessary to fully understand and contextualize his statement. Late in the afternoon of the second day, the men were led into a different room for dinner and the guest performances from *Cloud Nine*. The new space had been preset for theatre and dinner. The ritual aspects of theatre were heightened through the use of food, costumes, sets, props, and lighting.

The guest performance scenes from *Cloud Nine* were chosen for both their content and style. Churchill’s play deals with the theme of gender identity and stylistically does so by cross-gender casting several roles. I chose four scenes from the play, all of which included Betty played by a man. I purposefully cast that role against type, meaning casting a man who would never normally be chosen to play a woman. The four scenes were also chosen because they each individually worked on their own, and then when performed in sequence, they suggested the nature of the play as a whole. Each scene was introduced and named. Part of the theatricality was created by visually naming each scene on a poster board/easel and allowing it to remain during the presentation of
said scene. The guest cast consisted of three men and one woman, and I rehearsed the scenes for some four weeks prior to the research weekend.

After their performances, the guest actors left the room and the research participants were asked to respond to those scenes by voluntarily going up on stage and choosing one of eight improvisational suggestions from the easel and performing the suggested monologue. All eight men participated in this first round.

After the first round was completed I asked the men, who so desired, to go up on stage and improvise any reactions they had to their performances of the first round. Six of the men participated in this second round. The men were then asked to journal their reactions to witnessing both the guest actors and their own improvisation from both the witnessing and the doing perspectives. After their written journaling, the men were once again asked to share some of what they had written with each other. It was at this point in the evening’s sequence that Roland made the earlier cited comments.

His comments highlight his role of the witnessing I. He refers to his performing or doing I when he refers to what the men had previously experienced upstairs, downstairs, and in the evening his moment of letting go. These were triggered by the witnessing I.

Other men also expressed experiencing their own versions of this moment of not knowing. Both Terry and Bill describe moments triggered by the doing I. Terry’s journal entry, highlighting the most memorable experience of his performing self that night, explains his own experience of letting go: “As far as my own performance, I was aware that I was trying to sit and act as a woman. Shortly after I began my piece, I let go of that and was able to immerse myself more into the role I was playing.” Bill describes his experience of doing the second round of monologues:
When I went back for a second try at playing Clyde talking to Joshua, I had no idea how I was going to suppress or get beyond the laughter, both my own and the others watching. But the yell, which came out of desperation, put me in the moment—it was exhilarating. I no longer feared what the audience thought or saw.

The men all shared similar gender performance experiences. Some set up the experience of their “letting go” moments through the doing I/observing I diad, and others set up the experience from the witnessing I. Some responded that evening, and others the next day. Andy responded six weeks later during our preliminary learnings session: “The ability to be affected requires the letting go of one’s belief about what a man is and listen and experience the perceptions and thoughts of others. Opening one’s mind. The thing that stuck out the most was again the feeling of being part of something big in my little world.” Andy, in his own words, is expressing what may be a turn towards Omer’s participatory consciousness and Turner’s communitas.

**How I was Affected**

When Roland articulated his gender confusion to the rest of the men, late on Saturday night, I felt a mixture of delight, disbelief, and awe. I could not believe that any one of the men could so systematically articulate and be affected by all that I had purposefully set up as evoking experiences. From the time I led the men downstairs at 6:00 p.m. for dinner, I experienced a deep sense of respect. I felt profoundly affected by all that was set up and happened in that room. It was as if the container, holding all that the men were doing and which I had experienced in such an illusive and abstract form upstairs, was emerging here in this heightened theatrical setting with profound
materiality. Those feelings of respect, awe, and disbelief merged during Roland’s articulation.

I experienced the room, with its added theatrical dimensions, with awe and disbelief. I remember thinking and feeling: “Did I really do this?” and “How had this all come together like this?” It was as if what I had been doing for some four weeks at some unconscious synchronous level was suddenly flowing into consciousness, and I was in awe. I was not in awe of what I had done but in what we had created collectively. In that moment downstairs, sometime between dinner and guest performances, I had my own moment of participatory consciousness.

I witnessed the guest performances with a sense of curiosity and pride. The pride was the familiar pride I felt in the accomplishment of others and that I describe in Learning Three. The curiosity was facilitated by the guest performers preparedness and skill. I remember feeling an overwhelming relief when I experienced a great sense of confidence in their skills. In that moment, I gave myself permission to shift from pride and anxiety to a state of observational curiosity. That sense of curiosity, mixed with the occasional experience of anxiety, moved me through the participants’ improvised monologues in reaction to the Cloud Nine scenes.

This describes the emotional roller-coaster ride that delivered me into Roland’s sharing of his step-by-step reactions to what had transpired. I have attempted to describe the context in which I experienced his sharing. When I heard him describe in detail each aspect of the guest performances and how those had affected him, I experienced Roland as the observing I to my doing I, he had become my supportive and non judgmental observing I.
I vividly remember a particular graduate committee meeting while I was a student at the University of Iowa. I had just directed my first project, *Fragments* by Murray Schisgal, and this was to be my committee’s evaluation of that work. I remember as my committee started with their positive observations of my work: I had done a good job directing and coaching the actors, I had an interesting sense of style and choreography. My committee was slowly moving to that part of the meeting which most of us as graduate students feared. After reassuring me that they would indeed approve of the work I had done, they asked had I ever considered that the three characters in the play were actually different multiplicities of the same character. I was dumbfounded. The truth of their statement, and yes it was a statement even if they had couched it in a question, moved through my body like a lighting bolt. Fortunately for me, my committee observed, respected, and trusted the depth and severity of my realization.

That realization was not just about the truth of their interpretation, but on a much more profound level, I realized why I had not made that discovery. I had done all the analysis required, what I had not done was taken the time to be present with uncertainty, to hold the moments of not knowing. I moved from my discomfort with not knowing to the security of fact and reason. In shifting from this discomfort, I had failed to develop the necessary patience with not-knowing and the ability to hold and be present with uncertainty so necessary for creative play. I was 23 years old during that first year at Iowa, and I made a pledge to myself there and then never to be afraid of not knowing again. I have kept that promise and have incorporated that lesson into the teaching and
directing of my own students. I am reminded of another play I directed many years later, *Woyzeck* by George Buchner. I had no idea what I wanted as a last image for the play, and opening night was a mere three days away. I had no ending for the production, and the cast and crew were getting anxious, frustrated, and worried. I was in the deepest state of not knowing, and from that place, through a dream, emerged the ending that had so long alluded me. The dream took place the night before we opened and showed me a cast facing the audience with black helium filled balloons in their hands. The cast let go of their balloons. The black balloons slowly lifted towards the ceiling. I worked all day, rounding up helium, finding black balloons, and, in the end, I was able to make that image happen in the theatre.

**Theoretical Concepts**

To move beyond chaos and into true community, contends Peck, is a journey through emptiness. Emptiness occurs, says Peck, when judgmental thinking, ideologies, the need to comfort, solve or fix, and the need to control are released. 35 Turner defines communitas as an “unmediated” or direct relationship between actual, distinct, real people. In communitas, direct relationship and individual difference occur simultaneously. 36 Turner defines three types of communitas: spontaneous, ideological, and normative. Of interest here is spontaneous communitas, which Turner defines as a “direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities.” 37 In communitas, Turner contends that interactions are deep rather than intense and there is a magical quality to them. 38
O’Kane likens the eternal psyche to an individual’s experience of interconnectedness when they do not experience themselves as isolated or cut off from others or from life. This participation, this “eternal return,” through ritual to mythical origins, provides us with the knowledge that we are not alone. It thus allows us to face the dark aspects of the sacred—and of the self—without suffering more than necessary and without the pain provoked by isolation: we are supported by the awareness that many others have had this experience. O’Kane’s “eternal psyche” can be likened to Omer’s conceptualization of participatory consciousness, which Omer defines as a “state of consciousness that is unimpeded by a false sense of a separate self.”

Omer’s participatory consciousness is also similar to Turner’s communitas. According to Omer, participatory consciousness and ecstatic states are synonymous. Omer emphasizes that ecstatic experience is a human imperative during which gatekeeping dynamics are absent. Omer’s field of “suspended identification” is what Turner was referring to when he articulated about performance: “It opens up enough time in the right place for the exchange to take, to be made: it is liminal, a fluid mid-point between two fixed structures.” This liminal space is what Barry Spector refers to as the “loosening of identity, when the loosener destroys the walls of the heroic ego, new voices may express something other than ‘I know who I am.’ They may declare ‘I am not who I thought I was.’” These moments of suspended identification are also what Winnicott refers to as “intermediate areas of experiencing, to which inner reality and external life both contribute.” These are the areas of play which Winnicott respects and admires when he sites Milner: “They are guarded in some secret place of memory...
because they were too much like visitations of the gods to be mixed with everyday thinking.” 46

**Interpretation**

Learning Four suggests that volitional transgressive gender performances can momentarily suspend the imaginal structures and dichotomous thinking of our polarized gender identities, facilitating a state of *not-knowing*. This state of not-knowing portends a momentary collapse of adaptive identity and may facilitate a shift into participatory consciousness.

Late on Saturday night after dinner, after the guest scenes of *Cloud Nine*, and after their own cross gender improvised performances, Roland responded with the suggestion that he has entered a state of gender confusion: “The whole gender thing…it was fascinating to get really confused;” and later, “ I thought…ooh my….my antenna for gender is getting a bit lost.” The video of that evening’s evoking improvised monologue responses shows Roland responding during both rounds. He responded with an attempt to play the role of Helen played in the guest scenes by the only woman actor in the group. Roland challenged himself by not only playing a cross gendered role but one played in the guest scenes by an actual woman.

Roland remarked on the effect that seeing an actual woman in the scenes had on him in the group sharing with the men:

… and there is a real woman, when she walked in, it was like…oooh …wooo… that’s a real one and I found it sort of . . . she was a little like …it’s only been like a half a day…but it was like…she is quite amazing…a magic creature…and then…I got…it got more confusing.
Roland was able to experience the confusion of gender identity. He was able to approach the fear of not knowing with the delight of fascination. Through performance, he was able to experience both emotions simultaneously. One emotion being experienced by the doing I and the other by the observing I. The subsequent liminal space was partially the result of his genuine attempt at finding, through performance, the emotional basis of the real woman he witnessed performing. He and at least two other men had what Turner would term “enough time in the right place for the exchange to take, to be made: it is liminal, a fluid mid-point between two fixed structures.” 47 Those two fixed structures, of which Roland and others found themselves in the “fluid mid-point,” were male and female gender identities. Imagining, witnessing, and enacting transgressive gender performances facilitated that journey. They had let go of the gender dichotomy and found themselves willing, able, and fascinated to suspend dichotomous thinking.

After the shared experiences of Saturday night’s Gender Café, the men reassembled on Sunday morning. Roland opens a sharing section with:

I just became fascinated and awed by seeing specific men, and you know who you are, change gender right in front of me. it’s absolutely fascinating…it’s so believable…they just shifted gender…and therefore…as I am witnessing that…change…I’m really changing inside about…it’s like I’m a different creature…it’s like that man is no longer who I thought he was…it’s absolutely wonderful.

As far as gender is concerned, Roland had lost the sense of a “separate self” that is a qualifier for Omer’s experience of participatory consciousness. Roland had also found the “direct, immediate and total confrontation of human identities” of Turner’s state of communitas, a state in which “direct relationship and individual difference occur
simultaneously.” 48 Roland had entered what Winnicott labels “intermediate areas of experience to which inner reality and external life both contribute” 49

Validity

Learning Four suggests that validity considerations be given to the limited scope of the data supporting its articulation. Though Roland seems to have had gender performance experiences that would validate Learning Four, is his experience enough to justify the nature and scope of Learning Four? Roland’s expressions during Sunday’s closing sessions, cited above, and other very evocative sharing statements that Roland made, suggest a depth of experience that might justify Learning Four. Bill suggests in his closing journal statements that: “The thoughts and reactions of the other men often mirrored my own. And I was grateful someone was able to express things I had not yet consciously articulated for myself.” This was Bill’s response to his witnessing activity. Bill was the most experienced performer in the group, and Roland was the least. Bill’s gatekeeper may have prevented him from making a similar statement but it did not prevent him from honoring Roland’s ability to do so. Although Andy’s feedback comes some six weeks after the evoking experience of the Gender Café, it none the less seems to be Andy’s private affirmation of having witnessed, experienced, and supported Roland’s transformative experience.

Smith and Berg theorize about group life, in ways that family therapy theorists have long known, by their suggestion that “it is possible for an individual to express a feeling on behalf of all the members of a group: since that member has expressed it,
others are free to have different feelings.” 50 Certainly this is the sentiment expressed by Bill. Smith and Berg go on to point out that “While psychology has tended to look at behavior in individual terms, we think that when talking about an individual’s behavior in a group, it is both important and possible to distinguish between that which expresses the life of the group as a whole and that which expresses merely the needs and reactions of the individual member.” 51 While I do not maintain that Roland’s experience speaks for the entire group, I do suggest that it reflects the thoughts and feelings for Andy, Bob, and Terry to a lesser degree, and thus can be used as the basis for Learning Four.

**Conclusion**

Four Learnings emerged from the available data during this study. Learning One proposes that performance, the conscious meeting of the observing I and the doing I, allows us to imagine and observe ourselves and others within the realm of possibility, the not-yet-actualized or the not-actualizable. Performance is the engagement with what is possible. It moves us beyond what is merely actual and present into contact with what is possible, and when this is embodied, performance brings the possible home. Learning Two proposes that conscious gender performances—imagined, witnessed, and enacted—can bring into awareness the friend and the gatekeeper, their relationship and the role they play in transforming the adaptive identity that is gender. Learning Three claims that conscious gender performances, with an engaged and non-critical observing I—imagined, witnessed, and enacted—question the origins and then expose and reveal the imaginal structures that serve as the scripts of our gender performances. These scripts form the
basis of our gender identity. Learning Four suggests that volitional transgressive gender performances can momentarily suspend the imaginal structures and dichotomous thinking of our polarized gender identities, facilitating a state of not-knowing. This state of not-knowing portends a momentary collapse of adaptive identity and may facilitate a shift into participatory consciousness.

These cited four learnings form both in content and sequence the overarching primary learning of this study. The Cumulative Learning forms a direct relationship to the Research Problem for this study which was: What subjective states and transformative effects arise when transgressive gender performances are imagined, enacted, and witnessed? It was hypothesized that imagining, enacting, and witnessing transgressive gender performances would loosen or transmute the imaginal structures associated with polarized gender identity. The Cumulative Learning proposes that volitional transgressive gender performances, as viable polarized gender identity interventions, generate the psychic movement necessary to imagine and enact transformative alternative gender identities.
CHAPTER 5

REFLECTIONS

This study examined the subjective states and transformative effects that might arise when transgressive gender performances are imagined, enacted, and witnessed. Four learnings grew out of this study, and from those learnings I have concluded that volitional transgressive gender performances generate psychic movement and have the capacity to momentarily suspend the imaginal structures, which script our doing of gender. This suspension portends a momentary collapse of adaptive identity and a shift towards participatory consciousness and the capacity to imagine and enact transformative alternative gender identities. Chapter 5 will attempt to articulate the significance and implications of these learnings. The chapter is divided into four sections: Significance of the Learnings; Mythic and Archetypal Reflections; Implications of the Research; and Recommendations for Future research.

Significance of the Learnings

Focusing on three questions will facilitate an examination of the significance of this study’s learnings: Was the research hypothesis supported by the learnings? What unexpected outcomes emerged from the learnings? How were my previous understandings of the Research Problem revised due to the learnings that emerged? Learning One proposes that performance allows us to imagine and observe ourselves and
others within the realm of possibility. Performance is an engagement that moves us beyond what is actual and present into contact with the possible, and when this is embodied, performance brings the possible home. It was hypothesized that the research participants, in the process of the weekend’s research activity, would experience alternative gender possibilities and that those possibilities would be activated through and in performance by momentarily suspending or rendering powerless those imaginal structures associated with gender identity.

The capacity to experience alternatives and possibilities in performance was hypothesized; the powerful and necessary role of the embodiment of those possibilities was not. The critical unexpected outcome that revised my previous understanding of the Research Problem had to do with that embodiment and the somatization of the possible. It was not when the possible became an acceptable, intellectually-based realization that imaginal structures were momentarily suspended, however strong and stimulating that intellectual realization may have been. It was when the possible was physically and bodily experienced (felt) that imaginal structures were momentarily suspended. It was when the observation of ourselves transcended language, with its entrapping, patriarchal binaries, that the possibility of suspended imaginal structures made itself apparent. It may also have been the dichotomous thinking inherent in the language used in the proposal for this research study that failed to fully account for the necessity of embodiment.

Another unexpected outcome had to do with the significance of ritual to the engagement of performance. The necessity of ritual and the creation of the safety of a container was certainly a consideration in the planning of the research weekend. What turned out to be surprising was how strongly the men gravitated to those planned
moments of ritual. Most of the men had no previous experience in the use of the ritual elements I employed; however, they needed very little in the way of explanation and were drawn to and felt secure in their meaning and use. Those moments seemed to act as a catalyst, to spark and bring into embodiment the natural sense of ritual within performance itself.

Learning Two proposes that volitional transgressive gender performances can bring into awareness the friend and the gatekeeper, and the role they play in transforming the adaptive identity that is gender. The strength and depth of the relationship inherent between the performance triad of the observing I, doing I, and witnessing I, and Omer’s triad of gatekeeper, friend, and subject was an unexpected outcome of this learning. It was hypothesized that an awareness and experience of the different states of the observing I, doing I, and witnessing I were necessary to fully experience the transformative nature of performance as outlined in Learning One. The methodology for the research weekend includes activities and experiences in all three modalities. An unexpected outcome of this research was the sometimes apparent hijacking of the neutral observing I of performance by the gatekeeper.

Gatekeeping was not one of the intended experiences for study when this research weekend was designed. A pre-condition for participation was a comfort with both performing and self-disclosure. The weekend was also designed to move slowly, accounting for any discomforts the men might experience; discomfort was both a word and a concept considered, gatekeeping was not. The strength of affect and the simplicity of verbal expression when the men spoke directly into the camera from the observing I or the doing I was completely unexpected. The men were asked to speak from performance
modalities; they ended up, however, strongly expressing affects from Omer’s psychological concepts (friend and gatekeeper) that defy, confine or encourage, and widen experience. The camera’s ability to capture the lack of hesitation, the clarity, and simplicity of expression and the strength of affect experienced through both friend and gatekeeper were unexpected.

Learning Three claims that volitional transgressive gender performances, with an engaged and non-critical observing I, question the origins and then expose the imaginal structures that serve as the scripts of our gender identities. My hypothesis suggested that imagining, enacting, and witnessing transgressive gender performances might suspend the imaginal structures associated with polarized gender identity.

Unexpected was the significance and the role played by a non-critical or neutral observing I. Both the Research Problem and the methodology, with the benefit of hindsight, would suggest that a neutral or non-critical observing I was taken for granted. That the men would experience performance from an engaged observing I perspective was also assumed, and, in this case, the assumption proved correct. The assumption that the engagement would be non-critical or neutral did not account for the powerful role that Omer’s gatekeeper has during any transformational experience, performance included.

Learning Four suggests that volitional transgressive gender performances can momentarily suspend the imaginal structures and dichotomous thinking of our polarized gender identities, facilitating a state of not-knowing. This state of not-knowing portends a momentary collapse of adaptive identity and may facilitate a shift into participatory consciousness. The link between this state of not knowing and turn towards a group consciousness was unexpected. The possibility of experiencing and witnessing Omer’s
participatory consciousness or Turner’s communitas were part of the hypothesis, but the discovered necessary steps leading to those potential moments were not.

What was unexpected was the nature and quality of group life leading up to those potential moments of participatory consciousness. Journaling done by the men indicates that they were aware that their individual stories spoke not only for themselves, but also for the group. Not only did the men experience the paradox of group life, they were comfortable in doing so. The experience, vulnerability, and sharing inherent in allowing other men to speak for themselves, and their experiences facilitated and contributed towards moments of possible participatory consciousness. Individual experiences became felt group experiences, and those felt group experiences may have acted as important precursors to experiences of participatory consciousness. This experience of group altered my understanding of the Research Problem and demonstrated that my designed methodology presupposed a focus on individual and not group transformation.

