

Kate Bornstein: A Transgender Transsexual Postmodern Tiresias

From Shannon Bell

Gender School

"Sex is fucking, everything else is gender" Kate told us on the first day of gender school: a four part, sixteen hour Cross-Gendered Performance Workshop which was part of Buddies in Bad Times Theatre summer school program. Kate is a Buddhist M-to-F transsexual performance artist and gender educator. Kate has been both male and female and now is not one nor the other, but both-and-neither, as indicated in the title of her play *The Opposite Sex...is Neither!*

The Cross-Gender Workshop aimed at deconstructing gender: shedding gender, trying on a new gender; getting to zero point and then constructing a new gender. The first section of the workshop dealt with gender theory and learning how to build gender cues: physical cues - body, posture, hair, clothing, voice, skin, movement, space, weight; behavioral cues - manners, decorum, protocol, deportment; textual cues - stories, histories, associates, relationships; power dynamics - top, bottom, entitlement/not; and sexual orientation (to whom am I attracted).

This was preparation for constructing a character which we would work on performing for the following three sessions. At the final class we did a one hour Zen walk across the theatre stage. For the first half-hour of the walk we shed all our acquired gender characteristics; for the second half we took on our character's gender traits.

The only constraint on selecting a character was that it be some version of the opposite gender. I decided on the male object of my desire: I had done this before, but I had never stood in the shoes of the object of my desire: a butch chickenhawk. I had usually done boy: the crossover from woman to boy is pretty easy for a butch-femme, and besides: when women do male, our male often comes out boy due to similarity in skin, size, weight and energy. This time I was going to do the sort of male that brings me to my knees: the sardonic, gruff, older boy lover in the tradition of Jean Genet, Allen Ginsberg, and a couple of less famous, but no less impressive boy lovers whom I have had the pleasure of sharing with boys.

Hair and clothing - no problem: the striped prison T-shirt that Genet was famous for: leather jacket, cords, police boots, hair slicked straight back. I practiced leaning hands in pockets like Genet on the cover of Querrelle. I got the sardonic smile. I practiced walking in the footsteps of a gay friend who is into young men; modeled his body, his deportment, mannerism, voice; lifted some authentic boy loving poetry, borrowed some of Genet's personal history and took Ginsberg's age and his presence. **Locating myself in** Genet's stomping grounds of the 1930's and 1940's, the Barrio Chino in Barcelona, I reminisced and cruised the imaginary young men. I spit my words: "There was the French language and there was me. I put one into the other and now it is finished - C'est fini"; gruffly solicited company: "Got some time? Want to go?" I recited poetry fragments to the phantom boys of previous years:

> Child of Michelangelo Turn On Light the world.

Soft hard sphinx, emerald wild rose, They won't domesticate you. Glowing defiant soft green, Excellent Brat.

Dear Chicken

Delicate brown-eyed boy, Body full of charm. Mischievous, funny boy, Big tits of iron.

Funny young boy, Beautiful bulging eyes. Funny young boy, Beautiful boy growing old.

I disclosed my bisexual desire, so common among chickenhawks: "The powerful whores, the rough, hairy sailors, the smooth-skinned boy-beauties, we ate together, drank together, fucked together. God, how I miss them."

I never did fully get the character; I got the form and the voice for the first performance, and as the character continued to elude me I got glimpses of the inside of a desire which although frequently enjoyed isn't accepted in this society of same-age, same-class, mirror-self sexual narcissism. I got the sorrow of someone who knows the beauty and knows society's corruption of it: "I saw the beautiful chickens turned off by the state." As Kate was directing me: "you are old, feel the arthritis in your hand, the burning in your prostate," "you haven't scored for a while, feel the desperate desire," "cruise with your eyes," "walk with the weight lower in your body, show us a glimpse of the time you had with the sailors, boys and whores and how much you miss those days," "I want you to go hang out on the Second Cup steps in Boy Town and watch the hawks cruise the young guys, see how constant it is" - the gender of my character, like my own gender, was dissipating, devolving. Kate kept asking each of us what our character was fighting for. Mine was fighting for the right to be. This is Kate's fight too, and a fight she wages for fellow sexual outlaws. Her San Francisco theatre company is named Outlaw Productions.

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The Opposite Sex ... Is Neither!

The Opposite Sex ... Is Neither! is a one-woman performance piece written and performed by Kate Bornstein.

