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TRANSITIONS:
HOW INDIVIDUALS IN THE TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY USE IMPRESSION
MANAGEMENT

by

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B.S. University of Central Florida, 2008

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

There exists an extensive body of literature focusing on impression management, with numerous studies addressing the effects of gender performance on members of the GLBT community. Despite a growing body of literature that centers on the differences between the genders, there exists a lack of research regarding the transgender community's ability to use impression management. This exploratory study addresses subjective experiences regarding transgender identity, and concentrates on self-definition and impression management in everyday life. It was found through interviews that "transition" is a temporary state that relies heavily on "passing" through impression management to create a new gender status. Once the new gender status is achieved, passing is no longer an issue and impression management is once again implemented in a more routine way similar to that of those who are not transgender.

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INTRODUCTION

This study will explore the complexities and challenges faced by transgender individuals as they engage in impression management. [1]Although most individuals spend considerable time each day grooming, speaking, eating and engaging in other activities in specific ways in hopes to create the right impression, individuals who are transgender can have a particularly difficult job of impression management. Gender "displays" can be more challenging for transgender individuals because, if found artificial, they can create a stigmatized identity.

Proponents of feminist theories (Bettchel 2010, Butler 2004, Hawesworth 2001, Heyes 2003, and Nameste 2009) were some of the first to analyze the transgender phenomenon in a sociological way (Hird 2002). Applying queer theory to the transgender experience (Halberstam 2005, Hausman 2001, and Mcphail 2004) closely followed. The central themes that are found in such studies are the concepts of "authenticity" or the "realness" (Hird 2002) of a gendered experience. These studies can also focus on breaking away from the gender binary in Western culture to promote more fluidity in our ideas of gender.

Through a lens of performance, using the ideas of Erving Goffman (1959), Garfinkle (1967) and West and Zimmerman (1987), there is a potential to reveal how these individuals construct personal identities through the interaction of self and society (Hird 2002). As such, the transgender community offers a unique opportunity to examine the achievement of a new gender through interaction and the management of alternative sex categories and gender on a daily basis (Gagne, Tewksbury, and McGaughney 1997).

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[1] The word "transgender" encompasses a wide range of "gender-benders" and includes transsexuals, transvestites, cross-dressers, drag queens and drag kings (McPhail 2004). The term transgender was chosen over transsexual because I feel that transexual is a narrower term that may not be how individuals define themselves.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological and Medical Criteria

Transgender individuals who wish to legally and publicly transition into a claimed gender identity have to be diagnosed with gender identity disorder. This is a disorder that is categorized in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV (DSM IV) as strong and persistent cross-gender identification, which is a desire or the insistence that one is of the other sex (American Psychiatric Association 2000). According to the DSM IV, this identification must not be a desire to obtain perceived advantages of the other sex but a persistent discomfort or sense of inappropriateness in the gender role of the sex they were born.

Gender Identity Disorder has a specific, yet flexible, treatment plan to help people who are diagnosed with the disorder. *The Standards of Care for Gender Identity Disorders* (Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association 2001) was originally written in 1979 and has since undergone its sixth revision in 2001. In this document you can find concepts that are commonly used, assessments, requirements for treatments and follow up care. The use of a formal diagnosis can help in offering comfort, allow health coverage for treatments, and guide research for future treatments. The goal of the document is to outline the parameters of professional assistance for people in treatment. The expected end result of treatment is a lasting personal comfort with the individual's gender.

For the purposes of this study it is important to understand the process that transgender people undergo. A person is diagnosed with a gender identity disorder when they pass what is called a clinical threshold. This threshold is when concerns about gender identity persist through a person's development, become the central aspect of life, and prevent the establishment of a gendered identity. Once the diagnosis is made there is a three step

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therapeutic approach, known commonly as the triadic therapy: hormone treatment, real-life experience, and surgery to modify sex characteristics. Psychotherapy is not used as a way to cure the person but as a step towards a more realistic chance of finding success in not only gender identity expression but other aspects of life as well. During therapy a person is given options for gender adaption. These options are used to aid in acquiring skill and security in a new gender role. Some of these activities included in the standards of care (Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association 2001: 12-13) are:

Biological Males:

1. Cross-dressing: unobtrusively with undergarments; unisexually; or in a feminine fashion;

2. Changing the body through: hair removal through electrolysis or body waxing; minor

3. plastic cosmetic surgical procedures;