Another paradox the men experienced was that of the move of the masculine to not knowing and the move of the feminine to finding and expressing her voice. The experience of this paradox was also unexpected—being caught in the dichotomy of not knowing and a newly found knowing. Many of the men were able to hold both the courage to confront the unexplored terrain of not knowing and the experience of the exhilaration inherent in newly found knowing.

A final observation: I find that in reviewing the significance of the previous learnings and in the articulation of Tiresias which follows, that it may very well be possible that many of the unexpected outcomes and new understandings of the Research Problem were due to the mind/body split. The methodology for this study was
linguistically based. I tried on a number of occasions to get into a studio and physically experience many of the activities designed for the research weekend. It was not, however, until I experienced being in the middle of the somatic experience of my eight research participants, that I fully understand how entirely mind centered and linguistically oriented my research methodology may have been. Marla Morris explains her “theory in the flesh”:

Doing theory in the flesh is not doing theory in the head only. Theory in the head is detached, Cartesian, simple (minded). Stuck in the mind. Theory en-fleshed leaks, oozes, swells. Fleshy theory is embodied, in the body, through the body, the feet.¹

**Mythic and Archetypal Reflection**

I can think of no mythic or archetypal figure more relevant to the discussion or understanding of gender identity issues in the twenty-first century than Tiresias, the complexly liminal seer of signs and symbols in fifth-century BCE Greek mythology. Any understanding of Tiresias’s emergence amidst the stories of Oedipus, Creon, and other Greek mythological luminaries must begin with an understanding of patriarchy, for Tiresias emerges through the shadowy binaries of this patriarchy.

The term patriarchy is often associated with the emotionally charged lexicon of gender studies. My own emotion-laden relationship to patriarchy includes a history of countless academic discussions of Greek mythology without any understanding or discussion of the patriarchy that created and formed that mythology. In an attempt to not repeat the omissions of previous mentors and teachers, I would like to situate both Tiresias and this research study in the patriarchy from which they were birthed.
Carol Gilligan, one of the seminal theoretical influences on this study, articulates my own difficulty with the word patriarchy: “I use the word ‘patriarchy’ with trepidation because it has become such a code word for men’s oppression of women.” Gilligan then defines and describes patriarchy in a way I find most meaningful for both my relationship to Tiresias and to the men of this research study. She writes:

Patriarchy, although frequently misinterpreted to mean the oppression of women by men, literally means a hierarchy—a rule of priests—in which the priest, the hieros, is the father. It describes an order of living that elevates fathers, separating fathers from sons (the men from the boys) and men from women, and placing both children and women under a father’s authority.

It is this sense of separation inherent in patriarchy that leads to and culminates in the binary and dichotomous thinking, which so intrigued my research participants and asks for expression through Tiresias. Gilligan continues, “But in dividing men from men and men from women, in splitting fathers from mothers and daughters and sons, patriarchy also creates a rift in the psyche, dividing everyone from parts of themselves.”

Linda Schierse Leonard expands on Gilligan’s articulation from a Jungian perspective:

Patriarchal thinking and principles narrow our human existence to only part of what we are by nature. As humans, we live in the paradox of having consciousness and the freedom of choice to express the greater mystery of being; yet we must also order and control our lives to a degree if we are to survive. Patriarchal thinking—Western rational linear thought—tends to reduce our existence to one extreme: order and control. When we succumb to this reduction of our lives, we lose contact with the reality of our greater human mystery as well as that of the entire cosmos.

Though Gilligan suggests that “the Oedipus tragedy is the lodestar of patriarchy,” nowhere in her discussion or analysis of the Oedipus myth, its relationship to contemporary patriarchy or Freud’s psychological use of that myth, does she mention or deal with Tiresias. His notable absence and consequent silence in the works of both
Freud and Gilligan relegate him to darkness; rooted deep within the patriarchy, he asks that his transgressive performance be attended.

My first contact with Tiresias was through that lodestar of patriarchy, *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles. First readings and cursory studies of *Oedipus Rex* occurred in undergraduate school, at the same time that Art, Paul, and I were performing our gender-specific roles questioning the merits of both Brecht and Beckett at The International House of Pancakes, while women students were safely sequestered in Carpenter dormitory. I mostly remember that my first introductions to Tiresias, in the context of the play *Oedipus Rex*, were that he, a blind aging prophet of Thebes, was a difficult role to both play and cast. It was not until a later theatrical exploration of Tiresias, while in graduate school, that some of the more subtle aspects of his role and function in the narrative of Oedipus became clear. As with so much that we learn and process, more aspects of the truth that is embodied in Tiresias became clear when I was charged with the teaching of *Oedipus Rex* decades later. However, not until this research study, examining transgressive gender performances, has Tiresias’s performance been heard giving a full expression of his voice.

In a September 2011 Canadian Broadcasting Company interview with Gloria Steinem, when asked why she had agreed to participate in a documentary of her life, Ms. Steinem spoke of the importance of both telling our stories and having them heard. Mary Watkins quotes David Kiely in *Invisible Guests*:

…through the imagination, the individual can escape exile and confinement and dwell momentarily with shepherds and queens, but the exercise of imagination involves more than inventing situations and characters, it is … a movement of mind and heart from one vantage point to another. It is not merely a multiplication of flat scenes, but an entrance into the dimensionality of experience beyond the self, a leap from the balcony to the stage, from silence to speech. 8
In her own words, Watkins goes on to suggest that through imaginal dialogues we can “go beyond the limits of our own corporeality and range of life experiences by embodying in imagination the perspectives of others, actual and imaginal.”

**An Imaginal Dialogue with Tiresias:** It is with Mary Watkins and her thoughts on imaginal dialogues in mind that I humbly offer the reader the following imaginal dialogue with the guardian spirit of this study, Tiresias. I volitionally use the descriptive word *dialogue* in an attempt to remind the reader that, in fact, Tiresias is speaking to me, sometimes gently whispering in my ear, sometimes scolding and reminding, but always with the intend of being heard. I, standing mute, am nevertheless an essential character in that dialogue, because, through my attentive listening, Tiresias’s story is heard and we both may “dwell momentarily with shepherds and queens.”

**Tiresias:** I find it most striking, well maybe striking is the wrong word . . . ironic? Can irony be striking? Yes, the ultimate irony, that most people of your era would know of me through a play, a story revered for its linear development, its uncanny sense of cause and effect, its structure, its patriarchal structure. What your Boal calls, its “oppressive structure.” When people speak of *Oedipus Rex* as one of the great plays of all times, very rarely do they even mention my role in that story or discuss the nature and content of the prophecy I shared with Oedipus. I find it equally fascinating that entire areas of what you call psychology are devoted to this thing that Mr. Freud has termed the Oedipus Complex. One of the most profound and influential mythic stories of your time chooses not to deal with me. Nowhere in that discussion am I ever mentioned. Isn’t it at all striking or ironic that a sex/gender related complex named after Oedipus would not
include at least a mention of me, one who has lived and experienced life as both man and woman? But I am getting ahead of myself.

Your Robert Graves provides a very sketchy and rudimentary explanation of my personal story in his complete edition of *The Greek Myths.*\(^1^1\) I must add that his account of my story is only within the greater story of Oedipus. For a more thorough and insightful understanding of my own story, I would suggest *Sexual Ambivalence* by Luc Brisson and *The Experiences of Tiresias* by Nicole Loraux.\(^1^2\) Leave it to the French to more intimately explore my story. While Graves only focuses on my role in the Oedipus story, all three do, however, agree that there are essentially two significant versions of my story that have survived the years and made it into your postmodern era.

The essence of my story is that I have experienced and explored life from the point of view of both women and men. I have experienced the pleasure of sexual intimacy from both perspectives; actually, I promised myself several generations ago I would no longer describe my life or experiences dichotomously, we all really do have to stop with the binaries, which, by the way, is one of things I tried to tell Oedipus, but more of that later. So, as I was saying, I have experienced sexual pleasure from alternative perspectives. Many of your accounts have me walking along a path and coming upon two snakes copulating; some of your accounts have me hitting, wounding, or killing those snakes with a stick, at the very least separating them, and thus I was immediately turned from man to woman. Of course, years later I walk down the same path, again come upon copulating snakes and am instantly returned into my previous male form. My transcendence of the binary that is sex and gender was known to both Hera and Zeus. It was therefore most natural that when they got into an argument about who enjoyed sex
more—man or woman—that they should send for me. Zeus maintained that the woman experienced more pleasure during the sexual act. Hera, on the other hand, argued that men experienced more pleasure. So I was sent for, and when asked, I responded with the now oft-sited line: *If there were 10 parts to pleasure, the man enjoyed only one and the woman nine.* My response irritated Hera so much she struck me blind. Zeus, very likely feeling guilty for having gotten me into this mess to begin with, gave me the gift of prophesy.

A second version of my story has me unsuspectingly walking along alone again, this time led by what some have called an unquenchable thirst. I search for water and in so doing come upon Athena bathing, naked no less. Well, you can guess what happens, since humans are simply not allowed to see the gods naked; not Athena’s fault, it is simply a law among the gods—no uninvited nakedness in front of humans. She had no choice but to strike me blind. After much protest and pleading by my mother, Athena feels bad and, although she can not give me back my sight, she does, however, give me the power of prophesy. This version of my story further elucidates the notion of my existing in the *between states,* by granting me a longer than normal life and the ability to think and reason after I do die.

In one version, I see two snakes copulating, and in the other I see Athena bathing naked in the water of a spring. When I see the snakes I am turned into a woman and then some years later, seeing them again, I am turned once again into a man. Hera later blinds me for revealing that women enjoy sex more than men. Zeus, feeling bad, gives me the gift of prophecy. When I see Athena bathing naked in the stream, I am instantly blinded and later, because Athena feels bad, given the gift of prophecy.
By your invitation and permission, I was present during your research weekend; I dined with your participants as they shared their evening meal. I was in the audience as they witnessed the guest cross-gendered scenes from *Cloud Nine* and I was listening as they shared their own stories and struggles. In the spirit of that weekend, let me share with you, your research population and other constituencies, some of my own thoughts as to what I saw. Mythic figures are always dependent on context; I would now like to contextualize myself for your era.

James Hillman, someone I have been shadowing for decades, articulates most precisely what I saw when I came upon the snakes. He suggests that snakes are “Always a both: creative-destructive, male-female, poisonous-healing.” What I saw, when I witnessed the snakes, several of the men in your study group saw when they witnessed the cross-gendered scenes of *Cloud Nine*. They witnessed and experienced first-hand the nature of paradox; the always both of female-male. The nature of performance, the safety of their weekend container, and my presence allowed for their capacity to hold that paradox, that *both*. When I came upon Athena bathing naked in the spring, I also came upon paradox. I saw into the mystery of both— that is, Athena the warrior/virgin, whose body is and is not, and who your Frenchman Loraux suggests is the “Athena, by whom the strange is nothing else than a type of the well known.” My own struggles have been with gender identity, and I have come to the realization that gender is a personal and social identity that is constructed, and precisely because it is constructed we can refuse it, we can act against it, we can change it. That is what many of your research participants came to realize. Many of your men came to a transformative state of not knowing. As men, they discovered the need to speak from not knowing; they however also discovered
the paradox in that, as women, they were discovering and finding their voices. The both of male-female and of knowing-not knowing. That is my learning. What I prophesy for you is a change in consciousness in how you view the world, in how you view men and women, and certainly in how you view yourselves. There is no other; we are all connected. The men of your research study were questioning their own identities, which were based on binaries and steeped in the existence of the other. Those were beginning to drop away during the weekend. Framing the question in terms of polarities, regardless of which pole is the valued one, immediately sets up false choices for both women and men. It continues to divide the world up into men and women, as if these categories were unified opposites. It obscures the fact that the opposing qualities associated with masculinity and femininity are, as I well know from experience, caricatures to begin with. Nor Hall, in her *A Psychological Essay on Men in Childbirth*, encourages and validates my presence: “Young god-likeness in anyone benefits from the embrace of an elder who knows the ways of another gender in his own body. Tiresias the blind seer could see what others could not because he was man-womanly.” 15 It is an old story whose time is here again, like the Sankofa bird whose image reminds us not to neglect that story from the distant past.

Let me clarify something about Oedipus, where much of this started. Oedipus made a move from superstition and intuition, with which he correctly answered the riddle of the Sphinx, to a more scientifically based paradigm in search of his answers. To site your S. Elise Peeples, Oedipus put his “faith in different gods, the gods of prediction and control.” I think, speaking in your contemporary vernacular, she suggests that you, like
Oedipus, “believe that if we are disciplined enough and study hard and long, we will be able to understand and manipulate the world around us.”

Oedipus, from within this more scientifically-based thought process, one which supports and believes in binary and dichotomous thinking, was looking for the other, when all the time the other was within himself. A popular translation from your time period of what I told Oedipus:

The man for whom you look, the man you have been threatening in all proclamations about the death of Laius, that man is here. He seems, so far as looks go, an alien; yet he shall be found a native Theban and shall nowise be glad of that fortune. A blind man, though now he has his sight; a beggar, though now he is most rich; he shall go forth feeling the ground before him with his stick; so you go in and think on that, and if you find I am in fault say that I have no skill in prophecy.

One last thought, on a personal note, I want to thank you for listening, for being here with me, and a bit of advice if you will—remember to listen to the words and stories of the indigenous people you have sited and whose land you live on and on which you did this research. As your Barry Spector so wisely points out, “if a people are indigenous to a place, they define themselves by who they are, but if they live on someone else’s land—as Americans do—they define themselves by who they are not.” The Hupa, Yurok, Wiyot, Mattole, and Klamath of northern California and southern Oregon all had shamans whose lives and stories lived the experiences I have had. Their visions and truths may be more informative and immediate than mine.
Implications of the Study

The learnings that have emerged from this study suggest implications beneficial and useful for a number of different constituencies, including myself. This may be the first qualitative research exploration of gender using Imaginal Inquiry as a methodological basis. That being the case, the learnings and implications of this study may suggest further fruitful explorations in the field of both Imaginal Psychology and psychology as a whole.

Personal Implications

Some 12 years ago I went back to Chicago to help my father die. Eight months later, I had a small house built on my four acres of Northern California land and relocated my 85-year-old mother to that house. On Tuesday, October 5, 2010, at the age of 95, my mother died. I honor and document these dates and occurrences because they are intricately involved with the life of this research study.

During the 20 years prior to my father’s death and my mother’s relocation, I had spent five of those years living and working in other countries and cultures. Knowing that those travels were now no longer possible due to my new role as primary caretaker of my mother, I decided to go back to school. I researched and found a number of Ph.D. programs in psychology in the greater San Francisco Bay area that had weekend residency programs. I interviewed with several and ended up in 2002 enrolling at Meridian, headquartered in Petaluma, California. The work of primary caretaker for my
mother and the work of this research study were to become the essential focus of my life for the next 10 years. My mother took an interest in and supported the work necessary to complete the pre-dissertation phases of my studies. She was there, curious, and proud as I completed 1,200 hours of internship hours at Catholic Charities. She was both curious and a bit cautious as I completed my own year long therapy requirement. She rallied the strength necessary for my once a month weekends away. She allowed herself the joy and pleasure of waiting up for my late Sunday returns home, and she was vulnerably relieved when, in 2005, my required class weekends ended. She was no longer able to muster the strength to be alone and independent for three days at a time.

It has not only been the process of this research study that has had profound personal implications; the topic, and the research results as well, have significantly altered the direction of my life. Although my interest in gender and the performance of gender have been with me for several decades now, the formalization of the performance of gender as a research topic took shape during my last year of coursework at school. In no other academic or creative project or study that I have initiated or participated in, have I ever become so deeply involved or been so personally affected by what I learned and experienced. In the writings of Dowrick, Benjamin, and Harris I have found the words to describe both the struggle and tenacity of that involvement. Harris writes:

It is increasingly difficult to write with coherence or with innocence about gender as some monolithic, simple, comprehensible concept. We have to keep putting words like feminine and masculine in irony-conveying quotation marks. With these rhetorical devices we signal our understanding that these terms have meaning only in particular and unique contexts and that these contexts shift constantly.  19

I have taken these words to heart, although it has not always been easy, popular, or academically acceptable. My struggles have been ameliorated by the words and
thoughts of gender theorist Jessica Benjamin. Benjamin writes: “A gendered self-representation is continually destabilized by conflicting mandates and identifications, requiring a capacity for living with contradictions that is in no way culturally supported.”

**Implications for Research Population**

The eight men who so kindly volunteered to participate in this research study were affected during the weekend of its happening and on various levels in the months following. Both the data and the learnings suggest that a number of the men experienced shifts in their imaginal structures regarding gender identity. The data would also suggest that several of those men then experienced moments of participatory consciousness. The depth, significance, and staying power of those shifts and experiences are best judged by the men’s journaled comments several weeks after their weekend experience. Andy remarks in his last journal entry, “I was affected by how open and caring each person was.” He goes on to describe how amazed he was with the respect and vulnerability he experienced from within a group of men, and ended with: “The thing that stuck out the most was again the feeling of being part of something big in my little world.” The other men in their own personal journal styles repeat and sometimes elaborate on what Andy expressed so well for the entire group.

Humboldt County is a small and isolated community, and, in the weeks and months following the research weekend, I have on various occasions run into one or more of the research participants. During these brief encounters, the participants often brought
up the research weekend and how much it had affected them. Several of the men have indicated that the weekend had changed their perceptions and definitions of what “being a man” meant. They also made a point of communicating that they looked forward to reading the final draft of this dissertation.

**Implications for Other Constituencies**

Much of the research involved in the planning and implementation of the research weekend was done during my tenure at Catholic Charities. This, as it turned out, was a very fortunate synchronicity. Psychological internships in Humboldt County are few in number. Areas of interest and expertise of new interns are quickly known to the greater Humboldt therapeutic community. As it turned out, the Humboldt County Court System was soon referring much of its mandated male adolescent case load to me. Many of those boys were struggling with gender-related issues. I was able to experience the effect my gender exploration was having on my role as a therapist. Now, years later, research weekend over, and data and learnings articulated and analyzed, I am ever more convinced of the need and relevance of my learnings to the local Humboldt County therapeutic community.

During my time with Catholic Charities, I also discovered an intense calling for and desire to do couples therapy. I was drawn to and found exhilarating the dynamic of the three people present during the therapy sessions. I soon found myself with a case load heavy with couples, some of whom I saw once a week for almost a year and a half. I found the implications of the observing, doing, and witnessing I of performance on the
triad within couple’s therapy very informative. I was soon taking intensive couples workshops with Dan Wile, a faculty member at Meridian, a psychologist in private practice in Oakland, California, and author of Couples Therapy, After the Honeymoon and After the Fight. I am currently incorporating my gender as performance theories with Wiles collaborative couples perspectives.

I would also like to think that the focus of this research study and what I continue to be engaged with would be of interest and serve the ongoing research and development that is Imaginal Psychology. The possibility that this work with gender as an adaptive identity might inform Omer’s adaptive identity theories in general is both exciting and challenging. The discovered binaries in polarized gender identities might give insight and suggest further research into the nature of adaptive identities. What is the relationship between Omer’s adaptive identity and dichotomous or binary thinking? Does the structure of adaptive identity depend on dichotomous thinking? Is the transcendence of binary thinking a necessary step in the movement towards participatory consciousness? Is the dichotomy that constructs our notion of gender a direct result of trauma?

It is with great humility and hope that I approach the notion of integrating this work and its learnings into a larger professional community. I find the potential for polarized gender transformation exciting and significant within the theoretical lenses of Imaginal Psychology. I also see exciting possibilities for the role of transformative transgressive gender performances in both the educational world that stresses multiculturism and the psychotherapeutic world that stresses multiplicity. It is with even greater humility that I offer this work to our collective attempt to understand gender related violence and oppression.
One final constituency that I would like to consider, and I do so with great respect and admiration for the work they do: the people who administer, teach, and develop within our school systems. I have spent most of my life working within educational institutions and am grateful to them for much of my economic and creative freedom. There is, however, much in the way of institutionally encouraged polarized and coded gender performance that needs change. Ann Swindler, discussing John Meyer’s analysis of education, writes:

Meyer points out that what is important about schooling is less what it actually teaches children in the classrooms than the powerful system of social categories it establishes. In this sense education establishes an elaborate set of coded social statuses, and then, Meyer argues, people attempt to learn whatever fits them for the status the educational system has assigned them.21

Gender is one of those “coded social statuses” and there is currently a great deal of disinformation circulating within our educational institutions. At a 2008 teacher-mentor meeting, facilitating the training of new teachers in Davis California, a for-profit gender presentation was used. This presentation, which included printed material, lecture and discussion guidelines, and power point presentation material, was bought and paid for by the Davis Joint Unified School District. The purchasable gender presentation entitled Girls Will be Girls and Boys Will be Boys: Teaching to Gender and created by William McBride has since been removed from the Davis Unified School System Web Site but can still be found where it was also used, at a Math Arizona Education Web Site.22 The outline of that presentation, found at the Arizona web site, contains any number of controversial gender perspectives stated as facts. This kind of misleading presentational material does a great disservice to both the teacher and the child. Dowrick seems to be addressing these kinds of misleading educational presentations when she
suggests our goal should be: “To raise children who are as unfettered as possible by previous generation’s definition of gender, especially when these have the dreaded ring of certainty around them.”