Maggie, a goddess-in-training, "has taken a wrong turn at the moon and ends up in late 20th century North America." Her current goddess training exercise is to allow her body to act as a conduit for seven people who are "neither male nor female, neither here nor there, and neither dead nor alive." Maggie is to hold the gateways of higher awareness open for them as they each tell their own story of crossing gender. The gateways are "no-space, no-time" where truth can be experienced.

There is Ruby, the she-male drag queen performer: "tits, big hair, lots of make-up and a dick," who is dying, her body ripped apart by AIDS lesions. There is Kat who enters Maggie's body as she is waking up from sex change surgery (M-to-F); Kat, a compulsive support group joiner, concludes that "gender's just something else to belong to." Along comes Billy Tipton, the passing he-she jazz musician, who lived her life as a man because "swing is for men." Billy is dead but has been waiting in trans-space to tell his story. Mary who used to be Peter drops into Maggie's body on her way to her surgeon's office. Mary is a devoutly religious transgenderist afraid she'll end up in hell for her transgression. And there is Anaya, a post-operative M-to-F who passes through Maggie as she is dying from being beaten for never passing, for always being outside. Anaya confesses: "I honestly never believed I was a man. I don't think I ever really believed I was a woman. Right now, I don't think I am one or the other." Then there is Dean, a preop F-to-M, who at the point of surgery decides to stick with her pussy: "Fuck the penis who needs it?" Dean had been told by society and by lovers that he couldn't be a man because he didn't have a penis: "they never said it was because I have a vagina. No! It's always about penises[.]"

As Maggie coaxes the no-show seventh gender outlaw to enter her body, she realizes she is the seventh: "Not dead, not alive! Not here, not there! Not one, not the other! ... it's me?!?!?"

Kate Bornstein, in *The Opposite Sex ... Is Neither!*, has provided a typology of difference in gender difference and has presented the spiritual side of that state of ambiguity occupied by transgenderists, transvestites, transsexuals, cross-dressers, and all those in between one thing and the other.

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Kate on Kate

Shannon: In the Cross-Gender Performance workshop you gave some very right-on definitions of gender.

Kate: Gender is simply a way to classify people. Depending on the time and the culture, there are different criteria for the classification. In this culture, at this time, it is genital. Gender assignment happens at birth when the doctor inspects for a penis. The infant is assigned gender corresponding to the presence or absence of the penis.

Shannon: How does one go about deconstructing gender?

Kate: The first thing to do is to ask the question: What is gender? This is a question that does not get asked; people mostly ask "what is the difference between men and women?" They begin by presupposing a specific bi-polar gender system. The first step in taking gender apart is to ask the question; the second step is to get other people to ask the question. As Maggie says in *The Opposite Sex ... Is Neither!*, "a civilization is more well-known by the questions it asks than by the answers it comes up with." I don't think "what is gender" is an answerable question. I think the answer is that there is no such thing as gender, other than what we say it is.

Shannon: I really think gender is something to play with. Maybe this is because over the last eight or nine years I have hung with a lot of people who have been playing with gender. What is shocking to me is when you see people totally genderized who aren't playing; gender is such a parody of itself.

Kate: I love watching people play with gender and I think that is great. Camp could be the leading edge in deconstructing gender. Recently, I have begun to feel the sorrow that comes from oppression based on gender. So I am not in a playful mood these days. I have been and I am sure I will be again. But right now I am meeting more and more people who have been crushed not as men, not as women, but as neither. When people have been crushed all their lives for being an effeminate man and then they get crushed for being a drag queen and then they get crushed for being a transsexual woman, where do they go? It gets really sad to see these people dying.

I like the idea of playing with gender. I do it in my art. But in my life it is not as playful right now. I am hoping enough people ask the question about gender so that I am free to play with gender again.

Shannon: I guess it is kind of a privilege to be able to play with gender.

Kate: In a way, yes. The stakes are a little bit higher when you get frightened if you don't have a safe base to come back to. It can get really frightening. You can't say "Oops, I was playing." Because when you go home at night there is nothing to return to except what you have been playing at.

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Shannon: In your performance piece *The Opposite Sex ... Is Neither!* Maggie, the goddess-in-training who finds herself in the 20th century finds the societal importance ascribed to gender very funny, and the fact that there are only two genders equally silly. Kate, you are pretty strongly female looking: you are gorgeous, have long honey-red hair, a husky sultry voice, large breasts and big green eyes, I mean WOW. Do you really think of yourself as both male and female?