4. Increasing grooming, wardrobe, and vocal expression skills.

Biological Females:

1. Cross-dressing: unobtrusively with undergarments, unisexually, or in a masculine

fashion;

2. Changing the body through breast binding, weight lifting, applying theatrical facial hair

3. Padding underpants or wearing a penile prosthesis.

Both Genders:

1. Learning about transgender phenomena from: support groups and gender

networks, communication with peers via the Internet, studying these Standards
of Care, relevant lay and professional literatures about legal rights pertaining to
work, relationships, and public cross-dressing;

2.   Involvement in recreational activities of the desired gender;

3.   Episodic cross-gender living.

Hormones are an important part of triadic therapy and the transition experience of transgender people. Cross sex hormone treatments improve the quality of life and aid in anatomical and psychological wellbeing. The desired physical effect of hormone treatment can take up to two years of continuous treatment. For biological males, treatment with estrogen, the female sex hormone, results in: redistribution of body fat, breasts, decreased upper body strength, and other typical female characteristics. For biological females, treatment with testosterone, the male sex hormone, results in: deeper voice, breast atrophy, increased body hair, and decreased body fat. For males undergoing hormone therapy all the changes are reversible except for the breast growth and in females most body changes are permanent. The satisfaction of the side effects of hormones is an intricate part of the person's identity as a member of the preferred sex and gender. Not all patients that undergo hormone therapy choose to have genital reassignment surgery.

The second part of triadic therapy is the part that is important for the focus of this research, the lived experience. This is the act of creating a gender role and presentation in everyday life. This is essential to the person transitioning because there are immediate personal and social consequences. As stated in the standards of care (Harry Benjamin International Gender Dysphoria Association 2001: 17), the person must be able to handle the following in a new gendered role:

1.   Maintain employment;

2.   Function as a student;

3.   Function in a community based activity;

4.   Undertake some combination of 1-3;

5.   Acquire a legal gender identity appropriate first name;

6.   Provide documentation that persons other than the therapist know that they are functioning in the desired gender role.

The real life experience is a test of the person's capacity to function in the desired gender role and to show that they have social, economic and psychological support. It is important to understand the tools that are given, as well as how they are utilized by these individuals, as they transition from one gender identity to another. The previously outlined steps are what a person must go through to be legally recognized as a sex that differs from his/her birth sex. For this study the sample is being drawn from the people who are participating in these steps to legally become the other sex.

Impression Management

Impression management is the process that individuals engage in to control the impressions others form of them. This process is important because the impression that is made by a person is how others decide to evaluate and treat to that person. The description of one's self through attitude, speech, dress and mannerisms allows an individual to stake claim to a personal as well as public image (Goffman 1959). This form of self-presentation is used by others to decide the person's place in society, the kind of interaction that can take place and the construction of social reality (Goffman 1959). Impressions are not only created through physical attributes but also through role, status, interests and other aspects of what creates an

individual. These presentations are not a deception but a tactical decision of which behavior will create the desired reaction.

Erving Goffman (1959) discusses impression management as the process by which people in everyday life work to convey desired impressions to others around them, just as actors on a stage play a role. Every role has two parts, the character and the performance. The character is how the person believes his or her self to be and can be equated to the "self," in Goffman's conceptualization. The performance is when a person is introduced to an environment, and the self needs to be presented in the form of a public performance. Through this performance an individual is able to ascribe self into personal character (Goffman 1959). In other words, performance is how a person displays who they are by creating a public image that matches a private ideal. The performance is guided by society's expectations of behaviors and values of the desired self and is done mostly unconsciously.

While engaged in performance the individual will be acting in what Goffman (1959) described as the front stage, where they maintain appropriate appearances and actively create an impression. The front stage consists of the setting and the personal front. Setting is the physical layout of the stage (an office, a house, or a park) and includes props. Props are used by the actors to give the appearance of who they are; these can include clothing (uniform, business attire, or casual), accessories (jewelry, degree on wall, make-up, and hairstyles), etc. Props are the items that reveal the actor's social status to the audience. An audience is the people who are involved in the performance and also who the performance is typically for. The audience is particularly involved in the front stage when the performer is "on."