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the learnings that have emerged from this study and the apparent gaps in the relevant literature, a number of different suggestions for future research have made themselves clear. The data from this research study would suggest that psychic movement and momentary suspensions of adaptive identity occurred over the course of the research weekend. There is also some evidence to suggest that these momentary suspensions might have had an affect that could still be felt and experienced some four weeks later. Longitudinal research that focuses on whether any long lasting shifts in the adaptive identity that is gender are possible as a result of ritually contained transgressive gender performances would be most instructive.

A precondition for participation in this research study was a comfort level with both self disclosure and performance. Given this precondition, it might seem predictable that performance would have transformative effects. Working with populations on the transformative effects of transgressive gender performances that are not predisposed to that level of comfort would be valuable and informative.

As stated earlier, it is my hope that the work of this study might shape and influence further investigations in the development of Omer’s theories and the working
definitions within Imaginal Psychology. As Dowrick suggests regarding her concept of
the adapted self, similar to Omer’s adaptive identity:

…attitudes a child learns to attach to his or her sense of ‘boy me’ or ‘girl me’,
attitudes which are very specific to time and place and which may well belong in
the adapted self basket, especially if they are directed toward pleasing others and
winning their approval, whether or not this feels true to a child’s own tentative
inner reality.²⁴

The nature of gender as an adaptive identity or an adapted self, and the steps
necessary to move beyond the restrictive nature of that adaptive identity seem to be ripe
for further study using aspects of the specific learnings of this study as guidelines.
APPENDIX
APPENDIX 1

ETHICS APPLICATION
FOR THE USE OF HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

1. Participants will consist of self-defined gender-polarized heterosexual men. These men will range in age from 25 to 65, and an attempt will be made for ethnic, economic, and educational diversity.

The recruiting of these participants will be done within the confines of the greater Northern Humboldt County area. Recruiting procedures will include flyers, word of mouth, email notices, a radio show on the local University/NPR station, and an article in the North Coast Journal. Flyers will be posted and distributed on the campus of Humboldt State University, three local co-op/health food stores, and any number of local coffee shops. Email notices will be posted on several university listserv and one Unitarian Church listserv. Both the radio show and the article in the North Coast Journal will be guided by and reiterate the information contained in the email and flyer postings. See Appendices 5 and 6 for copies of the flyer and email.

My research participant group will consist of at least eight and no more then ten men. Besides being self defined gender-polarized heterosexual men, my participants need an active interest in the topic of gender identity, a desire and willingness to work theatrically within the context of a newly formed group, and a willingness to make moves of self disclosure and to attend to the disclosure of others.
2. The first contact with potential participants will occur during the preliminary telephone screening process. Some personal and limited email contact may, by necessity, precede the first telephone-screening interview. Any such activity would be limited to setting up a time for that first telephone interview. A detailed questionnaire will be mailed to participants who successfully meet the criteria as set up by the telephone interview. I will accept or reject the participants based upon the returned questionnaires.

There will be four group meetings with the participants. The first meeting and half of meeting two are to facilitate introductions, introduce experiences that engender trust and self-disclosure, and examine and introduce experiences that engender comfort and trust around performance and performativity (Friday evening and Saturday afternoon). The second half of meeting two will focus on the core experience (Saturday evening). The third meeting will facilitate weekend closure through discussion and participant feedback (Sunday morning). The fourth meeting will take place four weeks later and will focus on sharing initial learnings and acquire additional participant feedback.

The voluntary nature of all participation will be stressed and articulated in all phases of this process. Throughout the first three sessions the option of sitting out and moving to a place of observation will be continuously presented and demonstrated.

Any and all activities in which the participants will engage including any and all procedures and techniques that I will employ to encourage their engagement are covered in the following appendices:

Appendix 5: A Call for Volunteers-Flyer  
Appendix 6: A Call for Volunteers-Email  
Appendix 7: Initial Contact via Email-Script  
Appendix 8: Initial Contact via Phone-Script  
Appendix 9: Mailed Questionnaire  
Appendix 10: Notification of Acceptance Phone Call-Script
3. Confidentiality is discussed with participants and potential participants during the Initial Contact via Phone. It is again stressed in the Mailed Questionnaire and further elaboration of both confidentiality, and volunteer participation is discussed during the Notification of Acceptance Phone Call. Informed Consent will be reviewed, discussed, and signed at the first participant meeting.

4. Potential risks will be discussed during several phases of the screening process and articulated and discussed in depth during the consent process at the first participant meeting. Activities such as improvised group performances, group sharing, and individual improvised performances may create or bring about states of increased performance anxiety, emotional discomfort, or exacerbated feelings of inadequacy and/or low self-esteem.

5. The screening and consent processes inform participants of confidentiality and of the voluntary nature of their participation at all times. In addition, it will be made clear that this is a research group not a therapeutic group and that I am a researcher and not a therapist. My co-researchers and I will continuously encourage performance participation that is based on individual comfort levels. Each research meeting will begin with an
orientation phase that will make it abundantly clear what will occur during that specific session.

The core evoking experience of the second half of research meeting two has been carefully designed with containment and volunteer participation in mind. The creation of a safe container through the use of ritual has been part of the planning of all four research meetings. The inclusion of six hours of pre-core experience research meetings is meant to allow a maximum of time and experience to elicit the kinds of deep responses I am seeking from the core evoking experience of the second half of research meeting two.

My three co-researchers and I will employ the steps of reflexive participation to process through any of our reactions. We will meet separately during each break to express and work through any issues that need to be raised. During meetings, the videographer/co-researcher will journal via the use of the camera, and I and the other co-researchers will write reactions in our journals.

6. Benefits resulting from the participation in this study for the men actually involved in the study include the reflexive experiences resulting from working with a group of men around the topic of gender and performance. Possible moments of reflexivity and transformation may lead towards new relationships to their gender identities and lead to new insights around societies construction of their possible gender roles. Hopefully the results of this study will be useful to the therapeutic community as a whole. The work of this study is meant to benefit educators, therapists, and counselors, as well as men struggling to find a more meaningful relationship to their own masculinity.

7. After the completion of the study, a Summary of Learnings will be mailed to the participants. Mailed along with the Summary of Learnings will be a letter of
appreciation marking their participation and my sincere appreciation for that participation. The Summary of Learnings will be written and formatted in an easily understandable style: a bulleted list of paragraph descriptions of each learning.
APPENDIX 2

CONCEPTUAL OUTLINE

Evoking Experience

Meeting One

- Hand Shaking Activity in Silence
- Hand Shaking Activity Using First Names

Meeting Two-First Half

- Word Association Pairings
- Sound/Gesture response sequence
- Slow Walking Sequence
- Waiting at Bus Stop sequence, both roles
- Gender Walk, both roles
- Pharmacy Scene, both roles, two rounds

Meeting Two-Second Half

- Witnessing guest scenes from Cloud Nine.
- Reading out loud chosen individual performance improvisation suggestions.
- Witnessing and performing suggested chosen scenes Rd. 1
- Witnessing and performing suggested chosen scenes Rd. 2
Meeting Four

- Reading of the preliminary learnings

**Expressing Experience**

Meeting One

- Journaling response to handshaking experience

Meeting Two-First Half

- Journaling response to word association experience
- Journaling response to sound/gesture experience
- Journaling response to slow walking experience
- Journaling response to bus stop experience
- Journaling response to gender walking experience
- Journaling response to gender pharmacy scenes

Meeting Two-Second Half

- Performing suggested chosen scenes Rd. 1
- Performing suggested chosen scenes Rd. 2
- Journaling response to both the guest scenes of *Cloud Nine* and the men’s own improvised scene responses
- Men speaking directly to the camera from either the *Doing I* or the *Observing I* perspective

Meeting Three

- Journaling response to the previous day’s work from *Doing I, Observing I, and Witnessing I* perspective

Meeting Four

- Journaling responses to the hearing of preliminary learnings
Interpreting Experience

Meeting One

Men sharing from journaled writing around handshaking experience

Meeting Two-First Half

- Men sharing from journaled writing around word association experience
- Men sharing from journaled writing around sound/gesture experience
- Men sharing from journaled writing around slow walking experience
- Men sharing from journaled writing around bus stop experience
- Focal space expressions from both roles in bus stop experience
- Men sharing from journaled writing around gender walking experience
- Men sharing from journaled writing around gender pharmacy experience

Meeting Two-Second Half

- Men sharing from journaled writing around both guest performances of Cloud Nine and their own performed improvised responses
- Men choosing to speak to the camera from either the Doing I or the Observing I

Meeting Three

- Opening ritual sharing
- Focal space sharing around previous day’s performances witnessed and performed
- Focal space sharing from the Doing I, Observing I, and the Witnessing I perspectives
• Closing ritual sharing

Meeting Four

• Opening ritual sharing
• Men sharing from journaled writing around preliminary learnings
• Closing ritual sharing

**Integrating Experience**

Meeting One

• Opening ritual
• Men sharing from journaled writing around handshaking activity
• Closing ritual to Meeting One

Meeting Two-First Half

• Opening ritual
• Men sharing from journaled writing around word association experience
• Men sharing from journaled writing around sound/gesture sequence
• Men sharing from journaled writing around slow walking experience
• Men sharing from journaled writing around bus stop experience
• Focal space expressions from both roles in bus stop experience
• Men sharing from journaled writing around gender walking experience
• Men sharing from journaled writing around gender pharmacy experience
• Closing ritual to Meeting Two-First half
Meeting Two—Second Half

- Opening ritual
- Dinner
- Men speaking to the camera from Doing I or Observing I perspective
- Men sharing around journaled response to guest performance of Cloud Nine and their own improvised responses
- Closing ritual

Meeting Three

- Opening ritual
- Focal space sharing around previous day’s performances witnessed and performed
- Focal space sharing from the Doing I, Observing I, and the Witnessing I perspectives
- Closing ritual

Meeting Four

- Opening ritual
- Men sharing around journaled responses to the preliminary learnings
- Closing ritual
APPENDIX 3

CHRONOLOGICAL OUTLINE

Meeting One (6:00 pm to 8:00 pm)

I. Informed Consent and Orientation (6:00 pm to 6:20 pm)

   A. Researcher obtained each participant’s signed Informed Consent form.

      1. Researcher greeted each participant and mentioned bathrooms and
         refreshments.

      2. Once the entire group arrived and gathered, researchers reviewed
         guidelines on confidentiality and participation.

         a. Participant’s identities will be kept confidential at all times.

         b. Participants were asked to keep the identity of other
            participants confidential.

         c. Participation was stated to be voluntary at all times.

      3. Researchers responded to any questions participants might have
         had.

   B. Orientation

      1. Researcher provided general information.

         a. Space (bathrooms, exit locations, etc.)

         b. Schedule (breaks, ending time, cell phones, etc.)

         c. General overview of procedures involved during the
            meetings.

         d. Explain ritual chimes, opening and closings.
II. Introduction Sharing (6:20-6:45)

A. Researcher chimed into moment of silence.

B. Researcher asked men to introduce themselves and to make some introductory statement about their relationship to gender.

III. Introductory Evoking Experience (6:45-7:05)

A. Men were asked to walk around and shake each other’s hands while keeping eye contact, in silence.

B. Men were asked to walk around and shake hands and verbally use their own first names as an introduction.

IV. Introductory Expressing Experience (7:05-7:15)

A. Men were asked to journal regarding highlights of what was evoked during the two hand shaking activities.

V. Introductory Integrating and Interpretative Experience (7:15-7:45)

A. Men were asked to share something of what they had journaled and share it with the group at large.

VI. Introductory Integrating Experience (7:45-7:55)

A. Men were asked to gather in a standing closing circle.

1. Men were asked to spend several minutes in meditative breathing.

B. Men were thanked for their first session’s participation.

1. Men were reminded of next day’s activities and schedule.

C. Researchers chimed out.

Meeting Two-First Half (2:00-6:00 pm)

I. Orientation Review outline of day’s activities (2:00-2:05)

A. Cell phone and bathroom reminder
II. Ritual Opening (2:05-2:15)
   A. Chime in for a few minutes of silence
   B. Breathing as individuals and as a group
   C. Invite morning check by sharing with a word or two

III. Evoking and Expressing Experience (2:15-2:25)
   A. Word association pairings, both roles

IV. Expressing Experience (2:25-2:30)
   A. Men are asked to journal around word association work.

V. Interpreting and Integrating Experience (2:30-2:50)
   A. Men are asked to share with the group some of what they have journaled.

VI. Evoking and Expressing Experience (2:50-3:00)
   A. Gesture/sound sequence both roles

VII. Expressing Experience (3:00-3:05)
   A. Men are asked to journal around sound/gesture work.

VIII. Interpreting and Integrating Experience (3:05-3:20)
   A. Men are asked to share with group some of what has been journaled.

IX. Evoking Experience (3:20-3:25)
   A. Slow walking experience

X. Expressing Experience (3:25-3:30)
   A. Men are asked to journal regarding slow walking.

XI. Interpreting and Integrating Experience (3:30-3:45)
   A. Men are asked to share with group some of what they have journaled.
XII. Evoking Experience (3:45-4:05)
   A. Bus Stop Experience, playing both roles

XIII. Expressing Experience (4:05-4:10)
   A. Men are asked to journal regarding their bus stop experience.

XIV. Interpreting and Integrating Experience (4:10-4:30)
   A. Men are asked to share with the group some of what they have journaled.
   B. Men are asked to speak from both roles in Focal space.

XV. Evoking Experience (4:30-4:45)
   A. Gender Walk Experience

XVI. Expressing Experience (4:45-4:50)
   A. Men are asked to journal regarding their experience of gender walk.

XVII. Interpreting and Integrating Experience (4:50-5:10)
   A. Men are asked to share with the group some of what they have journaled.

XVIII. Evoking Experience (5:10-5:25)
   A. Gender Pharmacy Experience

XIX. Expressing Experience (5:25-5:30)
   A. Men are asked to journal regarding their pharmacy scene experience.

XX. Interpreting and Integrating Experience (5:30-5:40)
   A. Men were asked to share with group some of what was journaled.
XXI. Integrating Experience (5:40-5:50)

A. Closing Ritual

B. Breathing Meditation

C. Men were instructed about evening’s schedule and were told to follow researchers downstairs for the Gender Café.

D. Chimed out

Meeting Two-Second Half (6:00-9:00 pm)

I. Orientation and Welcome to the Gender Café (6:00-6:05)

A. Review outline of evening’s activities

II. Integrating Experience (6:05-6:10)

A. Chime into a few minutes of silence

B. Breathing as individuals and as group

III. Integrating experience (6:10-6:55)

A. Men share dinner.

IV. Evoking Experience (6:55-7:25)

A. Men witness guest performance of four scenes from Cloud Nine.

V. Evoking and Expressing Experience (7:25-8:05)

A. Men choose and read out loud a scene suggestion in response to guest performances of Cloud Nine.

B. Men perform suggested improvised scene in response to guest performances of Cloud Nine.

C. Men perform second round of improvised scenes in response to previous improvised scenes.
VI. Evoking and Expressing Experience (8:05-15)

A. Men are asked to speak to the camera, one at a time, from either the Doing I speaking to the Observing I or the Observing I speaking to the Doing I perspective.

B. Men address the camera as either the Doing I speaking to the Observing I or the Observing I speaking to the Doing I.

VII. Expressing Experience (8:15-8:30)

A. Men journal in response to guest performances and their own performances from the three perspectives of the Doing I, Observing I, and the Witnessing I.

VIII. Interpreting and Integrating Experience (8:30-8:55)

A. Men are asked to share with the group some of what they have journaled from the three perspectives of the Doing I, Observing I, and the Witnessing I.

IX. Integrating Experience (8:55-9:00)

A. Closing Ritual

Meeting Three (10:00-12:00 am)

I. Orientation (10:00-10:05)

A. Review morning’s activities

B. Cell phone reminder

II. Ritual opening (10:05-10:15)

A. Few minutes of silence

B. Breathing

C. Group sharing

III. Integrating Experience (10:15-10:30)

A. Focal space sharing around previous day’s work.
IV. Expressing Experience (10:30-10:50)
   A. Journaled responses to previous day’s work from each of the three perspectives: Doing I, Observing I and the Witnessing I.

V. Interpreting and Integrating Experience (10:50-11:50)
   A. Men are asked to share with the group some of what they have journaled from each of the three perspectives: Doing I, Observing I and the Witnessing I.

VI. Integrating Experience (11:50-12:00)
   A. Closing orientation and remarks about last meeting to share preliminary learnings.
   B. Ritual closing.

**Meeting Four (10:00am-12:00pm)**

I. Orientation (10:00-10:05)
   A. Review morning’s activities
   B. Cell phone reminder

II. Ritual opening (10:05-10:15)
   A. Few minutes of silence
   B. Focal Space expression
   C. Group sharing

III. Evoking and Expressing Experience (10:15--10:45)
   A. Reading of each of the four preliminary learnings
   B. Journaling in response to each of those four preliminary learnings

IV. Interpreting and Integrating Experience (10:45-11:45)
   A. Men are asked to share some of what they have journaled regarding each of the four preliminary learnings.
V. Integrating Experience (11:45-11:55)

A. Closing Ritual
APPENDIX 4

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

To the Participant in this Research:

You are invited to participate in a study on gender. The study’s purpose is to better understand how the conscious performance of gender can contribute to gender identity.

Participation will involve meetings that will involve interactions with a group of men, improvisational group performance experiences, group sharing, and individual improvised performances. This will take place on the campus of Humboldt State University and will involve three meetings. Portions of the meetings will be video taped and the tapes will later be transcribed. Meeting dates will be: May 7, May 8, and May 9, 2010. We will also meet four weeks later to share initial learnings.

For the protection of your privacy, all tapes and transcripts will be kept confidential and your identity will be protected. All information will be kept under my control, and will only be shared with my co-researchers, and, if applicable, a professional transcriber. In the reporting of information in published material, any information that might identify you will be altered to ensure your anonymity.

This study is of a research nature and may offer no direct benefit to you. The published findings, however, may benefit the understanding of how gender roles and gender identities are shaped, created, and may contribute to the understanding of how one’s gender identity may be changed to adapt to an ever changing social context.

This study is designed to minimize potential risks to you. However, some of the procedures such as interacting with a group, group improvisational performance experiences, group sharing, and individual improvised performances may touch sensitive areas for some people. You may experience increased performance anxiety, emotional discomfort, or exacerbated feelings of inadequacy and/or low self-esteem. If at any time you develop any concerns or questions, I will make every effort to discuss these with you. I, the researcher, cannot provide psychotherapy, but at your request or using my personal judgment, will facilitate referrals to an appropriate mental health professional, if such a need should arise.

If you decide to participate in this research, you may withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at anytime and for any reason. Please note as well that I,
the researcher, may need to terminate your participation from the study at any point and for any reason.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may call me at 707-442-7125 between the hours of 9 am – 7 pm any day of the week. Or you may contact the Dissertation Director at Meridian University, 47 Sixth Street, Petaluma, CA, telephone: 707-765-1836. Meridian University assumes no responsibility for any psychological or physical injury resulting from this research.

I, ______________________, consent to participant in the study of gender. I have had this study explained to me by John Heckel, the researcher. Any questions I have about this research have been answered, and I have received a copy of this consent form. My participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

__________________________________  ______________________
Participant’s Signature             Date

__________________________________  ______________________
Researcher’s Signature             Date
APPENDIX 5

FLYER: A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

GENDER GENDER GENDER GENDER GENDER

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN GENDER IDENTITY, GENDER ROLES, GENDER ATTRIBUTION AND THE PERFORMANCE OF GENDER?

LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEER RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS FOR A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY ON GENDER

The study involves three meetings spread over the weekend of May 7, 8, 9, 2010 and one follow up meeting some four weeks later.

Looking for a group of eight to ten heterosexual men ranging in age from 25 to 65, who have an interest in gender and performance. The study will involve group improvisational activity, individual video journaling, group sharing and individual improvisational performances. Prior experience in therapy and/or group work is desirable.

All participation is voluntary and confidential.

This dissertation study is in partial fulfillment for a Ph.D. in Psychology from Meridian University

If Interested Contact:
John Heckel
707-442-7125
jh2@Humboldt.edu
APPENDIX 6

A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS VIA EMAIL

Looking for male volunteers to participate in a research study on gender. The ideal volunteer would be interested in gender and gender related topics, has some experience and fondness for performance and improvisation, enjoy group interaction and collaboration, and be between the ages of 25 and 65.

The research involves four meetings spread out over the weekend of May 7, 8, 9, 2010. The research activities will involve individual as well as group performances and improvisations. Participants should be able to make moves of self-disclosure and attend to such moves made by others.

All participation is voluntary and full confidentiality is assured.

This research study is part of my dissertation, which is a requirement for a Ph.D. in psychology from Meridian University.

If you are interested or would like more information, please contact me: John Heckel, 707-442-7125 or jh2@humboldt.edu.
APPENDIX 7

SCRIPT: INITIAL CONTACT VIA EMAIL

Dear (participant’s name),

Thank you for your interest in my research study on gender. The first step would be to set up a telephone interview so that I can review the nature of the study with you. I could be available most any day from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. The telephone interview takes about 15 minutes. Please let me know a time that works for you.

Sincerely,

John Heckel
APPENDIX 8

SCRIPT: INITIAL CONTACT VIA PHONE

Hello, this is John Heckel, and I assume you are (participants name). Is this still a good time to spend a few minutes reviewing my research study on gender? Good! Before I ask you a few questions about yourself, let me say a few words about the study and see if after you have this information you are still interested in participating.

The topic of my study is gender and more specifically the performance of gender. This study is central to my dissertation, which is the last requirement towards my Ph.D. in psychology from Meridian University. Your potential participation will involve working with and in a group of eight to ten men very much like yourself. You and your fellow participants will be asked to engage in activities such as improvised group performances, group sharing, and individual improvised performances.

The study will take place during three meetings on the weekend of May 7, 8, 9, 2010. Friday evening for two hours, Saturday afternoon for four hours, Saturday evening for three hours and the weekend will conclude with a two-hour meeting on Sunday morning. There will also be one meeting for two hours some four weeks after our research weekend. All of our meetings will take place on the Humboldt State campus in Gist Hall 102, a very comfortable and airy dance studio. It is of course essential that participants commit to and attend all research meetings.

Are you willing to make such a time commitment?

I would now like to ask a few questions to see if you meet the guidelines necessary to participate in this study. As in most research studies, whose purpose is data collection, my research study on gender has some specific criteria for potential participants. Before we begin, I would like to assure you about the confidentiality of both this screening process and all aspects of my study. All of us involved in this research study will keep the names and identities of the participants and potential participants confidential. This means my co-researchers and I will keep your identity confidential and we also ask that participants not reveal the identity of fellow participants. Participants are not required to keep the identity of the researchers confidential. In any published reporting of information from this research study your identity will be altered to once again ensure your anonymity. Portions, if not all, of the research meetings will be videotaped and later transcribed. Again, your confidentiality is assured: all video material, transcripts, and written material will be examined and viewed only by the researchers and kept safely under my control.

Do you have any questions regarding confidentiality?

Would you like me to continue?
So, I would like to ask you a few basic questions to begin the screening process, and, if you match my study guidelines, I would like to mail you a more complete questionnaire that you can fill out and mail back to me. Okay?

1) How old are you?
2) How would you describe your sexual orientation?
3) How would you describe your interest in the topic of gender?
4) What attitudes and experiences come to mind when you think about performance?
5) Describe your interests in and experiences of working in groups?
6) How would you describe your own gender identity?
7) What does it mean for you to be a man?
8) Can you articulate why you would want to be a participant in this study?

Thank you for your answers.

**Screening completed:**
But given the guidelines for participation in my study: (pick one)

1) self defined gender-polarized men
2) self-defined heterosexual men
3) an active interest in the topic of gender identity
4) a desire and willingness to work theatrically within the context of a newly formed group
5) a willingness to make moves of self disclosure and to attend to the disclosure of others.
6) Age range from 25 to 65.

You do not seem to be a good match for participating in my study on gender, thank you for your time and energy.

**Screening continued:**
From what you have told me so far, you might match the guidelines necessary to participate in this study. I would now like to send you the screening questionnaire I referred to earlier and if you could give me your mailing address I will send it off today.

The questionnaire contains some 15 or so questions and will take some 30-45 minutes to complete. If you could, I would like the questionnaire sent back to me by____ (Individual dates for individual potential participants).

Again, thank you for your time and patience today.
APPENDIX 9

MAILED QUESTIONNAIRE

Please give the following questions your careful consideration. Use as much space as needed. They will, in part, indicate whether you and this study on gender are a good match. Please, mail or email your answers to me at the address indicated at the close of this questionnaire.

As with all aspects of this study your confidentiality is assured!

1) What is it that draws you to want to participate in this study?

2) What does it mean to you to be a man?

3) What does you being a man mean to your women friends?

4) What does you being a man mean to your men friends?

5) How would you describe your sexual orientation?
6) How would you describe your ability to work with and collaborate with a group?

7) How would you describe your abilities with improvisations and performances?

8) Describe a significant performance or improvisational experience you have had.

9) How would you describe your capacity to be self-revealing with men?

10) How would other men describe working collaboratively with you?

11) Describe how comfortable you are expressing your emotions.

12) Have you ever had difficulty containing your emotions?

13) Are you now or have you ever taken psychotropic medication? If so, please describe.
14) Have you ever seen a therapist for gender-related issues? If so, please describe.

15) Please describe what aspects of this study, as you now understand it, would give you the most concern.

Thank you for your time and your honesty. Please feel free to either mail or email your responses to the following addresses, and once again, your confidentiality is assured.

John Heckel
479 Howard Hts.
Eureka, California
95503

jh2@humboldt.edu
APPENDIX 10

SCRIPT: NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE PHONE CALL

Hello, is this (participant name)? Hello, John Heckel here, I am getting back to you on my research study on gender and your interest to be a participant in that study. I want to thank you for completing the questionnaire I mailed to you, and it is based on that questionnaire that I have concluded you would be a good fit for my study on gender. I am calling to ask if you would still agree to be a participant in that study? Are you still interested?

(No I am not!)

Well then, thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

(Yes I am!)

Thank you and welcome aboard! Can we take a few moments to go through some basic information, some of which we have already covered and some of which is new, and then reaffirm your desire to participate.

As you already know I am working on my dissertation, which is part of my requirements for a Ph.D. in psychology from Meridian University. My dissertation and my research study are on the topic of gender. I am specifically interested in the performance of gender.

Participation in my study will be of a group nature although there will be some journaling. There will be between eight and ten participants in this research study.

All of our meetings except the very last one will occur over one weekend. We will meet the weekend of May 7, 8, 9, 2010. The weekend will be divided into three research meetings, Friday evening for two hours, Saturday afternoon and Saturday evening for seven hours. Sunday morning for two hours. All of our meetings will take place on the Humboldt State Campus in Gist Hall 102, the dance studio. We will also have one meeting some four weeks after our scheduled research study weekend for the purposes of sharing some initial learnings and to get some follow up feedback from the participants.

Of utmost importance is the issue of confidentiality. All of us involved in this research study will keep the names and identities of the participants confidential. This means my co-researchers and I will keep your identity confidential and we also ask that participants not reveal the identity of fellow participants. Participants are not required to keep the identity of the researchers confidential. In any published reporting of information from this research study your identity will be altered to once again ensure your anonymity. Portions, if not all, of the research meetings will be videotaped and later transcribed. Again, your confidentiality is assured: all video material, transcripts, and written material will be examined and viewed only by the researchers and kept under my control.
Do you have any questions regarding the issue of confidentiality?
As you already know participation in every phase of this research is voluntary. You may stop your participation and withdraw consent at any time and for any reason. I also reserve the right to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason.

I believe that I have planned and structured this study with the safety and well-being of the participants in mind; however, activities such as improvised group performances, group sharing, and individual improvised performances may create or bring about states of increased performance anxiety, emotional discomfort, or exacerbated feelings of inadequacy and/or low self-esteem. Again all participation is voluntary. I am not a therapist and cannot provide psychotherapy, but should you request it or should I deem it necessary, I will make a referral to an appropriate mental health professional.

Do you have any question around the inherent risks in participating in this study? It is also inherent in research studies that they may provide or contain no direct benefit for the participants. The published results may however be of value to those interested in understanding the workings of gender, gender identity, and the self-reflexive nature of performance.

Do you have any final questions?
If you decide to participate I will send you written confirmation of the time and place of our meetings and a few other helpful suggestions regarding your participation in this study on gender.

Would you still like to participate in this research study?
(Yes I do!)
Great, take down my email and phone number and should any other questions come to, please feel free to call or write. Jh2@Humboldt.edu, 707-442-7125.
(No I don’t!)
Thank you for your honesty and your time. It’s been a pleasure speaking with you!
APPENDIX 11

EMAIL: NOTIFICATION OF NON-ACCEPTANCE

Dear (participant name),

Thank you for the time, energy and interest you have shown in my research study on gender. I also want to share my appreciation of your careful and well thought out completion of the screening questionnaire, and it is the result of my review of that questionnaire which has led to my determination that you would not be a good fit to participate in my research study on gender.

While your interest in my study on gender is clear, of the several criteria I have established for participation in my study, I do not think you fit the criteria of (state and elaborate which criteria has not been met).

Again thank you for your interest and time.

Sincerely,

John Heckel
APPENDIX 12

LETTER: FIRST MEETING NOTIFICATION
AND INFORMATION

Dear (participant name),

This letter is intended to give you an overview of some of the guidelines and basic information regarding your participation in my research study on gender.

It pleases me that you have found the time and the energy to participate! As per our previous phone conversation, the meetings will all be in Gist Hall 102 on the Humboldt State University Campus. Parking is plentiful and I will provide you with parking stickers at our first meeting. Meetings are:

Meeting #1: Friday, May 7 from 6 to 8 p.m.
Meeting #2: Saturday, May 8 from 2:00 to 9 p.m.
Meeting #3: Sunday, May 9 from 10 a.m. to Noon

As previously stated, we will also meet some four weeks after our research weekend to share initial learnings. All of our meetings will begin with an overview of that session’s planned activities, time frame, and break schedule.

As all of our meetings will be experiential, performance and movement centered, please wear comfortable loose clothing. As you know, during meeting two we will be viewing guest scenes from Caryl Churchill’s play Cloud Nine and sharing a catered dinner, should you have any specific dietary needs please let me know.

As you have noticed, meeting four is some four weeks after the weekend meetings. I shall remind you of meeting number four via telephone some one week prior to it’s occurrence.

As a normal procedure all cell phones should be turned off during our research sessions. If for any reason you must be accessible via cell phone please let us know.

As you might imagine starting on time is most important, in that spirit I advise that you might consider arriving on campus some fifteen to 20 minutes before our sessions are scheduled to start, so you have plenty of time to park and find your way to Gist Hall 102.
Also please give your careful consideration and study to the Informed Consent Forms I have included. We will be going over these in some detail when we first meet.

Again my deepest appreciation for your participation; should you have any questions please feel free to call or email me.

Sincerely,

John Heckel
707-442-7125
jh2@humboldt.edu
APPENDIX 13

SCRIPT: FIRST MEETING NOTIFICATION PHONE CALL

(Phone call takes place one week before first meeting.)

Hello (Participant’s name), John Heckel here. I am calling to remind you of our first gender study meeting this Friday, May 7 on the Humboldt State University campus in Gist Hall 102. I also wanted to re-establish your desire to participate and to remind you to give careful attention to the Informed Consent Forms I mailed you. Are you still available to participate on (date and time)? Good, have you gone over the Informed Consent Forms? Good, thank you for your time and I will see you on Friday at seven.

(If leaving a message on an answering machine)

Please call me back and let me know if you are still planning to participate and that you have the right time and place. My phone is 707-442-7125.

Talk to you soon.
MEETING ONE: SCRIPT

Welcome, how are you, please come in. My name is John Heckel. I am doing this research study on gender. We will begin shortly when the rest of our group has arrived, until then make yourself comfortable. Refreshments are over there and the bathrooms are through those doors.

Welcome! According to my information, I think we are all here. Again my name is John Heckel, and these are my three co-researchers, Janet Patterson, Michael Nickerson, and Montel Vanderjones.

I have spoken with and gotten to know all of you individually, but this is the first time we have all been together as a group. So, I am a Ph.D. student at Meridian University, and this study on gender is part of my dissertation, which is part of my requirements for a Ph.D. in psychology. This weekend we will be looking at gender as a performance, that gender is something that we do. We will explore, as a group of men, doing gender, observing ourselves doing gender, and witnessing others doing gender. I hope you can over the course of the weekend, as much as is possible, forget that Montel is constantly videotaping and that Michael and Janet are always journaling. Their job is to observe, from their perspectives, what you experience.

The first thing we want to do is take some time to go over the Informed Consent Forms. I mailed out these forms to you some four weeks ago and I hope you have taken some time to read the forms through to yourself. I will now go over several of the points covered on the forms, and then we will see if any of you have any questions. Okay?

(Pass out forms.)

Each of you should now have two copies of the form, one you will sign and give back to me, and the other you may keep for your own records.

Okay? Are we ready to go through a few of the points on the form? Good! First-confidence. My co-researchers and I will keep your identity confidential at all times. We will not share your name or any other aspect of you that could potentially identify you. We also ask you as participants to keep the identity of the other participants confidential. What we are asking is that as you go home and talk to family and friends about what happened here today, you hold the identity of the other participants in confidence. Okay? Good. You don’t however have to keep the identity of the researchers in confidence. Clear? Your identity will at all times be kept confidential. You should however know that on Saturday evening, during what I have called The Gender Café, we will be entertained by six actors, doing scenes from Caryl Churchill’s Cloud Nine; those actors will not remain present for the work that we do after their performances. They will know and see us only as an anonymous audience.
Now let’s go through the voluntary nature of all participation. All participation is voluntary at all times. At the start of each session we will talk through all the activities planned for that particular session. While I hope you participate in all of the activities, I understand that sometimes, for whatever reasons, you might not be able to or choose not to participate. If that is indeed the case, we request you move to the particular section of the room designated as Witness Space. Again, my hope is that I have designed all of the activities with your physical and emotional comfort in mind and I hope you will find yourself able to participate, but I also understand that some activities may bring about a discomfort that may cause you concern. I am not a therapist, and this is not a therapeutic group. We will be exploring gender related issues in a performance-oriented environment, and I would encourage you all to self-disclose at your own comfort level. Activities such as improvised group performances, video journaling, group sharing, and individual improvised performances may create or bring about states of increased performance anxiety, emotional discomfort, or exacerbated feelings of inadequacy and/or low self-esteem.

So, participation is always voluntary. I have indicated to you several times in the past that there would always be a place to not participate but to observe. If you will notice the chair to your right, if you ever do not want to participate for any reason please make yourself comfortable there and observe.

Okay? So please remember, always feel free to ask us any questions or to express any concerns you may have.

Any questions regarding any part of the consent forms?
Then could you sign them? I will now collect our copies.

Thank you. A few things about our facilities, this room is used most often as a dance studio, and, as such, we need to take our shoes off when working in this space. There is a bathroom directly through those doors and towards the right. We will always have some snacks and water on the table towards the far end of the room. During tomorrow evening’s meeting, we will be sharing a meal and watching four scenes from Caryl Churchill’s Cloud Nine.

Any questions?
This evening we will finish at 8 p.m. Montel will videotape all of our meetings. As I have indicated earlier, these videotapes will also be held in strict confidence and will be used for data collection.

Oh, I almost forgot . . . can we make sure all of our cell phones are turned off, and if you do have a situation such that you need to be available via cell phone, please let us know and we will figure out a way to accommodate your need.

Okay? The goal and purpose of tonight’s meeting is to get to know each other and begin to develop a sense of trust and comfort with each other.

We will begin and end each meeting through ritual. So as I chime us in can we remain in silence for several minutes until I chime us out of silence.

Okay? Any questions?

(Chime)

Silence
(Chime)

Thank you, could we start by each of you taking a turn and introducing yourselves and share with us something about your relationship to the idea of gender, what it holds for you, some introductory comment or thought about how you sit with this idea of gender role or gender identity. Introduce yourselves! Who would like to go first?

(20 minutes for introductions)

Could we please stand in a circle?

As a way of introductions, I would like to ask you to move around the room and shake hands with all the other participants in the room. If we could, I would like us to do this in silence, I would ask that you explore two points of contact: one would be your hands and the other would be the eyes. Try to keep both hand and eye contact as you greet the other men in the room. Remember, try to do this in silence, with the focus on the hands and the eyes. There are eight of you in the room so each of you will attempt to make a connection with seven other men.

Any questions?

(5 minutes for activity)

Okay, could we please gather again in a circle, now look around the circle, try and remember greeting each one of those people and see if you missed anyone if you did would you walk across the circle now and connect with that man.

Good!

Now I would like you to walk around and greet each other again, same as before with the eye contact and the handshaking, but this time add your own name so you would greet each other and the only words you may use is your own names.

Let me demonstrate.

(Co-researcher and I demonstrate.)

Remember, take your time, don’t rush through the activity; allow yourself the time to experience each other.

Any questions?

Okay, please begin.

(5 minutes for activity)

Could we gather again in a circle and once again look around the circle, and if you did not introduce yourself to any of the men in the group, would you walk across the circle now and do so?

Many times this weekend I will ask you questions, it is not important for you to answer them out loud, what is important is that you think through the questions to yourself. For instance, and don’t answer these out loud, in the exercises we just finished, which point of contact was hardest for you? Which caused you the most discomfort?
Which came easiest, the hand contact, the eye contact, or the voice using only your own name? When you finished, did you wait for someone to come to you or did you turn and approach someone else? Did you tend to let go of the handshake first or did you wait until the other man let go?

We are now going to pass out journals and pens (Co-researchers pass out notebooks and pens), you will keep these throughout the weekend, and, at various points, we will take time, after a particular activity, for you to write out your observations about what you just did. We will then always gather and share with each other something based on those writings.

So now if you would take a few minutes and journal any observations you have about your participation in the two versions of the activity we just did.

(10 minutes for journaling)

Good, if everyone has had enough time, can we gather in a circle and share with each other something based on what you have just journaled? As a way of helping this process, I would like us to hum as a group after each man has shared. I think this technique allows each observation to be heard, stops us from speaking over each other, and serves to value what that man has just shared. Questions? Good, who would like to start?

(20 minutes of group sharing)

Great, now as we close, if you could put the journal on your chair and stand.. If we could as we close this evening, if we could just breathe together as a group, and, if while breathing, we can observe ourselves doing the breathing. Notice the part of you that is paying attention to how you are breathing.

Okay? Good.

(Chime)

(Two minutes of breathing)

(Chime)

Thank you all very much, and I will see all of you tomorrow at two o’clock in this room. We will be in this room from two until six and then we will go downstairs.

Thank you.
Good afternoon. Hope you all had a great night. Good to see all of you again.

Today we are going to explore some group improvisational activities around the topic of gender and engage our performer self around gender. This afternoon we will focus on the nature of improvisation and how we can support, help, and stimulate each other through those performances. The idea is to be supportive; in all of our work this afternoon try not to get into tricking each other, but focus on being supportive of each other. There are two parts to our day together. This afternoon’s session will go until six o’clock; we will then go downstairs in a room set up for us, share a meal with each other, and watch a guest performance of part of Cloud Nine. We have entitled this evening’s session the Gender Café, complete with food and performances.

I would like to remind you, once again, to turn off your cell phones, and any one who needs to be reached please talk to one of us, and we will make the appropriate arrangements.