Kate: Oh yeah. I don't think my breasts are large. You know, no one has said I have really large breasts, but since I came to T.O., about six people have told me "you have really large breasts." I didn't get implants or anything, they grew. It is not like I decided this is the size I want. Do I really think I am not a man and not a woman? I know that I am not a man and most of the time I feel like I am not a woman. I keep one foot in the place called woman because otherwise sometimes you can blow away into madness. There is no other place to touch down in this culture, except among people who are laughing about gender: the drag-queens, the cool butches, and other transgenderists who are laughing and not trying to be one or the other.

Shannon: When you are neither are you a mix of the two? What does it mean to be neither?

Kate: It means I am not bound by the social constrictions of either gender. To be a man or to be a woman for me at this point in my life would be one closet or another.

Everyone I have talked to has conceived some sort of dissatisfaction with gender, be it what they feel they are required to do in this culture, or what they feel they are being inhibited from doing. Most people have a bone to pick with gender in some form. When that dissatisfaction can't be cured by buying enough gender-specific products or when it can't be silenced by the state or the medical profession or by religion or peer pressure, then it becomes known as gender dysphoria. I make it clear that I am a transsexual by choice and not by pathology.

There are more and more people who are questioning gender, and not by dint of Gender Studies Programs. There they mainly focus on what is the difference. They don't study gender. There is a field that is questioning gender and that is ethnomethodology. Kessler and McKenna's *An Ethnomethodological Approach* (1982) deserves tons of credit. Part of the dedication in the book that I am writing is to them.

Shannon: Do you have a title for your manuscript?

Kate: The title is *Gender Outlaw*. It is an analysis that places gender in the same arena as apartheid, Scientology; it places it as a class system, not something that is natural; it analyzes all the cult phenomena associated with gender. I know cults from the inside. For years and years I was a leading spokesperson for a cult: Scientology. I was a big time Scientologist for a long, long time.

Shannon: That is amazing. You seem perfectly normal.

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Kate: Four people from my past in Scientology came to the show last night. We all went over to their house after and stayed until 1 a.m., reminiscing. I left Scientology about ten years ago. I was a male when I was with Scientology. I was in sales. I used to go around and give sales lectures. I studied Jerry Fallwell and other televangelists.

Gender is a cult. Membership in gender is not based on informed consent. There is no way out without being ridiculed and harassed. There is peer pressure that is being brought to bear on everyone in this cult. There is no humor about gender. The only humor is from the people who transgress gender. My book will be the first written on gender by a twentieth century transsexual.

Shannon: You could really popularize Scientology.

Kate: Please!

Shannon: No wait, can you imagine? You could appeal to a whole new set of recruits. A male spokesperson for Scientology ending up an SM Lesbian Transsexual. How Cool.

Shannon: What sort of process did you go through to become a female?

Kate: That is the subject of my next show - *How To Be A Girl in Six Easy Lessons*. I went to a voice teacher, for example. Every person I went to in order to learn how to be a woman, to learn how to act and appear as a woman, took me too far into the construct, too far into the lie, into the closet. At voice lessons I was taught to speak in a very high pitched, very breathy, very sing-song voice and to tag questions onto the end of each sentence. And I was suppose to smile all the time when I was talking. And I said "Oh, I don't want to talk like that!" The teachers assumed that you were going to be a heterosexual woman. No one was going to teach you to be a lesbian because lesbian was as big an outlaw as transsexual. I actually learned how to talk by listening to Laurie Anderson. If you listen to my voice, I do hit my end consonants very strongly, like Anderson.

Shannon: What about your female mannerisms, how did you acquire those?

Kate: It is a matter of juggling cues. Passing is the whole thing. Cultures from time immemorial have always had people who have been neither one nor the other. It is our culture that is telling them to be invisible. All therapists, as good and as noble as they might be, counsel transsexuals to tell a little lie. They say don't ever say you are a transsexual; you are a real woman (or real man) now. You have a whole new past. People are going to ask you about when you were a little girl and you are going to say "when I was a little girl." Transsexuality is the only condition in Western culture for which the therapy is to lie. Every transsexual is counseled not to reveal their transsexuality, but to devise a past for themselves.