The personal front is a group of concepts that are crucial for performance. These can be sex, age, speech patterns, and physical characteristics. These concepts give cues to the audience as to how they are to interact with the performer. The major components of the

personal front are divided into appearance and manner. Appearance is how they are perceived even though they are not interacting and props are used to create the correct impression. Manner is the interaction with the audience, the person's speech patterns, how they talk to the audience and the gestures that they use. Scripts are used in the personal front and are internalized social categories that are projected during interactions. They can be very specific or vague depending on the interaction, for example, when in a relationship and a woman asks her significant other if this dress makes her look fat, the response that is scripted for the situation is "no." On the front stage a person uses more props and works on impression management but when the individual moves to the back stage they are in an environment where self-presentation is not a concern.

In the back stage the front stage performances are prepared, rehearsed and evaluated. Here is where people are "off" and knowingly violate regular impression management performances. For example before a date, a woman will be backstage talking to her best friend in slang about how she wants to be taken for a serious career woman on her blind date. While front stage this same woman would not announce that she is a career woman but may wear tailored clothing and speak in proper grammar.

Many times impression management is done with almost no thinking about how to shape personal attributes in a way to influence how others will treat them. The self as a performed character is a dramatic effect developing from a scene that is presented and the concern is whether it will be credited or discredited (Goffman 1959).

A person who is transgender uses the techniques that Goffman describes to shape the impressions of other people about his/her gender. By using the scenes, stages and props in performances of a different gender they create the impression that they belong to that gender.

This use of gender performance, of the other gender, leaves the individuals open to being discredited if a performance is discovered and their identities are spoiled.

When a spoiled identity is part of a person's character it is considered a stigma. Goffman (1963) explains that the concept of stigma is socially constructed, varies through time, and is often a reflection of stereotypes. Goffman (1963) gives an outline of three types of stigma: defects of the body, defects of the character and membership in social groups. The visibility of the stigma is the main issue because if it is obvious and disrupts the interaction then the stigma is immediately known. Individuals that are stigmatized perceive that they are evaluated by others negatively and they will develop coping strategies to manage impressions and identity.

When the stigma is invisible and only known to the one who bares it the individual engages in an act described by Goffman (1963) as *passing*, where an individual can conceal crucial information about themselves. There are rewards for being considered normal and anyone who can make a well organized effort to pass will do so. This idea of passing is important to the transgender community because sex is something that is not readily visible and the decision of one's sex is determined by performance. The fact that an individual's genitals are concealed and not readily visible during performances provides opportunity for transgender individuals to make use of passing to avoid stigma.

<center>Managing and Doing Gender</center>

Impression management happens on many levels and for various reasons, as outlined by Goffman. Indeed, gender is a "performance" that involves all the components of impression management discussed earlier such as props, appearance and manner. The props used to gender

a female could be make up, long hair, high heels and a dress. Male props could be a backwards baseball cap, baggy jeans and bulky tennis shoes. These things are not used exclusively by one sex or the other but are associated with being masculine or feminine. Appearance and manner are also important for gendering individuals. Appearance is the cues that are used by others to distinguish the role that is being displayed. This could be considered height, musculature, facial hair or lack of, and the props that are used to support the appearance. Manner is the way that interactions take place and includes gestures and speech patterns. When a man is displaying his gender to another man the beginning of interaction may consist of a direct look into each other's eyes, a firm handshake with a brisk "Hi."

The idea of gender as a performance is not a novel one and has been discussed at length in the sociological arena. According to West and Zimmerman (1987) "sex" is biologically-based and determined by anatomy while "gender" is an achieved status that is constructed through social, psychological and cultural means (West and Zimmerman 1987). In other words, gender is produced through the normal activities and attitudes considered appropriate for one's sex.

Sara Crawley (2002) uses the ideas of gender performance to argue that it is important to include a performance perspective in theories of gender and sex. Her autoethnography discusses her experiences as a lesbian and the importance of a lived experience. She replays scenes of her life, the performances that were given, and the conclusions that were drawn simply because she was female. As she ages, she changes her presentation of self and receives different outcomes. In a similar study that looks at gender through performance, Betsy Lucal (1999) uses vignettes from her life to bolster her analysis of gender displays and misattribution. Gender displays make claims to one's gender as to whether it is the proper display for that sex. Lucal uses personal characteristics as the main example as she describes what seems to be a

man until there is mention of hips and breasts. This misattribution of gender based on how she dresses and carries herself is another example of how people can be judged on self-presentation and gender performances.

