Transsexualism Encyclopedia Article

Transsexualism

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.



Contents

Transsexualism Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Transsexualism.....3

Transsexualism

Condition where an individual wishes to live as if he or she were of the opposite gender, sometimes seeking surgical procedures to change from one sex to the other.

Transsexualism, a condition in which the individual defines him or herself as male or female in opposition to their physical gender, or feels strongly that he or she wants to live as a member of the other gender, is rare. By some estimates, no more than 1 person in 350,000 believes he or she was born the wrong gender.

As these few people progress through childhood, their inability to relate to their own gender identity increases. Some seek the advice of a physician, and by the time they reach early adulthood, begin to take medical action to alter their gender. Since more males than females are diagnosed as transsexuals, it is more common for males to receive hormone treatment to develop secondary sex characteristics, such as breasts. In some cases, a surgical procedure is performed to alter the male sex organs to physically complete the transformation from one gender to the other.

At the Netherlands Institute for Brain Research in Amsterdam, scientists studied six male-to-female transsexuals and found evidence that a section of the hypothalamus that controls sexual function appeared to be more like the type found in women than that found in men. Because human **embryos** destined to become males differentiate early in the development process, the Netherlands study raises the question of whether the developing embryo could receive mixed hormonal signals to portions of the brain and the developing genitalia. Thus, as of the late 1990s, research seems to indicate that there may be physical reasons for transsexualism.

For Further Study

Periodicals

Glausiusz, Josie. "Transsexual Brains." *Discover* 17, January 1996, p. 83.

Gorman, Christine. "Trapped in the Body of a Man?" *Time* 146, November 13, 1995, pp. 94+.