Let’s start again by chiming in to a few minutes of silence.

(Chime)

(Moments of silence)

(Chime)

If we can, let’s take a few minutes and breathe. Let’s stand here in this circle and take some really deep breaths together. As we inhale and exhale together, let’s pay close attention to how our bodies feel this morning. Pay attention to the observing I. Try to activate the observer in you, and, both, do the breathing and observe yourself doing the breathing. Track how you feel, how your body feels.

Where are you tense? How relaxed are you? Maybe even close your eyes as you breathe and focus all of your energy on how you feel. Okay? Let’s start.

(Breathe together for some two or three minutes.)

Can we stand here for just a few moments and continue to breathe at our own pace, and could you offer just a word or two as to how you feel this morning? Or maybe you are more in tune to how the group feels. If that is the case, offer a word or two about what you sense in the group. Okay? Who would like to start?
(Two or three minutes of sharing)

Very Good.

Now, what I would like you to do is to pick a partner; please pick someone you have not worked with. Everyone have a partner? Yes? Good?

Now, with your partner, we are going to do a simple word association exercise. One partner will be the giver and the other man the receiver. The giver will give the receiver a word; the receiver will take one beat and respond with a word. Any word! There is no right or wrong here. If, for whatever reason, the receiver cannot think of a word, then please simply respond with the word “blank”. What is important is the rhythm. Word-beat-word. To help keep the rhythm, we will walk around the room, we will engage the body to help keep the rhythm. Try to work the pace of the walking with the pace of the word exchange.

Here let me demonstrate.

(Co-researcher and I demonstrate.)

So could you decide who gives first and who responds first?
Thank you.
Remember if you cannot think of a response, please simply say “blank;” try to keep the rhythm going and let your body help you with that task.
So, if we can all walk in that direction (point). Counter-clockwise, I believe.
Are we Ready? Good, I will let you work for some five minutes or so, and then I will stop you, and we will change roles and direction. Okay?
Good! Please start.

(Men work in pairs for five minutes.)

Okay. Good. Can we now change roles and try again. Givers become receivers, and let’s go in the opposite direction. Clockwise, I think.
Ready? Go!

(Men work in pairs for five minutes.)

Thank you. Good work. We will now pass back to you your journals; we will be using them all day today.

(Pass out journals.)

Could we gather our chairs and take a few minutes to journal any reactions, thoughts, or feelings we had? Good.

(Men journal for five minutes.)

All have enough time? Good. Now could we share with each other something of what we have journaled. Who would like to go first? Good.
(Men share in group for 10 minutes.)

Good, thank you. The exercise we just did asked you to respond with language, granted just one word, but nevertheless language. That language depends on a certain cognitive awareness. Let’s try another version of this improvisation that is not so cognitively depended. Okay? Please would you partner up again and, as before, work with a new partner. Yes? Good.

Now in this exercise face your partner and, again, decide who gives and who receives. Have you decided? Good.

Now the person giving allow yourself to make any gesture or action with a sound. Do not worry about how silly you may feel or look, simply allow something to come out. Remember, again, there is no right or wrong to what you do. You are giving your partner something to respond to. Here let me demonstrate.

(Co-researcher and I demonstrate.)

Again the rhythm is important, so receivers take one beat before you respond, and then givers take one beat before you give the next gesture and so on. If you get into the flow of it, you will appear to have a dialogue of movement and sound going on. Feel free to allow yourself to move around the entire room.

Any questions? Good.

Go to work.

(Men work in pairs for five minutes.)

Now, if we can, let’s switch roles and work again work for five minutes or so, okay? Good, go to work please.

(Men work in pairs for five minutes.)

Could we once again gather the chairs, sit, and journal for a few minutes noting any feelings, thoughts, or observations that stand out in what you just did?

(Men journal for five minutes.)

Everyone had enough time? Good. So, let’s share something of what you have journaled, okay? Good. Who would like to go first?

(Men share for 15 minutes.)

I suggested to you, yesterday, that I would ask you some question about these activities, and, remember, they are for you to think about and answer in your head, not out loud. Okay?

Good.
Which was more difficult for you, the word association activity or the sound/movement activity? Which role came easier for you the giver or the receiver? In the sound movement activity, were you able simply to improvise the sound and movement, or did you need to plan it out ahead of time in your head, think about it, and then do it? Where you able to keep an active observing I present? Or maybe you got caught up in the doing of the activity that you lost the observing I.

Let’s take a minute, and I will show you an example that makes this very clear. If all of you would simply walk around the room as slowly as you could. Here let me demonstrate.

(Demonstrate)

Okay? Now please, just for a couple of minutes. Okay? Good, go to work.

(Men walk.)

(Allow 5 minutes for walking.)

Could we gather back and pull in our chairs and take a few minutes to journal regarding what we just did? Any observations that stand out for you, feelings, or thoughts you experienced while slow walking?

(Allow 10 minutes for journaling.)

Could we share with each other something from what we have journaled? Who would like to go first? Good.

(Allow 15 minutes for sharing.)

Thank you. During your walk, you concentrated on walking very slowly, you also observed yourself walking; you got a sense of both doing and observing yourself doing. You also allowed yourself enough time, observational time. I would suggest, to feel how it was to walk that slowly. This is an important part of our work this weekend: the observing of ourselves doing or performing and the capacity to be present with the feeling of that performance. Make sense?

Okay. Now let’s take this idea into a more specific and structured improvisation. Imagine, if you will, waiting at a bus stop, this bench will be the bus stop, the bus is coming from over there, to my left. Two people will meet at the bus stop. So let’s have half of you line to my right and the other half to my left. Again let’s call the folks to my left group A, and the men to my right, let’s call them group B. Okay?

This will be an improvisation between two men, one man, members of group A, will be someone who takes the bus all the time. He has no car, doesn’t want one, doesn’t need one; he takes the bus to work. Group B are men who always drive their cars to work, except this morning something went wrong with the car: it would not start, you were in a hurry, and you have decided to take the bus to work. Okay? Do we have the essence of the two men down? Good.
The man who always takes the bus, is already at the bus stop, group A, waiting, the man who never takes the bus, group B, will come in and start waiting.

We will then have a three-line exchange, with the man from group A getting the first and third line, and the man from group B getting the second line.

So let’s review: Group A man sits waiting for a bus, group B man comes into the scene and starts waiting; group A man says one line, group B man responds, and then group A man gets a final line and leaves. Group B man is left waiting alone.

Questions?
Let us demonstrate, and I think it will become clear.

(Co-researcher and I demonstrate.)

Things to try and remember: there are only three lines in the scene, two by the man from group A, and only one from the man from group B. The man from group A should leave the bus stop leaving the man from group B alone to wait. I will end the scene, and then the next pair will begin. When you finish, get at the end of the line of the other group, so men from group A get to the end of the B line, and men from group B get to the end of the A group line. This way you will have several chances to play each role.

Men from the A group, you have the first line, feel free to say whatever comes to you, just remember the object is not to trick the other person, the object is to work together, to create an experience meaningful for both of you.

Don’t worry if you don’t get it right the first time, we will keep working until you get more and more comfortable with both roles.

But try to remember that part of you that observes you doing; that part will know it’s your turn to say a line or that it is your turn to leave the bus stop. Allow the observing part to really become comfortable in the situation. Allow the observing part to observe how your body feels, how you play the role of the man who never takes the bus and then finds he must. In other words, really allow the observing part to actively observe and trust the performing part will still be able to do what he needs to do.

Are we ready to give it a go?
Good.

(Men work for 20 to 30 minutes, during which time I change the order so that all men will get to work with all other men in both roles.)

If we could, let’s pull in our chairs and journal for a bit, recording any aspects of what you just did that stand out for you.

(Allow 10 minutes for journaling.)

So now let’s share with the other men some of what you have journaled. Who would like to go first? Good.

(Allow 20 minutes for sharing.)
Good! If we can, let’s hear some expressions from both of those men. If we can, could we go into the circle and give voice to how the man who always takes the bus felt? Let’s do it one at a time, and whatever wants to be expressed, let it. Okay? Remember your expression could be as simple as one word; if it is, allow yourself to repeat that word, allow the observing part of you to sense how you feel saying that one word.

(Men express something from always taking the bus perspective.)

(Allow 10 minutes for expressions.)

Good Work.
And now let’s take the perspective of the man who never takes the bus.

(Men express something from the never taking the bus perspective.)

(Allow 10 minutes for expressions.)

Good.
Earlier we did some “aware” walking; we walked as slowly as we could and we observed ourselves walking. We did something and we observed ourselves doing it at the same time.
Now we are going to walk again, earlier we walked as ourselves, but this time we are going to attempt to walk as either men or women, or stated another way, we will walk the way we perceive men and women walk. You have a choice, you can decide how you want to walk—male or female, or you can pick a piece of paper out of this hat and allow that piece of paper to determine how you walk. Make sense? You will all be walking at the same time, so if you forget that my co-researchers and I are in the room, you might say you are performing for yourselves. You are performing so that you might observe yourselves doing a man or a woman walking. Also, no one knows which you are doing except for you.
Any questions?
Also, I am going to put on some music, so that we all don’t move and walk about in silence; feel free to allow the music to help your movement.
Good, now would those of you who would like to have these small pieces of paper in this hat determine how you walk come up here and take a pick. Those of you who would rather determine yourselves how you walk, decide which way you will walk. Okay?
Questions?

(Some men pick a piece of paper from hat, other decide on their own.)

Now if we are ready let’s walk. Try walking slowly at first, maybe not as slowly as we did this morning, but slowly so that you can observe your movement. Make note of muscle tensions, joint movements, and the like.
Good. Please start walking; I will stop you after several minutes. Alright? Go!
(Start music.)

(Men move for two to three minutes.)

(Stop music.)

Good work. Can we stop for a minute? Try staying right where you are and sense your body.

(A minute of silence)

Now, when I start the music again, begin walking again as the gender you were, as you start to feel yourself transition into the Gender Walk and observe what changes you make to mark the kind of walking you are about to do. Keep walking until I stop the music. When I do stop, stand still and then notice what changes you have made to, once again, be yourself or stated in another way to “do” being yourself.

Ready? Good.

Please start.

(Start music.)

(Men walk for two or three minutes.)

(Stop music.)

So, please stand still and observe your body and the changes you are making to once again “do” being you.

(A minute of silence)

Let’s try this one more time with everyone changing roles, those of you that did the gender walk “doing” men, try “doing” women, and those that did women, try doing men.

Okay?

Good, please start.

(Start music.)

(Men walk for two or three minutes.)

(Stop music.)

So, again, let’s stand still and in silence for a minute and observe as we change back into doing ourselves.

(A minute or so of silence)
Again, one more time, let’s shift, again, to the other role. Those of you that have just been doing women, now go back to doing men, and those of you who have just been doing men, go back to doing women.

(Start music.)

(Men walk for two to three minutes.)

(Stop music.)

Let’s stand still and in silence for a minute and observe as we change back into doing ourselves. Some questions, and again think and feel these through for yourselves not out loud. Which transition was more apparent; male to yourselves or female to yourselves? Which felt easier to observe? Which felt easier for your body to accommodate? Which was easier to exaggerate? Were you able to track your feelings while performing each? Were the feelings you did track more intense for one more than the other?

Now can we again go back to our chairs and journal any highlights that stand out for you, any observations you may have? Okay? I will give you about 10 minutes to journal.

(Allow 10 minutes to journal.)

Good. have we all had enough time? Good. Can we now share with the group something of what you have journaled.? Who would like to begin?

Good, thank you.

(Men share for 15 minutes.)

Thank you. Could we now put our journals down and get back into our standing circle? Thank you.

Now let’s take the idea of performing or being aware of doing gender to yet another level, by adding an audience. We are going to take a simple scenario; a person going to a pharmacist and getting a prescription filled. We will keep this to a simple two-person scene, but this time we will perform the scene for an audience. Two participants perform and six participants and the researchers watch or observe. You will have your choice; again, decide for yourself which gender you are doing or playing, or take a slip of paper from this hat and let it decide for you. So let’s pick partners, and could I ask you again to choose a man from the group you have not worked with? Okay? Does everyone have a partner? Good. Now let’s decide who plays which role; one of you be the pharmacist and the other person be the one who wants their prescription filled. Remember, let’s keep the scenes fairly simple, don’t try to trick each other; work together. The focus is on each of you doing or playing gender. Remember to observe yourself performing. Do not let your partner know which gender you will be doing. Your objective is not to find out what your partners gender is but to focus on your own
doing/performing and the observing of yourself doing and performing. Allow your partner to do whatever he needs to, try not to corner your partner in some attempt to find out which gender he is playing. Allow yourself to respond however you feel you should.

You will notice that I have placed this large cardboard box on the floor; here let me show you, in this box are an assortment of costume props—hats, scarves, and pieces of material. As you step up to play your scene, I would like each of you to simply take one costume prop from the box and use it in the scene. You may use your prop in any way you choose. You might simply hold it for the scene, or, if you choose, it might become more significant; it is all very much up to you. Let it happen as naturally as you can, try not to force anything, and remember attempt to observe yourself “doing”.

Any questions?

Good. Now those of you who would like to take a slip of paper from my hat, please come forward, and those who would like to decide for yourselves which gender to perform, do so now.

Who would like to go first? Good.

(Scene #1)

Good.

(Scene #2)

Good

(Scene #3)

Good. And one more, please

(Scene #4)

Good, now if we could, let’s pick a new partner; try the scene again but switch roles, both gender and customer or pharmacist. So pick somebody to work with who will allow you to be customer to their pharmacist or vice versa. But, again, do not tell each the gender you are performing. Make sense? Good.

Who would like to go first?

(Scene #5)

Good.

(Scene #6)

Good.

(Scene #7)

Good. And one more please. (Scene #8)

(Eight performances lasting about 30 to 40 minutes in total)

Very good. Hold your feelings for just a minute longer. Can we gather in a circle and when we are ready, lets journal from observing ourselves doing gender either as the pharmacists or the person wanting their prescription filled.
(Men journal from the doing perspective for three to four minutes.)

Good. Now, if we can, let’s journal from the perspective of the audience; from watching or observing the other scenes.

(Men work journal from audience perspective for three or four minutes.)

Good. Now as we have been doing all afternoon let’s choose something from what we have journaled to share with the other men. Who would like to go first? Good, thank you.

(Allow 20 minutes for group sharing)

Can we gather for our closing? Let me thank all of you for your good work this afternoon, and I very much look forward to our session tonight. We will now go downstairs as a group and enter our dining and performance space. Let’s take a few deep breaths together and share a moment or two of silence before I chime us out, again after our breathing, I will lead you down stairs for dinner.

(Chime in)

(Men breathe together.)

(Chime out)
Welcome to the *Gender Cafè*. This evening we will meet in this room until 9:00 p.m. And now for tonight’s agenda: first we are going to get comfortable and get ourselves situated with some of the good food you see set up on the table to your left. Then when we are almost finished with our food, we will be entertained with guest performances from Caryl Churchill’s *Cloud Nine* on the stage immediately to your right. I directed the four scenes you are about to see, and the casts of those scenes have graciously volunteered to be here tonight to perform. After they have performed, they will leave, and we will engage in some performances of our own, in part, in reaction to what we have experienced and observed of their performances.

First let’s take a few minutes in ritual. If we can, let’s gather in a circle and join hands.

Good. Let’s breathe. As we breathe, observe the intake and exhale of the air. Pay attention to how your body feels this evening. Your states of being, how relaxed you are, how tense you might be. As you exhale, think about what you are ready to let go of, maybe nothing, or there might be something that comes to mind. Take this moment with these men to let that go when you exhale. Okay breathe.

Thank you.

Anything that needs expressing before we begin?

*(Two to three minutes of sharing)*

*(Chime in)*

So welcome to the *Gender Cafè*, and now let’s eat.

*(All eight men situated around one large table, food has been placed in bowls, and the men help themselves and then pass bowls to other men.)*

*(Music in the background)*

*(45 minutes for dinner)*

*(Lights change)*
And now for your entertainment pleasure, I present to you our first scene of this our *Gender Café*. Please welcome (names of the actors) and their version of four scenes of *Cloud Nine*.

**20-30 minutes of *Cloud Nine***

Let’s give it up for *Cloud Nine*.

Let’s bid our acting troop a thank you and a fond farewell as we proceed to the next part of our evening, our *Gender Café*. We are now going to perform for each other. To my left, you see a very colorful display board, and to my right, you see our box full of costume props. If you remember from this afternoon, the box contains scarves, hats, and various pieces of material. Now, what I would like each of you in turn to do, is come up here and choose a suggestion for a scene/improvisation from this board. You will notice that choices are numbered from one to eight and you will also notice that you cannot tell what the suggestion for the scene is before you choose it. What I would like us all to do, is come up choose a scene from one to eight, read the suggestion out loud, and then go over to the costume/prop box and pick out a prop and then do the scene. You should know we are going to do two rounds of this performance exercise. During the second round, you will get a chance to do a scene someone else has done in the first round.

**Pick the scene card numbered two.**

**Read card out loud.**

“In response to *Cloud Nine*: speaking as the Clive’s wife, Betty, please tell him how wrong his perceptions of his family are, and why!”

**Choose a scarf from Costume prop box.**

**Play the improvised monologue.**

Try and remember from earlier today to keep track of the *observing I* and the *doing I*, and, in this case, there is also the *witnessing I*, the audience, just like this afternoon.

So does everyone have the idea, again no right or wrong here, after all this is the *Gender Café*? So who would like to begin?

**First Round**

**20 minutes**

Now let’s try round two. This time choose a scene suggestion someone did in round one, a scene you could feel yourself having a reaction to, a scene which you wanted to do because you felt a need to express something that was not being expressed because you had a different point of view. Make sense? Any questions?
(Second Round)

(20 minutes)

Good, very good all of you. Anyone want to give it another go? Yes?...Good.

Now we are going to have dessert, some coffee or tea, and we are going to journal from either the observing I, the doing I, or the witnessing I. First, however, let’s help ourselves to the wonderful desserts placed to the table on your left.

(Men get desserts.)

Good. Everyone have your dessert? Good. While you are journaling, I am going to ask you to come up here on the stage, one at a time, and address the camera.

(First man is called up on stage.)

Good. Now, what I would like you to do is to address the camera, look at the camera and speak from either the observing I speaking to the doing I or the doing I speaking to the observing I. Based on your work this evening, choose the one who needs to speak and express what needs expressing.

Questions? Good. Start when ever you are ready.

(Allow 15 minutes for speaking to camera while men are journaling.)

Now if we could , just like we have all weekend, could we share something of what we have journaled with the other men, paying particular attention to those three roles?

Clear? Good who would like to begin?

(20 minutes of group sharing)

Good, very good.

I would like to thank all of you for a most exciting and entertaining night. Let’s close with our closing ritual. I will chime us into a few minutes of silence.

(Chime)

As we stand here in our circle, holding hands and breathing, would any one like to offer any words of closing?

(Sharing)

(Chime)
Thank you. We will see each other tomorrow at ten. Good night.
Good morning, everyone, good to see all of you again. Our research weekend is almost over. This morning we will meet for about two hours, and the purpose is to bring a kind of closure and integration to our weekend. Let me remind you once again to turn your cell phones off.

If we can, let’s start with a moment of silence

(Chime)

(Moment or two of silence)

If we can, let’s take a moment or two and with the use of our focal space expressions to see what exists within the group this morning, any reactions to last nights work, and feelings about the coming conclusion of this weekends work.

(15 minutes of focal space work)

(Chime)

We are now going to pass out your journals, after your writing today, we will collect these journals again; we will use them again when we meet in four weeks to share some of our initial learnings.

What I would like you to do now is to journal for yourselves the moments from last night that stand out for you. Remember we spent last night in three primary roles: the doing I, the observing I, and the witnessing I. I would like you to, if you could, write from each of those perspectives. Pick one moment from each perspective and tell us what that moment means to you, why you chose that moment. So you might label each writing so that it is clear to us from which perspective you are remembering. You’re remembered key moments should come from each of those perspectives. Any questions? Good.

I will give you about 20 minutes to write down what you remember as highlights, moments that stand out for you.

(Allow 20 minutes for writing.)

Now if we could, let’s create a focal space in which we can give expression to one highlight, of your choosing, of each of those positions. So we will begin with the
witnessing I perspective; we will each have the opportunity for some expression before we move to the observing I, and then finally the doing I. Any questions? Good.