Gender as a performance was labeled by West and Zimmerman (1987) as "Doing Gender" and means creating differences between the sexes that are not natural, essential or biological. Virtually any activity can be assessed as masculine (male) or feminine (female). Displaying gender does not mean that an individual is attempting to achieve the ideal conception of male or female but rather it is to engage in behaviors that lead others to assume that they are male or female (West and Zimmerman 1987). "Doing gender" is a complex and socially guided activity that allows certain expressions and pursuits to be labeled masculine or feminine (West and Zimmerman 1987: 126).   This could be applied to the work arena where it is acceptable for men to be fireman, construction workers and football players. These jobs require assets that are distinguished as masculine; strength, endurance, fearlessness and camaraderie. Work that is seen as acceptable for women is nurse, elementary teacher and cheerleader. These jobs require good dispositions, a nurturing capability and the ability to be supportive. It is not that a man couldn't be a nurse and woman couldn't be a firefighter, but when this is done the individual is often met with challenges that refute they are able to do the job.

In a study of female to male transsexuals, Dozier (2005) states that the perceived sex of an individual has an influence on the assigned meaning of behavior in social and sexual interactions whether or not is the person's biological sex. The sex that the person is believed to be along with the actual behavior is responsible for the gender that is displayed and accepted by others. This studied exemplified how when the sex is ambiguous then special attention is paid to cues in the gender display to determine where a person fits. If a person does not have

significant gendered social cues, or appears androgynous, an observer will decide a category and use this chosen category to define the person. This is another way that impression management is used in the assigning of gender. If a sex is unknown the observer will take into account the setting, appearance, manner and props that are used by the androgynous person and assign him/her a gender that fits.

Being Transgender

Transgender people are a social group who are actively involved in using gender performance as a form of impression management. Being transgender can be considered a challenge to the fixed gender system, therefore allowing these unique individuals to offer a new form of gender subjectivity (Halberstam 1998). These individuals are well aware that observers will use the components of impression management to assign a gender to them, so they must intentionally work to create an impression of the desired sex.

Researcher Barb Burdge (2007) suggests that the assigning of gender is an act of social status which discerns who claims what rights or responsibilities throughout the course of life. Gender is achieved at the cultural level and is enforced through social institutions such as the family, the law, religion, mass media, politicians, and in the realm of medicine. Gagne, Tewksbury and McGaughney (1997) describe gender as constructed within a range of social options, and the binary gender system has made it difficult for those whose gender falls outside of this accepted system to be recognized as socially legitimate. As a social construct that controls and exerts power over each individual, gender has the ability to oppress people who do not conform to the accepted binary of male and female. This oppression is a form of stigma that transgender individuals have to manage. One way of dealing with stigma is through an act known as "passing" (Goffman 1967). Goffman (1963) describes passing as how an individual

conceals crucial information about them self in order to create the impression of being
"normal."

The act of passing and the stigma that is associated with getting caught as an artifice requires specific negotiations for those who are transgender. An exemplary study by Harold Garfinkel (1967) on the process of passing was conducted as a case study on an intersexed woman named Agnes, who achieved the status of female. She used female appearance, along with feminine manner and props, to create the impression that she was of female sex. In this case, Garfinkel (1967:118) defined the term *passing* as "the work of achieving and making secure the rights to live in the elected sex while providing for the possibility of detection and ruin carried out within the socially structured conditions." Agnes, while in the process of passing, was not acting as though she wanted to be female but was convinced that she was naturally female and shared a performance that was consistent with that of "normal females" (Garfinkle 1967). The act of passing taught Agnes how to be a female while displaying female gender by engaging in impression management in the same way that other people do.

 In learning to "act" as a woman Agnes would pay attention to how the people around her discussed the actions of different women. She took the information that she discovered and used it to tailor her actions so she presented herself in the proper way. For example, her boyfriend would criticize women in front of her explaining to her real women don't do such things as sun bath in the front yard. She would take his criticisms as part of what the definition of what a real woman was and not do those things. When he would commend a woman for doing something that was perfectly feminine she would incorporate that into her gender performances.

This study is a reflection of how gender performance is used to facilitate passing for another gender. It describes in detail how the idea of passing can be implemented to avoid

stigmatization. How transgender individuals use impression management is an important question, since the sex categories, that the mainstream population accepts so easily, are binary and force transgender individuals to navigate through passing.