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www,mental-backup.de Kuhdyck 45a D - 47669 Wachtendonk Seite 6 von 6 info@mental-backup.de Tel.: +49 (0)2836 - 97 10 59 Fax: +49 (0)2836 - 97 10 57 Transsexuals (M-to-F) get a lot of shit for walking into women's bars and into gay men's bars (if they are F-to-M transsexuals). They don't talk, they try to pass, and that pisses off a lot of lesbians and gay men. There is friction. And I think there is responsibility on both sides. It is not just those cold-hearted lesbians or gay men, how dare they pick on another minority group. No. They see people who are lying. I would be offended if some transsexual comes up to me and says "I'm not a transsexual." And they have. I get real offended. I say "go live your life," I can't deal with lies. I have to temper this with realizing that not only does the entire culture say that they are invisible and don't exist, but their therapists for years have drummed it into their heads that they had to lie.

So how did I learn to be a woman? I never did. I learned to be a passing transsexual. I learned that if I am on the phone with someone and they say "Good-afternoon sir," I will take my voice up a little bit higher and say "Hi, it's not sir." I balance and juggle my cues constantly. How did you learn to be a woman?

Shannon: Gay men taught me to be the kind of woman I am now. And more recently, I learned how to be a goddess from Annie Sprinkle: I took her ten hour Slut and Goddess Transformation Salon and also from just being her friend.

Shannon: You were a het guy until what age?

Kate: Yo, what do you want to know for? Until I was thirty-five or thirty-six.

Shannon: That's amazing. You look younger than thirty-six now. When did you have your change, last year?

Kate: I'm forty-four.

Shannon: Did you look young as a het man?

Kate: No, I looked a lot older.

Shannon: How do you account for looking younger as a woman than as a man?

Kate: Part of it is hormonal. I'm on daily estrogen which smooths out the skin quite a bit. In this culture woman is equated with young, woman is equated with child; it is the wideeyed innocent look for women. It says child. More exposed skin says child. Longer hair says child.

Shannon: You changed genders and you became a lesbian. Did your taste in women change?

Kate: No, but I was finally able to be with the women I really wanted to be with. I can't tell you how many women I approached when I was a straight man only to find out they were lesbian.

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Shannon: What is your taste in women?

Kate: I like really creative women. It doesn't matter butch or femme. I get really attracted to femme - not particularly high femme. I like three-quarters of the way in either direction. This is real sexy to me. I like a little bit of danger. I'm into S/M and I am a switch. I appreciate someone who is into switching.

Shannon: Were you into S/M as a guy?

Kate: No, only in fantasy. It took quite a while after I was a woman to come to terms with S/M because to me, topping was equated with being male. I had to get over that before I could top.

Shannon: What did you like about being a male?

Kate: My stock answer is I like being able to write my name in the snow. I like the safety. You can walk through the streets with impunity pretty much as a guy.

Shannon: What do you like about being a woman?

Kate: The freedom, the freedom to play with roles, the freedom to play on a whole spectrum, the ability to talk and the ability to listen.

Shannon: And what do you like about being a lesbian?

Kate: The ability to be on par with a lover.

Shannon: Kat, in *The Opposite Sex ... Is Neither!* says "no matter who wins your revolution, I am still an outlaw." What does it mean to be a sexual outlaw?

Kate: A sexual outlaw is a person who breaks sexual, or in this case, gender rules. The prime directive of gender in this culture is, if you are a woman, thou shalt not be a man and if you are a man, thou shalt not be a woman. And in sex, thou shall be heterosexual.

Shannon: The 90's concept of Queer, Queer Theory and Queer Identity is supposedly more inclusive. Are transsexuals still pretty much outlaws within Queer or are they more accepted?

Kate: There has been a lot of debate recently about inclusion. In Minneapolis and Seattle, Gay Day was renamed Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Day; whereas, the big National March on Washington had a huge debate and ended up being Lesbian, Gay, and Bi - not bisexual just Bi - and not Transgender. Apparently, there were cheers when people heard that it wasn't going to include transgender. I was kind of hurt by this at first and I made several calls to the Coalition. They haven't returned my calls. But I stopped to realize: wait a minute, wait a minute, why should lesbians and gays include transgendered people? Not all transgendered people are lesbian and gay. In fact, the majority probably are not.

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www,mental-backup.de Kuhdyck 45a D - 47669 Wachtendonk Seite 8 von 8 info@mental-backup.de Tel.: +49 (0)2836 - 97 10 59 Fax: +49 (0)2836 - 97 10 57 The majority of people who play with gender are probably straight. I am including male and female heterosexual cross-dressers. This being the case, why do transgendered people gravitate to and expect inclusion in the Lesbian and Gay Community? Because lesbians and gays are a sexual minority and the words sex and gender have been used interchangeably for so long. No, this is too analytical. But then I realized where these two groups, transgenderists and lesbians and gays overlap; it is scary where they overlap and no one is going to like my answer.