Let’s start with the witnessing I.

(Allow 20 minutes for focal space work around the witnessing I.)

Very good, now before we move to expressions around the observing I, anything else regarding the witnessing I? No? Good.

(Allow 20 minutes for focal space work around the observing I.)

Very good, anything else about the observing I? No? Good.

And now the doing I.

(Allow 20 minutes for focal space work around the doing I.)

We would like to collect your journals, if we might; please make sure your names are in them so we can get them back to you in our final meeting four weeks from now. Good.

Let’s gather with our closing if we could.

(Chime)

(Moment of silence)

Let’s share a few words while standing here in this circle holding hands, about hopes and fears or, for that matter, any other feelings we have for the next five weeks for each other.

(Five minutes or so of sharing)

Our next meeting is [date/time], and we will again meet in this room. During that interval, I will be working hard to find initial learnings in all this material we have collected. During the next meeting, we will share those initial learnings with you and get your feedback. Sharing those learnings with you is an important part of the process that is this research.

(Chime)

Thank you.
Welcome back everyone. It’s been some four weeks since we have all seen each other. Hope all is well for all of you. It really is good being with all of you again. As you know, the purpose of this get together is to share some of our initial learnings with you, and for all of you to get a chance to share some of your reactions to those initial learnings with us. Your responses are a critical part of this entire process. Let me again ask all of you to turn off cell phones and let me draw your attention to the refreshment table which provides some good stuff when your hunger dictates. Our session this morning will last until 12:00 noon.

As I chime us in, let’s take a few minutes of silence, pay attention to our breathing, and get a sense of how it feels to be back in this room with these men.

(Chime)

(Several minutes of silence)

Good. Now if we could share a word or two, maybe longer, about how it feels being back here together.

Who would like to start?

Good

(Several minutes of sharing)

This morning, as I read each one of the initial learnings, I would like each of you to respond with some writing in your journals which we will pass out to you. I have prepared four learnings and, after I read each, I will give you some four or five minutes to write your reaction. Allow yourself time to respond in any way you choose. A word or two, feelings expressed into words, again, there is no right or wrong here.

(Pass out journals and pens.)

(Allow 30 minutes for reading the learnings and journal entries.)

Everybody finished?...Good...Now as we have done often in the past, let us share something of what we have written with each other. Let’s go learning by learning. So the first learning, who would like to start? Good.
(Allow 60 minutes for sharing based on journal entry reaction to each learning.)

Good thank you. Thank you we are going to collect the journals.

(Collect journals and pens.)

When my dissertation is approved, we will send you a complete summary of learning. I cannot guarantee when exactly that will be, but be assured final learning information will be shared with you.

Let’s move into one final closing ritual, if we could gather in our circle one last time. I will chime us in.

(Chime)

(Silence)

Could we recognize each other’s participation in this study by sharing a word or two of what it has meant for us to be here, with each other. Who would like to go first? Thank you!

(Sharing)

(Chime)

Thank you.
APPENDIX 19

SCENE SUGGESTIONS: ONE THROUGH EIGHT

1) If the first scene we observed were to continue and Clive were to speak to Joshua about what Joshua apparently said to Clive’s wife Betty---
Go to costume/prop box pick out a costume/prop and play Clive speaking to Joshua.

2) In the first scene, we observed Betty sharing with her husband Clive, how she felt about Harry Bagley and his imminent arrival---
Go to the costume/prop box pick out a costume/prop and play Betty telling Clive how you really feel about Harry Bagley and his arrival.

3) In the second scene, we observed Harry letting Betty know that he worships her. The scene ends with Harry proclaiming: “The hell with it.”---
Go to the costume/prop box pick out a costume/prop and play Harry letting us know what happens, with Betty, after Harry says: “The hell with it.”

4) In the second scene, we observed Betty expressing her desire for Harry, the scene ends before either Betty or Harry act on that desire---
Go to the costume/prop box and pick out a costume/prop and play Betty trying to convince Harry to “want” and “like” her.

5) In the third scene, we observed Ellen attempting to control her feelings and desires for Betty---
Go to the costume/prop box pick out a costume/prop and play Ellen fully expressing her desires and feelings for Betty.
6) In the third scene, Ellen doesn’t really let Betty know what she, Ellen, thinks of Harry Bagley---
Go to the costume/prop box pick out a costume/prop and play Ellen and let Betty know what Ellen really thinks of Harry Bagley.

7) In the fourth scene, Betty tells Clive that there is something “wicked” in her but never tells him what that is---
Go to the costume/prop box pick out a costume/prop and play Betty and tell Clive what that wicked thing is.

8) In the fourth scene, Clive suggests women are treacherous and evil, he doesn’t however get a chance to explain how---
Go to the costume/prop box pick out a costume/prop and play Clive telling Betty exactly how women are treacherous and evil.
SCENES FROM CLOUD NINE

Performed Scene #1:

Betty: Clive?
Clive: Betty.
Betty: I thought you would never come. The day’s so long without you.
Clive: Long ride in the bush.
Clive: Nothing serious. Beauty is a damned good mare. I must get some new boots sent from home. These ones have never been right. I have a blister.
Betty: My poor dear foot.
Clive: It’s nothing.
Betty: Oh but it’s sore.
Clive: We are not in this country to enjoy ourselves. Must have ridden 50 miles. spoke to three different headmen who would all gladly chop off each other’s heads and wear them round their waists.
Betty: Clive!
Clive: Don’t be squeamish, Betty, let me have my joke. And what has my little dove done today?
Betty: I’ve read a little.
Clive: Good. Is it good?
Betty: It’s poetry.
Clive: You’re so delicate and sensitive.
Betty: And I played the piano. Shall I send for the children?
Clive: Yes, in a minute. I’ve a piece of news for you.
Betty: Good news?
Clive: You’ll certainly think it’s good. A visitor.
Betty: From home?
Clive: No. Well of course originally from home.
Betty: Man or woman?
Clive: Man.
Betty: I can’t imagine.
Betty: What do you mean? Whoever can it be?
Clive: With an H and a B. And does conjuring tricks for little Edward.
Betty: That sounds like Mr. Bagley.
Clive: Harry Bagley.
Betty: He certainly doesn’t admire me, Clive, what a thing to say. How could I possibly guess from that. He’s hardly explored anything at all, he’s just been up a river, he’s done nothing at all compared to what you do. You should have said a heavy drinker and a bit of a bore.
Clive: But you like him well enough. You don’t mind him coming?
Betty: Anyone at all to break the monotony.
Clive: But you have your mother. You have Ellen.
Betty: Ellen is a governess. My mother is my mother.
Clive: I hoped when she came to visit she would be company for you.
Betty: I don’t think mother is on a visit. I think she lives with us.
Clive: I think she does.
Betty: Clive you are so good.
Clive: But are you bored, my love?
Betty: It’s just that I miss you when you’re away. We’re not in this country to enjoy ourselves. If I lack society that is my form of service.
Clive: That’s a brave girl. So today has been all right? No fainting? No hysteria?
Betty: I have been very tranquil.
Clive: Ah what a haven of peace to come home to. The coolth, the calm, the beauty.
Betty: There is one thing, Clive, if you don’t mind.
Clive: What can I do for you, my dear?
Betty: It’s about Joshua.
Clive: I wouldn’t leave you alone here with a quiet mind if it weren’t for Joshua.
Betty: Joshua doesn’t like me.
Clive: Joshua has been my boy for eight years. He has saved my life. I have saved his life. He is devoted to me and to mine. I have said this before.
Betty: He is rude to me. He doesn’t do what I say. Speak to him.
Clive: Tell me what happened.
Betty: He said something improper.
Clive: Well, what?
Betty: I don’t like to repeat it.
Clive: I must insist.
Betty: I had left my book inside on the piano. I was in the hammock, I asked him to fetch it.
Clive: And did he not fetch it?
Betty: Yes, he did eventually.
Clive: And what did he say?
Betty: Clive—
Clive: Betty.
Betty: He said fetch it yourself. You’ve got legs under that dress.
Clive: Joshua!

Performed Scene #2:

Harry: I wondered where you were.
Betty: I was singing lullabies.
Harry: When I think of you I always think of you with Edward in your lap.
Betty: Do you think of me sometimes then?
Harry: You have been thought of where no white woman has ever been thought of before.
Betty: It’s one way of having adventures. I suppose I will never go in person.
Harry: That’s up to you.
Betty: Of course it’s not. I have duties.
Harry: Are you happy, Betty?
Betty: Where have you been?
Harry: Built a raft and went up the river. Stayed with some people. The king is always very good to me. They have a lot of skulls around the place but not white men’s, I think. I made up a poem one night. If I should die in this forsaken spot, there is a loving heart without a blot, where I live—and so on.
Betty: When I am near you, it’s like going out into the jungle. It’s like going up the river on a raft. It’s like going out in the dark.
Harry: And you are safety and light and peace and home.
Betty: But I want to be dangerous.
Harry: Clive is my friend.
Betty: I am your friend.
Harry: I don’t like dangerous women.
Betty: Is Mrs. Saunders dangerous?
Harry: Not to me. She’s a bit of an old boot.
Betty: Am I dangerous?
Harry: You are rather.
Betty: Please like me.
Harry: I worship you.
Betty: Please want me.
Harry: I don’t want to want you. Of course I want you.
Betty: What are you going to do?
Harry: I should have stayed on the river. The hell with it.

Performed Scene #3:

Betty: Ellen, I don’t want to play any more.
Ellen: Nor do I Betty.
Betty: Come and sit here with me. Oh Ellen, what will become of me?
Ellen: Betty, are you crying? Are you laughing?
Betty: Tell me what you think of Harry Bagley.
Ellen: He’s a very fine man.
Betty: No, Ellen, what you really think.
Ellen: I think you think he’s very handsome.
Betty: And don’t you think he is? Oh Ellen, you’re so good, and I’m so wicked.
Ellen: I’m not so good as you think.
Betty: Ellen, can you keep a secret?
Ellen: Oh yes, yes please.
Betty: I love Harry Bagley. I want to go away with him. There I’ve said it, it’s true.
Ellen: How do you know you love him?
Betty: I kissed him.
Ellen: Betty.
Betty: He held my hand like this. Oh I want him to do it again. I want him to stroke my hair.
Ellen: Your lovely hair. Like this, Betty?
Betty: I want him to put his arm around my waist.
Ellen: Like this, Betty?
Betty: Yes, oh I want him to kiss me again.
Ellen: Like this Betty?
Betty: Ellen, whatever are you doing? It’s not a joke.
Ellen: I’m sorry, Betty. You’re so pretty. Harry Bagley doesn’t deserve you. You wouldn’t really go away with him?
Betty: Oh Ellen, you don’t know what I suffer. You don’t know what love is. Everyone will hate me, but it’s worth it for Harry’s love.
Ellen: I don’t hate you, Betty, I love you.
Betty: Harry says we shouldn’t go away. But he says he worships me.
Ellen: I worship you, Betty.
Betty: Oh Ellen, you are my only friend.

Performed Scene #4:

Betty: Poor Clive.
Clive: It was my duty to have them flogged. For you and Edward and Victoria, to keep you safe.
Betty: It is terrible to feel betrayed.
Clive: You can tame a wild animal only so far. They revert to their true nature and savage your hand. Sometimes I feel the natives are the enemy. I know that is wrong. I know I have a responsibility towards them, to care for them and bring
them all to be like Joshua. But there is something dangerous. Implacable. This whole continent is my enemy. I am pitching my whole mind and will and reason and spirit against it to tame it, and I sometimes feel it will break over me and swallow me up.

Betty: Clive, Clive, I am here. I have faith in you.
Clive: Yes, I can show you my moments of weakness, Betty, because you are my wife and because I trust you. I trust you, Betty, and it would break my heart if you did not deserve that trust. Harry Bagley is my friend. It would break my heart if he did not deserve my trust.

Betty: I’m sorry, I’m sorry. Forgive me. It is not Harry’s fault, it is all mine. Harry is noble. He has rejected me. It is my wickedness, I get bored, I get restless, I imagine things. There is something so wicked in me, Clive.
Clive: I have never thought of you having the weakness of your sex, only the good qualities.
Betty: I am bad, bad, bad—
Clive: You are thoughtless, Betty, that’s all. Women can be treacherous and evil. They are darker and more dangerous than men. The family protects us from that, you protect me from that. You are not that sort of woman. You’re not unfaithful to me, Betty. I can’t believe you are. It would hurt me so much to cast you off. That would be my duty.

Betty: No, no, no.
Clive: Joshua has seen you kissing.
Betty: Forgive me.
Clive: But I don’t want to know about it. I don’t want to know. I wonder, of course, I wonder constantly. If Harry Bagley was not my friend, I would shoot him. If I shot you every British, man and woman would applaud me. But no. It was a moment of passion such as women are too weak to resist. But you must resist it, Betty, or it will destroy us. We must fight against it. We must resist this dark female lust, Betty, or it will swallow us up.

Clive: Yes I do forgive you. But I can’t feel the same about you as I did. You are still my wife and we still have duties to the household.
APPENDIX 21

LETTER: THANK YOU

Dear [participant name],

My dissertation has received its final approval, which means I am able to send you the final learnings of our work on gender.

I am very grateful for your participation. Your work with the other men, during our weekend together, was of course a vital part of this entire process. I will be forever in your debt.

Sincerely,

John Heckel
APPENDIX 22

SUMMARY OF DATA

Responses Sorted by Participants and Activity

JOURNAL ENTRIES AFTER THE BUS STOP ACTIVITY

Please take a few minutes and journal regarding any significant moments that might have arisen from the previous activity.

Terry

I was aware much of the time of my self-consciousness as an actor. I’m a composer in theatre and have been asked to act a couple of times. It was a mistake. Anyway it did feel pretty natural being the one who watches in this scenario. Sometimes it’s not that different than real life, when in real life you are in a situation in public with strangers. One thing I noticed was how I was being the one who watches when I was an audience member too. I’m beginning to notice the feminine component being missing from these exercises. Not a criticism just an observation.

Jerry

I just wanted to speak more than three lines. I kept thinking about establishing a scene and not being able to say what I felt like saying. I felt a lot of relief when Terry just started talking without any regard to the three line rule because I felt it freed it up a little. I enjoyed watching the scenes; being an observer in that sense. Overall I just felt exhausted from work and from moving. (I just finished moving to a new apartment yesterday.) I enjoy participating in theatre again. I want to actually do some improv without…

Bill

I had a hard time not thinking about what I was going to do next as I was watching others perform. I wanted so much to please. The instructions felt restrictive. I wanted to explore the scene a little more each time. The walk off was way too long and mustering up the motivation to exit felt artificial.
Roland

I really started to cry. Why? What power? Why not? I want the other part, with an opposite feeling, from the assumed feeling. Friendship, why not or the very least, why not a good relationship—a positive experience to remember. I want to make it real—observed or not. Why can’t he observe me accurately? I do, but do I really observe him accurately.

Chris

Without other impetus, tends toward understatement and lack of humor. Typically, not broad; all reflections of own personality, just cropped and modified for effect. Maintaining observing eye and script creates low level of tension, but easy to deal with; used to this.

Ted

It was fun trying to focus on the listening to others and yourself as well as take in the technical aspects of performance. It was creating a character that you have never met and trying to understand how he feels etc. I found myself doing my best to play the moments as well as understand how much to give and take…Wondering if the other person is listening and feeding off my presence. When I was earth man I was more feminine than business man or trucker etc.

Ken

Bus stop—The...interesting place to take the bus-devotee who for me is creature of compulsive neurosis. I had fun. The sequencing got out of whack at a certain point and that didn’t seem to mess it up. It’s good to play. Felt like play!

Andy

First really quick and to the point as man b, the exchange was awkward, anxiety and critical eye. Group A taking or giving, listening, and watching response. Not playing for humor that was one outcome. Felt finding differences of one to another was difficult. The performing eye or doing eye was probably more present. The different emotions….

GROUP SHARING BASED ON BUS STOP ACTIVITY JOURNALING

What observations based on the journaling you have just completed would you like to share with the rest of the men?

Terry

Ahm…I work in theatre but I never…I’ve only been asked to act once…and so…they never asked me again after that first time (Laughter) so I’ve always been a little self-conscious when I’m in an exercise…but at the same time it’s…started you know…feeling like…ahm…like when your in a public place with strangers it’s kind
of the same feeling really because your...I mean...you know...not like your trying to act but you...it was a similar feeling...and I also noticed that...ahm...I was doing the same...I was being the one who watches while I was an audience member as well...watching my...being consciously aware of what I was doing as an audience member and...ahm...one other observation I had was that...I was starting to notice the absence of a feminine component to some of these exercises...like...which is kind of new to me...you know...not until...I was wondering about the maleness of this...I don’t know why but that’s what it was.

Jerry

I just wanted to say how restricted I felt by the three lines...just having three lines...yea...but how...how...how watching other people using just three lines...in doing...and really conveying character...like setting up little scenes...yea...that contrast was interesting.

Bill

I found it hard to not think about what I might do, while I was watching other people do things...ahm (Shakes head back and forth.) what’s that? (Shrugs shoulders.)

Roland

I guess it was the last scene that I did, it was with you right? (Referring to Chris.) I...ah, when I’ve done similar exercises, and I can do them by myself too, it amazes me...I started to cry when you...when you...I mean it was...I had no expectation of crying, no plan of crying, so I wasn’t...wasn’t planning on a scenario where I could be observed crying, but I didn’t feel embarrassed or like I should hide it, you know, it was just beginning, so I don’t know if it really was observed... (Emphasis) I observed it. (Stronger emphasis)...I observed it ...it surprised me...like I really reached out to you...it felt authentic to me...like...man ... (Grunt of pain.)...ahh...man, I really did like this day...and you really smashed it...God... (Emphasis) it’s so real... (Stronger stress) It’s just so real.

Chris

I have this sensation watching from the observing I (Bus Stop Scene), it’s...it’s less of an inventing a character or something like that ...more of a taking aspects of my personality that are already present and just sort of cropping and modifying them and skewing them until they fit something more like what the script or the improv situation...ahm...demands or asks for...and that also raises for me some interesting questions about authentic self (He laughs.) and what exactly that means (Long pause then Chris turns to Roland.)...and I actually felt like kind of a jerk. (Referring to his part in their scene.)
Ted

I started to think about...ahm...I found myself thinking about...the...trying to figure out who was this earth person or who was this person taking the bus ahm...and why some of those character values were more feminine than...ahm...the other character which never took the bus which seemed to me more...you know a trucker or can’t do it...but I think that’s created from the experiences you go through where as if I was in another environment...ahm...it would be the same thing as taking the bus, but it would be different because of a different reality of life than it is up here.

Ken

I found that I...I never take the bus...I hate taking the bus...I mean when I have taken the bus, I feel like an alien or a visitor so the non-bus rider was a really awkward place to be in where as I had a lot of fun with the bus rider because I could vilify the bus rider. (Laughter) Condemn this person (Laughter) by demonstrating what was wrong with them or what might be wrong with somebody (Laughter) why they would choose to ride the bus everyday. (Laughter) It was really interesting to be on both sides of it and to be afraid of...and to think...now...ah now I can be the one instilling fear...it's kind of...yea...I don’t know.

Andy

Well I do ride the bus. (Laughter) So your talking about me (Looking at Ken.) especially playing the non-bus rider, the angry person, pacing back and forth, waiting for the bus. I see all those people at the bus stop. (Nodding his head) But there is no gentlemen who walks past the bus stop everyday, where as some kind of disorder everyday that is real.

JOURNAL ENTRIES AFTER THE GENDER WALKING ACTIVITY

Please take a few minutes and journal regarding any significant moments that might have arisen from the previous activity.

Bill

I have “ideas” about how women and men move and I tried to play them out. For female the emphasis was below the waist, hips moving, knees together, not a lot of movement above the waist. I also noticed my eyes looked mostly at the floor 20 ft. ahead. This was not a conscious choice at first. As a male the emphasis was on the upper body, chest lifted, eyes up and out. I felt they where both a bit of a exaggeration based on my “ideas” of females and males.
Terry

I walked as a male—I tried to walk as a couple of different types of males. One—a proud handsome, powerful male, surveying all that was in his grasp. It was different from my regular self. Next I tried a small, strong, unhealthy, pissed off ignorant male with a big chip on his shoulder. Tried to stir up some aggression. I definitely do not relate to this. I walked as a female—I tried a couple of different ones. I tried to draw on some women friends. One a beautiful woman who loves what she has and flaunts it, enjoys the attention. Next, a woman with very large breasts who was very self-conscious about it, whose had men looking at them her whole life. I tried to physically imagine having large breasts and a vagina. It was hard to imagine a vagina; my testicles kept getting in the way.