<u>Limitations of Previous Research</u>

There is limited information on the how transgender individuals create a new gender identity for themselves using impression management. Although the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) community has become a topic that is widely study at many levels, the transgender community has been lumped into these studies yet marginalized within this group. There is no exact count on the prevalence of transgender individuals in our society other than that they constitute approximately 2 to 3 percent of the LGBT community (Burdge 2007). Those that are accounted for in that percentage are only openly transgender who interact with the LGBT community. Many transgender individuals conceal gender identity in an effort to either maintain the perception of safety or to "pass," undetected, as a "normal" member of society (Burdge 2007). It is important to take into consideration that the transgender community is a separate community with its own need for representation.

Most of the research that has been conducted on transgender individuals has been through a biological or psychological lens. This study uses a sociological lens to investigate into how transgender individuals' use impression management to achieve a desired sex status. By utilizing a transgender-only sample, there will emerge a clearer picture of these individuals' management of how they are perceived.

METHODOLOGY

Overall, this study investigates the daily lives of transgender individuals through the scope of impression management with an emphasis on the period of transition. It also explores areas of lifestyle in a culture that enforces a gender binary. A qualitative approach was used in this study to allow each individual to convey in his/her own words what daily life is like for them. Giving participants the ability to express personal feelings allowed for rich data that cannot be found in surveys or statistics.

Data Collection

The research was conducted through the use of in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The content of the interviews included open ended questions that gave each participant a chance to direct the interview to topics that are pertinent to daily life. I conducted the interviews in a place of the participants' choosing since the topics that are covered in the interviews are of a personal and possibly sensitive nature. When distance was a problem I used Skype technology for participants who are comfortable with that kind of interaction. Before the interviews began they were given a short questionnaire for demographic purposes only. I interviewed a range of transgender people including, transmen (female to male), transwomen (male to female) and gender queer. Interviews were voice recorded and lasted, on average, 75 minutes. All interviews were conducted with a general set of questions that covered topics of daily rituals, relationships, stigma navigation and transitioning. Each interview was transcribed the evening it was concluded as well as any field notes, interactions and setting details. All interviews were conducted between February 1, 2011 and March 20, 2011

I supplemented the interviews with my own field notes about the process of conducting the interviews. When writing field notes I used Emerson, Fretz and Shaw's (1995) definition as

a guide: field notes are accounts describing and actively interpreting experiences and observations made while involved in a study. The field notes frame subjects, reflect, and reincorporate meanings, sensitivities and understanding that the researcher has discovered from having participated in the event. By using field notes as a collaborative method I was able to have a better understanding of each individual and a more detailed description of this particular social niche.

The field notes were completed when all interaction with each participant had ceased and before the interviews were transcribed. Additional notes were taken during transcription for anything that became particularly interesting when listening to the recording. The notes included my interactions with the participants, my feelings and personal insights that had arisen throughout the interview.

<u>Participants</u>

To qualify for this study an individual had to be involved in some part of the medical definition of transitioning and want to legally transition as defined by the DSM IV. However, there are several ways to embark on the journey of gender reassignment, also known as transitioning. For some transgender individuals they begin with cross-dressing and living part time as the claimed gender, some individuals begin down the medical route and choose psychotherapy, or with hormone treatments and plastic surgeries for secondary sex characteristics (Devor 1997). With an array of choices for transitioning I decided that I would include in my study anyone who fits the medical definition for transitioning and wants to legally transition to a different sex. By including individuals that are both progressing through or have completed the transition process I was able to gain a better understanding of the experience as an ongoing development of expression and management.

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For this project I interviewed 9 people who self-identify as transgender. Since transgender people are considered part of the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) community across the country I did not limit myself to only the state of Florida. I contacted the people that I knew to be transgender and also let friends I knew in the LGBT community know that I was soliciting interviews. I relied on a snowball sample for all of my recruiting and though the sample is small and not random, the in-depth interviews were able to provide a substantial amount of data.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Current gender status	Years since beginning of transition	Transition status
Erica	53	Caucasian	Female/Trans Woman	14	Genital Surgery
Tracey	23	Caucasian	Trans Woman	1.5	Hormones/Living Experience
Betsy	31	Caucasian	Trans Woman	10	Surgically Altered
Mary	34	Caucasian	Trans Woman	3	Hormones/Living Experience
Brice	29	Caucasian	Trans Man	5	Hormones/Living Experience
Parker	26	Caucasian	Gender Queer	2	Hormones
Luis	19	Hispanic	Trans Man	6 months	Hormones
Marshal	33	Caucasian	Male/Trans Man	4	Genital Surgery
Susan	18	Black	Trans Woman	3 months	No hormones yet

The participants ranged in age from 18-53 and had all self-identified as transgender in their early teens. Three participants were transmen (female to male), five were transwomen (male to female) and one was gender queer. Only one participant was not on hormones, one was surgically altered, two participants had completed a surgical genital transition and the remaining five were currently surgically unaltered. Two of the participants considered themselves to be bisexual or lesbian before coming out as transgender.