The definition of gender in this culture includes the mandate of heterosexuality. To be a woman means to love men, to be a man means to love women. So in fact, every lesbian and every gay man is transgressing gender roles and gender rules. Whereas not all transgendered people are lesbian and gay, all lesbians and gays are transgendered. It is not a matter of lesbians and gays including transgendered people. It is a matter of transgendered people including lesbians and gays, and no one is going to like [that].

What this does is call into question identity and it could be seen as making light of the lesbian and gay movements. It's not. It is just saying what it is that we have in common. It is saying yes there is a lesbian movement, yes there is a gay movement, yes there is a lesbian and gay movement, yes there is a transgendered movement. What do these four movements have in common? They fuck with gender roles. Nothing else do they have in common.

I know why transgendered and transsexual people aren't included. It gets back to passing: you have to be a man, you have to be a woman. But my existence within a lesbian and gay community is threatening to the very foundations of that community. Here I am: I am saying that I'm not a man and I'm not a woman. So what happens when a lesbian is attracted to me? I call into question her lesbian identity.

It is a problem for anyone whose identity is wrapped up in a bipolar gender system. It is fascinating that we would pin all of our sexual orientation on the gender of sexual partners rather than a person's age or the sexual activity - what the person does in sex. This is why I really like the S/M world. People into S/M are pinning their sexual orientation on what they do and not who they do it with, necessarily. This is a tidal wave about to crash.

I have had lovers who would say to me "you are such a beautiful woman." I thought "Oh, that is so great," and we'd have wonderful sex. But then I would start to talk, I'd say "I just realized ..." and start talking about some of the stuff I have been discussing here. The lover would go "No, no, you are a woman now!" And I would say, "Well, no I am not. And I do want to talk about being a boy and playing Davey Crockett with the little boys in the neighborhood."

It wasn't only when I'd talk about my past but when I would do a play like *Hidden: A Gender* where I played a chiefly male character. The character I played was a villain. He was basically the voice of all my internalized fears about my "gender disorder." I made this character a cross between Geraldo Rivera and a nineteenth century medicine show barker. He is peddling this stuff called gender defender: the pink bottle is for the girls and the blue bottle is for the men.

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www,mental-backup.de Kuhdyck 45a D - 47669 Wachtendonk Seite 9 von 9 info@mental-backup.de Tel.: +49 (0)2836 - 97 10 59 Fax: +49 (0)2836 - 97 10 57 I had studied the barkers; they would invent illnesses. I asked myself what is a horrible name for this illness and I called it gender blur. This name has caught on. I see it surfacing in articles around the Bay Area and I saw it in a book. The term came from this horrible character.

Shannon: This is one of the things I really like about postmodernity. No one can hang onto a term or an idea for more than a minute because someone else is already onto it. And often in the next usage the whole meaning is inverted or subverted.

Kate: There is a transgender liberation happening. Leslie Kleinberg writes about it in her book *Transgender Liberation*. Within the transgender movement there is a hierarchy: at the top of the heap are the post-operative transsexuals who pass, next down are those who don't quite pass as well but a repost-operative and then down and down, depending where you are standing. If you are standing in the shoes of a she-male, that is the top of the heap. At the bottom of anyone's heap is the closet case who puts on his wife's panties when she is away on a business trip.

Sandy Stones's theory, in The Empire Strikes Back - A Post Transsexual Manifesto, is that the next step in the evolution of the transgender movement is the transsexual who does not pass, the transsexual who does not assimilate, the transsexual who is not ashamed. Marjorie Garber, in *Vested Interests*, has pegged the position of the transgendered person, the cross-dresser, whatever you want to call it, as a signifier of boundary crossing, as existing at the point of an identity of crisis. Garber proceeds to examine plays, books, films, paintings and performance and finds that at the intersection of other identities - race, class, nationality, religion, there is the crossdresser.

I think the place of the transgender person in our culture today is the place of the *fool*: the jester, the trickster, someone who can laugh. This is where performance art fits in. It is here that we can find a lot of fools.

Shannon: When did you begin gender performance or performing gender?

Kate: I went from being male to not-male, to female, and now to not-female. I started performing when I found out people were interested in the question of gender.

Shannon: What is the condition of being not-male?

Kate: In this culture it would be called androgyny but still on the male side of it.

Shannon: After you became female did you embrace femaleness for awhile?