Jerry

I think it revealed to me more about what ideas I had about what is male verses what is female and how one “does” either one. Male—direct, anxious without distraction, an element of physical threat, more emphasis on being a physical presence, similarities of gesture and expression. Female—allowing yourself to be more curious, easier to lift face for eye contact, allowing yourself to notice things, more open, smaller, allowing myself to be more tactile, greater range of expression and gesture.

Chris


Ken

How the hell do women walk? Do I have breasts? Are they nice? Am I wearing “ass pants”? A thong? What kind of shoes am I wearing? These shoes are all wrong—I feel like a lesbian in drag…Aren’t men supposed to be detached and arrogant? My shirt can barely hold all my muscles in! My dick is so big even my dick has a dick and even my dick’s dick is bigger than your dick.

Ted

Found myself not trying to stereotype woman especially with a woman in our presence. Allowed myself to be free with both genders but male was what I knew without thinking. Woman walking hurts my legs and hips maybe because that what I look at so that what I worked the most. lol.

Andy

There was marked difference in male walk and female. Going from female to my normal walk was a little shift. Male self-walk with purpose not appreciating
surroundings, going from one place to another. Female self had purposeful walk, was more aware of surroundings and of body. Felt more in contact and being in the moment. Felt good.

Roland

First male—suspicious/power/closed watching all sides/you can not know me, confident, tough, closed, watching out for other men, watching out for pleasurable females. Female—I know what I’m wearing—silk, thin and sensual against my bare skin and it feels so free, fun, happy, close to nature. I love being me in this space, I enjoy each expressive moment. Happy. Me—I pull in, I look down, I’m a bit tight, I start acting younger, looking out the window for discovery and happiness. I know the first two are archetypal. For a short time I tried being a female who was afraid.

GROUP SHARING BASED ON GENDER WALKING JOURNALING

What observations based on the journaling you have just completed would you like to share with the rest of the men?

Bill

I…ahm…felt that I was doing a lot of things that I had preconceptions about…male and female…but the one thing that I noticed, which was not a conscious choice was that when I was walking as a female my eyes were down on the floor about 20 feet ahead of me. Which is not normally what I would do. When I played the man, the male my eyes were lifted…neither of those…I didn’t think about that until I observed that I was doing that…so I didn’t put it on, it just happened that way but I am sure it’s based on my preconceptions.

Terry

I tried with both genders to imagine or to be a couple of different kinds of men…I tried to be a handsome, strong sure of himself male and who was surveying all that…powerful…all that was around him and I tried to be…ahm…a pissed off unhealthy strong, maybe tweaker kind of guy who…you know…and I tried to find some aggression and…you know and feel what that was like, which wasn’t my style really. And as a woman I …ahm…tried a couple of different…tried a beautiful…woman that enjoys attention and…ahm…from men and flaunts it and then I tried imagining a woman who had very large breasts and who is always very self-conscious about…because men are always…have spent their whole life looking at them…I tried to imagine what it was like to have really large breasts and a vagina. The vagina was hard because my testicles kept getting in the way…(laughter) I kept feeling them there…so it was really…that was it.
Jerry

I thought it was interesting that for me...I...that...I started to think about...think about the exercises as showing me a little bit about what I...how I think people do the different genders...that was really interesting for me to think about that...like I have never really thought about that...ahm...how I thought men played men...ahm...when I was playing with that I felt like that there was a greater emphasis on physical presence...on being a physical presence and when I was thinking about how women played women I just thought there was...I felt smaller...less of a physical presence.

Chris

I...ahm...you reminded me of something (Turning to Jerry.) that I have written down here which is...I saw myself going towards different energy centers when I was doing the walking...like for women it was lower down in the hips and I found the male walking started to rise up into the chest area not only in the chest but also it’s expansion...(Looking again at Jerry.) that same idea of this larger physical presence and then I started thinking about that...observing that...trying to think about that in an almost primatology sense...It’s almost...what is almost...it is this territorial thread display...practically...like you puff yourself up, you make yourself bigger, that’s what I felt myself doing when I was supposed to act male I was supposed to be bigger and I was thinking wow...do we walk around all our lives in our territorial threat display like now I am bigger than you...you’re bigger than me...oh...oh

Ken

I was really wanting...ahm...I was really wanting some female clothing...to ah...assist...I felt like I was trying to walk like a woman and like god these jeans are wrong...they’re the wrong jeans, not flattering, my shirt didn’t fit like a woman’s and then I started thinking about...do I have breasts...how big are they? Do I want people to see them? You know, am I that kind of woman? Do I...what am I displaying? What am I showing off? and wishing...thinking god if only I had the right clothes, if I had a purse or some high-heels or something, I would be enjoying this more. But what I was thinking was god I am really wearing the wrong clothes for this woman thing. You know I feel like ahh...uncomfortable...oh well

Ted

I noticed that my legs and my hips...ahm...were more of my focus as (Looking and referring to Chris) Chris has said maybe that’s because that’s what I pay attention to the most when I watch women walk...ahm...I also noticed that I...ahm...my shoulders were arched back and...ahm...I kind of felt like I was the baddest woman walking...like I can walk better than a woman...I was a little...I wasn’t trying to go for any stereotypes just do...like that...not do me, but do me if I was a woman because we have a woman in our presence and so...unfortunately...that still self-conscious back of my mind knew there is a woman here too so...I can’t...I have to be real about...I can’t be the stereotypical thing because its not real...so that was always in the back of mind.
Andy

I found the male walking with a sense of purpose but not appreciating his surroundings, that being in the moment. I felt the woman, when I was walking as a woman was more in the moment and more aware of her body, how the body was doing, how the body was moving…I didn’t think about any physical attributes that the person had or would have…it was just the movement and how I would feel walking as a woman and then when we changed from walking as a woman to…the last time when we walked as a person…I notice there wasn’t a big shift from me walking as a woman to me walking as Andy. It was just a subtle…it was just a subtle shift. Which I thought was kind of surprising.

Terry

I might just add that I did notice the one time that I was being a man and the tweaker guy probably, I had the urge to pick a fight with someone, like in this room…in this group. (Laughter) I don’t know if it was real or not but I just wanted to…I don’t think I really wanted to like seriously get into a fight, but I wanted to just shove somebody and get physical like that…somehow…its ok if I did.

Ted

That went for me too…when Jerry went walking by, I just wanted to (gestures as if shoving someone with left shoulder) nudge him…when I was a man walking and doing my thing (He is pounding his fist) for some reason I kept pounding my fist and doing something with my hand like this…I had to be more aggressive or more…ahm…what’s it called…more expressive with my hands to let my presence be known.

Roland

Yes, one other time I did not contribute earlier and it really changed my feeling…but this time…ahm…ahm…ahm…that great scene of…in…ahm…what’s it called?…the French version, I mean the original version. La Cage Aux Folles. When the two gay guys, and the one says don’t worry I will teach you how to walk like John Wayne. A hilarious scene, and I thought about that like I’ll get this swagger down but I felt powerful in being him, John Wayne but…my male…It was really an archetypal, you know…but it really felt…it was about suspicion and power and clothes, my watching all sides of me. I was confident but I had to be ready for anything. The female—I …ahm…I didn’t want it to be a stereotype like the kind of woman I like to watch, but…and I didn’t want her to be…I wanted her to be in part by herself, sort of unaware of how…of whether she was being watched or not watched. Just for her…her…me to be…just totally enjoy being in the air and being who I was and I really…she..was…I liked being her. I think the biggest…and those are stereotypes…the biggest thing… that I didn’t expect to find interesting, but was deeply interesting, was what it felt like to then shift back to myself each time. I pulled in, my body caved a little bit, I looked down at the floor, I was
a little tight and I started acting younger...ahm...I also looked out the window a lot for discovery and happiness. Which sounds a lot like when I was six.

**SPEAKING TO THE CAMERA**

*Based on today’s activities, would you speak to the doing self or the observing self, and what would you say?*

**Jerry**

(To the doing self)

I think I would say that...ahm...let's see if the observing self were to say something to the doing self...ahm...just saying something to the doing self...the message from all day would be...to...ahm...to let go, I guess...let go...it's fun...it's all fun...a fun examination of stuff and that's all it is.

**Andy**

(To the doing self)

As the observer, as the observer, it's...it's...it's difficult and sometimes very hard to grasp the essence of what...of what that request is...and as the doing part, if you could just let that be...just let that be...just a little bit freer and not worry about being perfect.

**Ted**

(To the doing self)

Ahm...Doing Self be open to new things...ahm...allow yourself to look within yourself for...ahm...the true meaning of being.

**Ken**

(To the observing self)

It would be better if you observed in a way that was supportive and didn’t observe in a way that was looking for fault...or wondering what everyone else was thinking that wasn’t helpful.

**Terry**

(To the doing self)

Doing self I think you need to be more focused with what your doing. Be in the moment. Ahh...and don’t do anything I wouldn’t do. Yea...ahm...I think your still unclear about your activities and your uncomfortable, just try and do the best you can.
Bill

(To the observing self)
Ahm…step back a little bit…ahm…give me more room…let me go…I know your not talking to me but…ahm…criticizing me, but just the act of observing sometimes makes me feel very nervous.

Roland

(To the observing self)
Well this is a new relationship and I guess it’s…I’m trying it on like a new suit of clothes…ahm…I’m not sure…I’m not sure I like it, but I want to be open and try to trust it and try to trust you. Like John says, I want to trust you that you are there to help me, to work with me and that I’m there to work with you…that it’s a mutual relationship…that we are there for each other in an authentic way.

Chris

(To the doing self)
Just one thing to say and that’s…Relax.

JOURNAL ENTRIES AFTER THE GUEST SCENES FROM CLOUD NINE AND THE MEN’S IMPROVIZED RESPONSES

Please take a few minutes and journal regarding any significant moments that might have arisen from the previous activity.

Terry

I was aware that one of the guest actors was in a play that I had seen before. I was in wonder at how a simple scarf and some good acting could transform a man into a woman. He was very convincing. I was able to suspend reality and bring myself into the world of the play. I was rooting for Betty and I was rooting for Ellen. I was rooting for the women mostly but as I think about it I was rooting for Harry too in some ways. As far as my own performance I was aware that I was trying to sit and act as a woman. Shortly after I began my pieces I let go of that and was able to immerse myself more in the role that I was playing.

Jerry

Observing self of guest scenes of Cloud Nine…that it’s a cycle, it’s all a fucking cycle of expectations! we have these expectations, we reward people for fitting into those expectations by not ostracizing them—they do the same—it’s like a stacking and stacking of expectation and reward (classical conditioning) Where did it start? When did those expectations start for us? What does it mean to be a man? Is it still all relative? Do men
romanticize being women and women romanticize being men? What is gender? What are the reasons for gender? What makes people gender ambiguous? Is it just a different set of reinforcements?

**Bill**

Watching *Cloud Nine* scenes I felt gender/role stereotypes were being played out from 30-40 years ago. It made me uncomfortable. Are vestiges of those stereotypes still with us? Are they deeply rooted but now covered with superficial obeisance to gender correctness? Or have we moved beyond them? I also thought the actor playing Betty did a great job and when Betty and Ellen were in the scene together I felt he must have learned a lot from observing Ellen/actor in terms of physicality. Playing the monologues was really frightening. But once there it was really fun. I think I especially enjoyed being in front of the spotlight. The observing self is less inside me and more sitting in the audience and learning.

**Roland**

Downstairs—*Cloud Nine*—Witnessing the players. confused, melodrama or real life story with honesty—a real woman and a man being a woman—I’m confused, real, not real—?? A man pretends to kiss a woman, who is really a man, a real woman kisses a woman who is really a man—How do I feel—gender confusion. I witness sexism, chauvinism, racism, distrust, dishonesty real—it hurts—really. I want to do my reenactments not as melodrama. I want to be seen as treating each character with respect. The stereotypes make it difficult. gender is getting confused. How am I seen? How do I want to feel inside? I watch myself as I move in real time. the emotions come through me. I truly want their depth. they are sacred. I have been given a trust. But what of women of this female gender.

**Chris**

Performance response: greater success the more that affectation dropped away; follows: Affectation—emotion. Follows: Affectation played against gender roles seems ‘comical’, ‘weird’—emotion exists outside gender. Curious about how odd traditional ‘male’ performances seem. Is this progress or the exchange of one cage for another? Performance participation Response: Gender performance is the crust on a crème broulot. it’s definitely something; it’s definitely not everything.

**Ted**

The original players were great. The character of Betty reminded me of my ex-wife and how she felt about me working so much and never being home for long periods of time. I observed how I prefer very honest and true…I knew there was a kissing scene with two men that I was afraid of seeing but the women scene was great to the observing part of me because I got to see two women or man and woman kiss.
Ken

I enjoyed the performance. I enjoyed the gender portrayals and the melodramatic quality of the writing allowed for a simultaneity of being disturbed and maintaining distance through dramatic irony. I felt awkward looking at the only female performer and noticing that with the exception of the silent female researcher it was the first woman I had looked at for a while. The fact that she was very physically attractive added to my anxiety as I consciously censured my admiration of her beauty.

Andy

Doing Taking the women. the women were not dealt with in their complexity based on the roles they have to play. Being limited to just a few areas. the men were very masculine, there wasn’t any introspection. The frame was too rigid and would surely break. Playing the scene wanting to break out of the typical role, the roles were rigid. Harry, a romantic has stepped over the line in terms of his friendship and association with Clive. The servant has seen all. Clive has to exercise restraint with the events as have been reported to him. Felt equally comfortable playing either role.

GROUP SHARING BASED ON THE GUEST SCENES
FROM CLOUD NINE AND THE MEN’S IMPROVIZED RESPONSES JOURNALING

What observations based on the journaling you have just completed would you like to share with the rest of the men?

Jerry

What I saw…I was …ahm…just really intrigued by the idea of it being a cycle of expectations and rewards…as gender being this…as being this…having expectations and rewarding people for fulfilling those expectations…and its this cycle that moves back and forth, which I think is interesting.

Terry

Well, I was aware of a couple of things…one of the actors I had seen before in a play…oh I know him…ahm…I was amazed at how a simple scarf and some good acting can transform a man into a woman, and then once I got through that I was…allowed myself to suspend reality and immerse myself into the world of the play and…I found myself rooting for the women, and then I realized I was probably rooting for Harry too, and I realized I really wasn’t rooting for Clive very much.
Bill

I…ahm…it…felt…the stories that were unfolding there and the roles they were playing…felt very old fashioned and like something from 30 or 40 years ago, I don’t know how old the play is…what time period it was referring to, when it was written, but…then I began to think, so…purposely very old, then I began to think how far have we really moved past that and are some of those stereotypes really deeply rooted and we have covered them up with the sort of obeisance to gender…ah…what is that called?…ahm…I wrote it down…gender…ahm correctness…so that’s what went through my mind.

Andy

I didn’t feel the women were dealt with their complexity based on their roles…ahm…it was a very rigid frame…I could see how this whole thing could just break apart, there was no flexibility in regards to Clive and dealing with his wife and Harry having stepped over the line with regard to his relationship with Clive. Clive does then have to exercise some restraint, but still these roles are just so rigid, and women are…have so little movement…in which they can…move.

Roland

I got…I’m often getting myself in trouble with expectations…ahm…in life and I had fantasized what production I would be watching…I hadn’t thought about the script, but…ahm…sort of the emotional feeling I would get from witnessing, and I felt like I was watching a…soap opera…a melodrama where I should hiss and…but I…and then my first attempt at being there by myself I…ahm…I played a little bit with that but I…sort of desperately wanted to believe in it…I wanted to believe that…it isn’t told the way we would tell a story, the same story today written today, but I wanted to act like these were real people going through real things, and, therefore, when I was on stage, I wanted to feel the depth and compassion and connection to their humanity. The whole gender thing, I mean, although the archetypal stereotype…ahm…it was fascinating to get really confused, I mean upstairs we each played men and women, we have walked as a man and walked as a woman and suddenly there’s another man being a woman very convincingly and there’s a real woman…when she walked in I went…oooh…that’s a real one (Laughter) and I find a …she is kind of like, I know it’s only been half a day, but oh my god (Laughter) she is quite amazing, a magic creature, and then I…and then it more confusing…she…the man kissing…Betty didn’t seem to really kiss her, he gave her one of those stage kisses where you couldn’t really see his lips, so he didn’t really kiss the woman, but then the real woman was falling in love…and did kiss a man who was playing a woman…and I thought, man, my antennae for gender is getting a bit lost.

Ted

I felt like I was observing…ahm…my life when, maybe not only my life…life in general, as in being a man to a woman, where we are grown up to believe certain ideas,
certain ways we are supposed behave and we carry those traits within our relationship and, as I was looking at Betty…it looked like a real situation I’ve seen and I could see Betty’s part but I could also see Clive’s part and…ahm…it seems like with the gender roles and everything it’s about a balance even with ourselves it’s about a balance with not just being too manly but understanding that we did come from a woman and understanding that we do have female characteristics…whether you’re a …no matter what and understanding that its okay to have those…and we shouldn’t press our own ideas upon women because of how we feel or how it makes us uncomfortable to be feminine…that was really poignant …in the scenes.

Ken

I thought the most interesting character that I was watching was Clive…you know, I thought he was the most sympathetic and the most interesting because I was watching the other three sort of trying to get out of whatever structure this Victorian gender structure…and I thought…well …dah…you know…why would you want to be in that…an unpleasant structure to be a part of…so Clive, I thought, was the most interesting because he was really committed to the structure and he was really into it and it seemed to be causing him a great deal of pain, so I was really wondering what kind of tragic sense of self loathing is committing this guy that he’s really bought and sold on this structure that he seems…the fact that his wife is obviously cheating on him and he is soldiering forward to the duties and obligations that I was really curious about what was so important to him that motivated him to continue with that.

Chris

My response to the performances…I did have this feeling that there was greater success for me as an audience member the more I saw affectation drop away and I was experiencing raw emotion coming out of the performers and that also led me to the flip sides, which is the affectations were also what was letting me identify…Oh he’s a man but he’s supposed to be a woman…or things like that…so I felt that there was this divergence happening for me between affectation and honest emotion. They’re going in two separate directions. Which when it was more effective, it was more comical…right…because there were these…these…(gesture towards Jerry) like Jerry…when you talked about we are supposed to identify gender immediately and we get a prize if we do and so when we are confused by it it’s comical…it’s weird because wait, what’s going on here. Ahm…but emotions it seems to me is something that existed outside of that…that was an entirely separated thing going on there. And also what you were talking (Gesturing towards Ken) about, because I did notice that when looking at the male gender roles…there are these Victorian gender roles…I mean…obviously the woman gender roles seemed odd but even the men…the male gender roles seem odd…seemed dated but then I was wondering. I wrote down here…Is this progress or have we simply exchanged one cage for another? Have we simply…have we updated? Our gender roles? But we are still using them. Have they actually improved or…I don’t know…I really don’t.
Terry

I would respond to you and Bill and…I feel like we haven’t come very far with respect to some of these issues and it’s…I don’t see it so much as gender as much as I see it as human insecurity. I’m always still amazed in this modern world and in Humboldt county…you know…when I speak with somebody I know or whatever…when they speak about their partner…and jealousy happens like if they did…something suspicious or…which seemed really kind of innocent in high school but…to see people still get really…you know have that protective need to keep that person in their life…you know what I mean…and ahm…it just seems like that’s more of a human thing then a gender thing and it seems like we still struggle with that and, of course, I look at it…it runs through my mind and I see it as basic animal instinct survival…you know…that’s where it came from…and it’s still here and I don’t think it still needs to be here but it probably always will be.

CULMINATING JOURNAL ENTRIES

What were your remembered highlights from the weekend, from the three perspectives: the doing self, the observing self, and the witnessing self?

Jerry

Doing Self: (page was left blank)

Observing Self: I have really been trying hard not to impose meaning on anything here but to approach it all like a playful examination of a very real social issue. I have really been trying hard to forget bout criticism of my own ability to perform and to just open up and be present and participate. This has been difficult. I feel out of practice.