Kate: I tried to: I tried it all on. Like my character Kat says: "I tried on your names, I sang your hit parade ... " I thought I am a woman so I'll buy the clothes, I'll be a power dresser. I was at IBM when I did my changeover.

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Shannon: How did people react?

Kate: For the most part supportively. It was headquarters that flipped out. They sent vice-presidents up once a week, three weeks in a row, to check me out, to see if I was wearing purple eye shadow and feather boas.

Shannon: What is the state of not-female?

Kate: I'm kind of treading water. I think it is more fluid for me now. It goes into a spiritual space. There is no way to pin that down except to say "it is not here, it is not there, it is not one, it is not the other." That is the whole point of *The Opposite Sex ... Is Neither*!

Shannon: This is a real cross-over between Buddhism and postmodernism because you get to the not-I, the not-gender.

What wisdom have you acquired by living as both a man and a woman?

Kate: I gained the ability to question gender. Being not-one and not-the-other is a space where you can make a lot of realizations. It's what Maggie says at the beginning of *The Opposite Sex ... Is Neither!*

See - there are these gateways in time and space. They're not here. They're not anywhere... This is no-space, this is no-time. It's where we can really experience truth... In my last life as a human, I would look for these gateways. And whenever I'd find one, I'd stay inside it as long as I could.

I constantly do that, I constantly look for this point of light, this point of being neither.

I do rituals before each performance. One of the most joyful times is when there is really no boundary between me as a performer and the audience. That adds to the noboundaries of the script and the no-boundaries of my life. I like to include the audience in the performance. From my S/M background it has to be consensual. So I try to give the audience a role that is okay for them to play. In *The Opposite Sex ...Is Neither!* it is "please witness." When the audience is included and acknowledged, constantly acknowledged for being there, the boundary breaks down.

Shannon: Do you miss your penis?

Kate: No, not at all.

Shannon: God, I would really miss my pussy if I had a sex change. You know if you put a speculum sideways in a woman's pussy you can see the erectile tissue and muscle surrounding the female eurethra. It looks very much like an internal cock when it is erect.

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Kate: That is what mine is like. What they do for a M-To-F sex change is cut the penis open, scrape out the inside and then turn it inside out so that the outside of my penis is now the walls of my vagina. The head of my penis is now my cervix. You have more sensation in your clitoris than I do because mine is reconstructed from my perineum. It has lots of nerves and is fine, but yours is more sensitive. However, the walls of my vagina are more sensitive than the walls of your vagina.

Shannon: What about your cervix or previous penis head. Is it sensitive?

Kate: Yes, we have been searching and have just found the right sized dildo, which is great because pounding hurts. What I have is a cul-de-sac which just goes so far. I still have a form of ejaculation from the Cowper's glands. It comes out of my urethra.

After the interview I go to see *The Opposite Sex ... Is Neither!* again. I wanted to see Kate channel Billy Tipton, the passing he-she 1920's jazz musician, one more time. Kate can read her audience: as Billy says:

"My wife left me after sixteen years. See, I never told her I was a woman. After I died, and word got around, she swore she never knew. That's a mighty big regret I have, mighty big. If you see her, you tell her I am so goddamn sorry I never told her. Her name is Kitty. [Billy looking straight at me] You tell her that, please. Please?"

I whisper "yes," in a sort of inaudible hoarse whisper that carries into the space between her words and my mind. Can Kate tell that there is something about Billy, his voice, his maleness, channeled through her gorgeous female body, that ignites a sense of awe in my clit and continues up the back of my spine and out the top of my head? Maybe it's because Billy is such a mind-fuck, a trickster through and through. Billy begins his exit:

"I had to be a man ... I have been readin' all the newspapers since I died, and they like to make it out I did it for my music. I love my music, but lookin' back, it wasn't everything. Maybe I just simply loved my Kitty. Maybe I was just one ornery old bulldagger who got away with it all."

Kate Bornstein is a performance artist, actor and writer. *Gender Outlaw: on Men, Women and the Rest of Us* was recently published by Routledge.

Shannon Bell is a pastiche feminist philosopher. She teaches classical political theory and feminist theory. Her book, *Reading, Writing and Rewriting the Prostitute Body* was published by Indiana University Press, 1994. The Interview with Kate Borenstein was originally published in *The Last Sex: Feminism and Outlaw Bodies*, Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, editors. New York: St.Martin's Press.

Note: All references from *The Opposite Sex...Is Neither!* are from Kate Bornstein's script, copyright 1991, 1992.

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