Witnessing Self: The first few moments of seeing the actor playing Betty were very significant for me and also the contrast to Clive’s overly emphasized masculinity…it occurred to me that it’s theatre, it’s roles, it’s responding to your scene partner. Betty was so fragile and soft in large part because Clive was so rigid and gruff and vice versa. If the actor playing Betty refused to play her like that, the scene would have a very different Clive and vice versa. The roles and the quality of the roles were dependent on each other.

Andy

Doing Self: The sound movement part—there were definite times in this section when the line was blurred and we just responded. There were also times when it felt that there was an acting out old frustrations and behaviors that would be frowned on today.

Observing Self: Two instances—the second time through the bus stop scene, Jerry and I. The anger and frustration was not very well defined and left one to wonder is this because of the situation or is there more to this.

The second. Playing Ellen and telling Betty how she felt about Harry Bagley. There should have been more thought in this.
**Witnessing Self:** Roland at the bus stop telling Chris what a wonderful day it was and how happy he felt about this day. This was very touching.

*Cloud Nine* Betty and her relationship with Clive.

**Ted**

**Doing Self:** The way I walked with the music as a woman.

**Observing Self:** I am not afraid to open up when I was a woman sitting on the bench.

**Witnessing Self:** When he (Jerry) said your pills are ready.

**Ken**

**Doing Self:** I liked very much the Bus Stop improv. The ‘game’ nature of the exercise made me feel much more comfortable with the group as a whole.

**Observing Self:** I remember feeling extremely self-conscious after having eaten and then drank coffee and realizing with a stuffed belly that I actually had to get up on stage. I felt so self-critical and so uncomfortable that I absolutely blanked while on stage about how to play Ellen—who had just been portrayed by a graceful, lithe woman in her twenties. I deadpanned a literal interpretation out of desperation. It was succinct by default.

**Witnessing Self:** I was distracted by the beauty of the female performer in contrast to the observable lack of sex appeal in the three male actors. I spent much of the time thinking…How odd that theatre attracts so many beautiful straight women but very few handsome straight men. Most of my very handsome male friends from the theatre were gay. The make up and the dressing up seems to have branded theatre as a feminine activity. But why then is it a field dominated by men?

**Terry**

**Doing Self:** walking slowly, I entered the surreal reality of the clock across the parking lot as it related to the insanity of my life and my schedule. That was probably my most engaging moment. I became obsessed for an instant to reach that clock at the slowest possible pace,

**Observing Self:** It is difficult to pick one significant moment in observing my doing self. If I had to pick one, I guess I’d say it related to my own reaction or observations that there was actually feminine energy present during our whole time together. It didn’t bother me in any way. But I noticed it. Actually I was thankful for the female presence in the group.

**Witnessing Self:** When Jerry took the stage as Clive last night. I found his stumbling to be that character Clive, to be even more effective, more real then if he would have nailed the character Clive. It said to me that we have many ways of asserting authority in the world of humans and other beings.
Bill

**Doing Self:** When I went back for a second try at playing Clive talking to Joshua, I had no idea how I was going to suppress or get beyond the laughter, both my own and the others watching. But the yell, which came out of desperation, put me in the moment. It was kind of exhilarating. I no longer feared what the audience thought or saw.

**Observing Self:** My last line as Betty, I watched and listened as my voice became softer, plaintive, and I shifted my position on the bench just to become more inviting. I did that, and remembered the observing self being a little startled. Where did that come from?

**Witnessing Self:** Watching the scene with Betty and Ellen, I remember being struck by the moment they both clasped their hands and put them in their laps. It looked like a mirror exercise almost yet seemed natural and a feminine gesture. It really solidified my image of the male actor playing a woman and pulling it off.

Roland

**Doing Self:** Bust Stop—Man A—always takes the bus, Man B—Hates bus, his car broke, so he must take the bus. I was Man A. In my scene, I was so excited, so open, so looking for connection. I bubbled over with curiosity and shaking, and questions—Man B—yelled at me, put me down, shut me down…emotionally and verbally abusive—He caught me completely off guard—I cried as I started to go into my serious depression ”curdled”—I was ashamed, guilty, I must go far away.

**Observing Self:** Harder for me. The mirror on the wall helps. I like me. When I walked in slow motion—I had no plan—But I really saw, watched myself—deliberately choosing step by small step—to leave, to lock myself up—I learned something of me! By observing.

**Witnessing Self:** I felt involved—I wanted, I was a responsible audience person. I awed over seeing specific men actually change their gender right before my eyes and by doing so changed me. Witnessing.

Chris

**Doing Self:** Action without prolonged goals—Play exercise—Moving into non-verbal space; afterwards felt physically, emotionally, mentally invigorated and limber—Felt self owned.

**Observing Self:** Observing self—continuous series of aware moments of stress leaving my body; yet still happening; on going. This morning—acknowledging a ‘quieter’ mind. At the dinner last night acknowledging the presence and value of an increased state of relaxation.

**Witnessing Self:** Being taught two different things by either ‘serious’ or ‘silly’ performance. Just now observed difference between intentional, affected humor, and humor that arose immediately out of the moment.
APPENDIX 23

SUMMARY OF LEARNINGS

The Research Problem at the heart of this inquiry was: What subjective states and transformative effects arise when transgressive gender performances are imagined, enacted, and witnessed? It was hypothesized that imagining, enacting, and witnessing transgressive gender performances may suspend the imaginal structures associated with polarized gender identity. Imaginal structures were thought of as aspects of experience powerful enough to mediate experience.

Each of the following four learnings had their own key triggering moment. It was essential in the understanding of all the data in support of each learning to thoroughly integrate and synthesize the corresponding key moment. All aspects of the research weekend and the follow-up meeting, some six weeks later, were videotaped. The videotaping was done by one of my research assistants. The 12-plus hours of video and the videographer/research assistant’s journaling of key moments via the camera movement of that video were an indispensable source of data. During the actual real-time research sessions, I was often preoccupied and focused on facilitating the activities, causing me to miss key moments. During the data analysis phase of my research, I came to rely on the video more and more. It was the video and the way my videographer/co-researcher captured the embodiment of affect, both during performance and the group sharing about those performances, that triggered Learning One. Learning One proposes
that performance allows us to imagine and observe ourselves and others within the realm of possibility. Performance is an engagement that moves us beyond what is actual and present into contact with the possible, and when this is embodied, performance brings the possible home.

The need to investigate and articulate Learning Two was triggered from data, again, made available because of the presence of the camera: the more theatrical use of the camera via an activity the men performed close to the very end of the second day of their time together. After the men had had extensive experiences in the witnessing, imagining, and enactment of transgressive gender performances and had shared a meal with each other, I had the men speak directly to the camera based on the following instructions: “Based on today’s activities, please choose either the observing I speaking to the doing I, or the doing I speaking to the observing I, and look into the camera and speak what that subjectivity needs to express. The men participated in this activity one at a time, privately, on the set of the previously witnessed and enacted Cloud Nine scenes. Learning Two proposes that volitional transgressive gender performances can bring into awareness the friend and the gatekeeper, and the role they play in transforming the adaptive identity that is gender. Adaptive identity was defined as a mask or persona assumed by individuals given a contextual, specific set of social constrictions.

Even though I was focused and preoccupied with facilitating the evoking experiences during the research weekend, there were very specific times that key intersubjective field moments did evoke, in me and my co-researchers, strong affective reactions. One such occurrence became the triggering moment for Learning Three. Close to the end of the afternoon of the second day, during the gender walking activity, the men
filled the room with such projected gender specific energy that all of the co-researchers expressed having been affected. Learning Three claims that volitional transgressive gender performances, with an engaged and non-critical observing I, question the origins and then expose the imaginal structures that serve as the scripts of our gender identities.

The video recording of the men’s experiences and their sharing of those experiences, once again, provided the triggering moment for Learning Four. The video of the men’s culminating sharings at the close of day two captures the vulnerability, confusion, and exhilaration seemingly caused by one participant’s absolute loss of gender identification. Learning Four suggests that volitional transgressive gender performances can momentarily suspend the imaginal structures and dichotomous thinking of our polarized gender identities, facilitating a state of not-knowing. This state of not-knowing portends a momentary collapse of adaptive identity and may facilitate a shift into participatory consciousness.

Over time, a synthesis of all four of these learnings resulted in the emergence of a Cumulative Learning, which suggests that that volitional transgressive gender performances, as viable polarized gender identity interventions, generate the psychic movement necessary to imagine and enact transformative alternative gender identities.
Chapter 1

1. The work of Suzanne J. Kessler and Wendy McKenna forms the basis for understanding of *Gender Attribution*. They choose “attribution” because “it implies an active process, based on information received, and involving implicit rules for assigning characteristics.” Suzanne J. Kessler and Wendy McKenna, *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), 18.

2. The work of Kessler and McKenna also form the basis of this overview of gender terminology.

3. A clear understanding of any individual and specific gender role is necessary to the understanding of how one defines the transgressive in *transgressive gender performance*.


10. This core definition of Imaginal structures is taken from a *Key Definitions-Aftab Omer* handout sent via e-mail to Institute students by Karen Jaenke during the summer of 2007.


15. Aftab Omer, *ITP Key Definitions* document received from Karen Jaenke via email (Petaluma, CA: Meridian University, October 19, 2002).

16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 67-68.
30. The multicultural and multiethnic nature of our society can also hold some valuable insights into the nature of gender identity. The existing research and findings into indigenous gender identities in both North America and Africa prove helpful in the understanding of the value of transgressive gender performances.
31. Throughout my 1200 hours with Catholic Charities of Humboldt and Del Norte Counties I saw some 14 clients per week during 2005 and 2006. I saw five couples a week; my work with these couples and with individual men has made the limiting nature of polarized gender performances ever more clear.

Chapter 2

1. See *The Myth of Two Minds* by Beryl Lieff Benderly for a very readable account of biologically related gender issue. He actually set about to write a different book and through his discoveries about socially constructed gender amazed himself and wrote what turns out to be both informative and entertaining.
3. See Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman, “Doing Gender,” Gender & Society, 1 (1987): 125-151 for an account of the distinctions between sex and gender made during these decades and the resulting confusion among the students exposed to these distinctions.


8. Ibid.


10. Ibid.


12. Beoku-Betts and Grant end their four-year term as editors of Gender and Society with a review and analysis of all the books on and about gender published during those four years.


20. Ibid., 17.

21. Ibid.


23. Both Fine and Fausto-Sterling do a complete meta-analysis of most studies suggesting sex differences.

24. Cordelia Fine, Delusions of Gender, 16.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., 195.
27. Ibid., 196.
28. Ibid., 195.
31. Fausto-Sterling writes a preface and an afterword to the 1992 edition in which she explains what motivated her to get back into this discourse.
32. I was directing *How I Learned to Drive* written by Paula Vogel. I found out they lived together and via my connection to Ms. Vogel got Fausto-Sterling’s email address.
34. The exact number of sexually dimorphically “deviant” births is of course difficult to estimate. Fausto-Sterling and her colleagues in their study entitled “How Sexually Dimorphic are We? Review and Synthesis” estimate that up to about two percent of all live births deviate in some way from the ideal male and female.
37. Jill Dolan and Catherine MacKinnon represent two very interesting and divergent views. Dolan, in her book *Presence and Desire* explores the potential for performance strategies and theatrical representation to intervene in normative constructs of sexuality and gender. MacKinnon argues, in her book *Feminism Unmodified*, that viewing gender and sex as a matter of sameness and difference—as virtually all existing theory and law have done—covers up the reality of gender, which is a system of social hierarchy, an imposed inequality of power.
39. Ibid., 81.
41. Ibid.
44. In the introduction to *Judith Butler*, Lloyd sources a number of Butler critics including Slavoj Zizek, Lynn Segal, and Sara Heinamaa.
46. Ibid.
47. See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s *Touching Feeling* (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2003) 129, for one example of Butler’s profound influence on post-modern thought.


50. Lloyd, *Judith Butler*.


55. Butler, *Gender Trouble*. By trouble she is often referring to the paradox that is gender, the existent/non-existent ‘woman’ in post-modern feminism.

56. See Joanne Trevenna, “Gender as Performance: Questioning the ‘Butlerification’ of Angela Carter’s Fiction,” *Journal of Gender Studies*, 11, no.3 (2002). For a complete discussion of this complex issue of what exactly exists or does not exist before the performance of gender.


60. Levy and Fivush, “Scripts and Gender,” 126-146.

61. Ibid.


64. There is a very good introduction to Goffman’s concept of identity performances in Catherine Kohler Riessman,“Performing Identities in Illness Narrative: Masculinity and Multiple Sclerosis,” *Qualitative Research*, 3, no I (2003): 5-33.


68. See Belinda Johnston, “Renaissance Body Matters: Judith Butler and the Sex that is One,” *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies*, 6, nos. 1/2 (2001). She takes some rather brave steps forward in this discussion regarding what the basis for the Butler gender performance might be. Be it script, schema, or imaginal structure, they are not of the soul.

69. Johnston’s discussion regarding the soul begins to sound very much like the work of Aftab Omer and the course work at Meridian University.


72. Ibid., 7.


74. Ibid., 188.


77. Ibid., 70-71.

78. Watkins uses the word dialogue within the context of two versions; the one being the more traditional relating to the notion of the extrovert and the other being related to Buber’s sense of relatedness or closely connected to the before mentioned absorption.

79. Omer, *ITP Key Definitions*.


83. See the work of Butler, Fausto-Sterling, Kascak, and particularly interesting to demonstrate the far reaching effect questioning these theories has, see Perry and Joyce and their article demonstrating Butler’s influence on the world of archaeology: “Providing a Past for “Bodies That Matter’: Judith Butler’s Impact on the Archaeology of Gender,” *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies*. 6, nos. 1/2 (2001).


86. Ibid.


88. Ibid. 238.

89. Lloyd, *Judith Butler*, 86.

90. Ibid.

91. Roscoe makes several specific references to Butler’s contribution to the re-thinking of gender variants in Native North American societies in *Changing Ones* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998) and Nanda references the post modern feminists for creating the atmosphere for a new take on cross cultural variations regarding gender in *Gender Diversity* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2000)


93. One of the more interesting and somewhat surprising studies indicated that, according to the longitudinal study done by Aube and Koestner, men experienced more severe results of non-traditional gender related interests and traits than did women. For the complete study and results see Jennifer Aube and Richard Koestner, “Gender Characteristics and Adjustment: A Longitudinal Study,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63, no. 3 (September 1992): 485-493.


97. Ibid.

98. For the Hegelson study see the previous citation. Cegalian and Lyons published their study “Gender Type and Comfort with Cross Dressers,” *Sex Roles*, 50, nos. 7/8 (April 2004): 539-546.


101. Ibid., 12.

102. Ibid., 3.

103. Ibid., 15.


106 Hare-Mustin and Marecek, *Making a Difference*, 54.

108. Ibid. 79.

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid.


112. See Donald M. Kaplan, *Clinical and Social Realities* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1995) and his chapter entitled “Theatre Architecture and the Primal Cavity.” This chapter was influential in how and when I set up the performance space for my “gender café” during the research weekend of this study.


114. Ibid., 13.

115. For an overview of Boal’s techniques in action with people from a host of different countries, see: Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (New York: TCG, 1985).


118. That world conference gave birth to the articles contained within Schechner’s *By Means of Performance*, which also contains a complete list of the international cast of actors, directors, anthropologists, sociologist, and psychologists attending the conference.


120. Ibid., 241.


123. Ibid., 261.


130. Ibid., 241.

131. Ibid., 190.

132. Harris, *Gender As Soft Assembly*, 93.

133 Ibid., 135.


135. Ibid.

136. Ibid., 243.

137. Ibid.

138. Ibid., 279.


141. Ibid., 44.

142. Gloria E. Anzaldua and Analouise Keating, eds., *This Bridge We Call Home* (New York: Routledge, 2002). From the preface written by Anzaldua entitled “(Un)natural Bridges, (Un)safe Spaces,” 3.

143. Omer, *ITP Key Definitions*.


146. Ibid., 105.

147. Ibid., 105.

148. Ibid., 107-115.


152. Omer, *ITP Key Definitions*.

153. Ibid.

155. Ibid., 70.


157. Ibid., 339-355.


159. Omer, *ITP Key Definitions*.


162. Ibid., 119.


165. Ibid.

166. Ibid.

167. Ibid., 120.

168. Ibid., 117.

169. Ibid., 105.


171. Ibid., 101.


173. Ibid., 372.

174. Anzaldua, *This Bridge We Call Home*, 3.


176. Roscoe, Nanda, Lang, and Williams spend considerable time in their individual presentations of North American Native gender diversity cautioning about language choices and reminding us about cultural relativity.


178. Ibid., 345.

180. Ibid.


185. Ibid.


187. Ibid., 7.


190. Ibid.


192. Ibid.


196. Lang lists as many cultural specific linguistic terms for berdache as possible in her *Men As Women, Women as Men*, including those of Northern California.

197. Ibid., xvii.


200. Ibid.


203. Nanda’s estimate based on his met-analysis of existing anthropological sources includes the most room for variable sources.


206. Ibid.


210. Ibid.


212. Lang, *Men As Women, Women As Men*, 4-6.

213. As a Direct result of a Cross Cultural Psychology course taught by Kimmy Johnson at Meridian University, a course during which she gave thanks to the indigenous people on whose land we resided; I returned to Humboldt State University and asked the president of my university to do the same.


219. Ibid.

220. Ibid.

221. Ibid.

222. Ibid., 128.

223. Ibid.

224. Ibid., 128-130.

225. Ibid., 347-348.

226. Ibid., 348.


232. Ibid., 159.

233. Ibid.

234. Roscoe, Changing Ones, 16.

235. Lang, Men As Women, Women As Men, 160.


237. Lang, Men As Women, Women As Men, 239.

238. Ibid., 240.

239. Ibid.

240. Ibid., 218-219.

241. Ibid.


244. Ibid., 252.

245. Ibid.


247. Ibid.

248. Ibid., 453.


250. Ibid.


252. Ibid.

253. Ibid.

254. Ibid., 455.

255. Ibid., 453.

256. Ibid., 452.

258. Ibid.


262. Ibid.


269. Ibid.

270. Ibid., 29.

271. Ibid.

272. Ibid., 58.

273. Ibid.


278. Niko Besnier documents his research in endnote #1 for his “Polynesian Gender Liminality Through Time and Space.” on page 554 of *Third Sex Third Gender*.

279. Ibid., 287.

280. Ibid.
281. Ibid.

282. Ibid., 296.

283. Ibid., 297.

284. Ibid.

285. Ibid., 298.

286. Ibid.

287. Ibid., 298.

288. Ibid., 299.

289. Ibid.

290. Ibid.

291. Nanda, Gender Diversity, 64.


293. Nanda, Gender Diversity, 64.

294. Ibid., 67.


296. Suzanne J. Kessler and Wendy McKenna, Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach, 164.


Chapter 3

1. Dissertation Handbook, 64.


Chapter 4

1. Omer, ITP Key Definitions.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

7. Omer, *ITP Key Definitions*.
9. Ibid., 25.
10. Ibid., 25.
15. Omer, *ITP Key Definitions*.
18. Omer, *ITP Key Definitions*.
21. Omer, *ITP Key Definitions*.
22. Ibid.
25. Omer, *ITP Key Definitions*.
27. Omer, *ITP Key Definitions*.


31. Omer, *ITP Key Definitions*.

32. Ibid.


34. Omer, *ITP Key Definitions*.


37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. O’Kane, *Sacred Chaos: Reflections on God’s Shadow and the Dark Self*, 81

40. Ibid.

41. Omer, *ITP Key Definitions*.

42. Ibid.


46. Ibid., 39.


48. Ibid.


51. Ibid, 7.

Chapter 5


3. Ibid, 16.

4. Ibid, 7.


9. Ibid., 84.

10 Ibid.


17. Sophocles, “King Oedipus,” *Playreader’s Repertory*, 18


22. The program may be viewed at crr.math.Arizona.edu/genderkeynote.pdf and purchased at www.underoneroof.org.


24. Ibid.
REFERENCES


Plumwood, Val. “Do We Need a Sex/Gender Distinction?” *Radical Philosophy* 51, (Spring 1989).