Building rapport was also an important part of the process. I found that participants were willing to trust me based on the process in which my participants were referred by individuals with whom they already had a trusting relationship. This was evident when each interview began with inquiries into how I knew the person who referred them to me and what our relationship entailed.

A major hurdle I encountered in maintaining rapport throughout this study was the implication of gender in everyday language. While I have relied on research for an understanding of ideal methods of gender expression and impression management, I feel as though these ideals should not be imposed on the transgender community by an outside researcher. I had to make a conscience effort to be aware of what I said and how I phrased things as to not be offensive to the participants. Gendered language is the practice in our Western culture, so much so that unless pointed out, most of the general population would be unaware of the implications that the choice of words has to sensitive areas such as transgender topics.

Pseudonyms were used by several of the participants. It is of my understanding that they chose to use pseudonyms in an attempt to protect their anonymity. In the case of a couple of participants, pseudonyms were initially used until some point in the interview when they decided to reveal to me the name they use in everyday life. For example, during an interview I was using one participant's name and felt that I may have been pronouncing it wrong. I asked her if this was the case and I was told not to worry about it, as it was not her real name, it was just one she uses sometimes. It was at that point when she introduced me the actual name she used in her everyday life. A similar account occurred when another individual, about 15 minutes into the interview, told me "my real name is…" and then continued talking. Both times

I did not ask for any clarification but rather felt that this was a sign they had become comfortable speaking with me and beginning to divulge personal information.

<u>Data Analysis</u>

Analysis of the interviews was a continuous process from transcription, reading the transcriptions and returning to individual interviews after all interviews were complete. While transcribing the interviews, I took notes on how the participants' answers fit into Goffman's ideas. An example of this is when a participant talked about how her personal gender didn't match her ascribed gender. That became a character theme. I continued this process throughout all the interviews until transcription was complete. Once the interviews were transcribed, I went back through and highlighted text that clearly fit into Goffman's ideas of front stage, character, performance, props, appearance, manner and backstage. These highlighted quotes were organized into their respective themes and then analyzed for their latent content which is explored in the findings section.

Many common ideas were shared between the participants; those that were most clearly stated are used as supporting quotes in my findings. There was a diverse variation of background amongst the participants, making their responses varied in both vocabulary and verbosity. Though the language used was different across the participants, the underlying context remained the same.

<u>Ethical Considerations</u>

I felt that fully disclosing the study was a very important ethical aspect of my study not only for the sake of the participant, but to make sure that the proper information is portrayed by the participant. The research is not about the actual act of transitioning but about the subjects'

personal experience of self-proclaimed identity and impression management. Confidentiality played an important role in this study since the goal of the individual is to pass as the self-identified gender. It can cause distress for the individual if that identity is not maintained. To address this issue all participants remained anonymous and were addressed by the gender identification that they proclaim during the interview process. Most of the participants used a pseudonym throughout the interview even if I knew their real names.

<u>Reflexive Statement</u>

My social position as a 29-year-old graduate student has colored my perspective or the lens that I utilize in observing and listening to the participants and their respective stories. I had to take into account the fact that I have not lived through a transgender experience. This is a massive undertaking and something that I personally have never had to battle. I also had to remain aware that I was raised in the very culture that fosters a binary gender categorization. It was important to keep in the forefront of my thoughts to not fall victim to my own instincts of automatically categorizing someone as "male" or "female" based on gender cues as I do in my everyday life. I allowed the participants to define themselves and continued with that appropriate gendered language.

During my time interviewing the participants I found myself to be sympathetic and mirroring the emotions that were displayed during the interviews. In the beginning stages I was slightly confused with some of the concepts that were presented by the participants and began to feel frustrated in hearing about the many shared hardships these individuals consistently had to face on a daily basis and overcome time and time again. Throughout several interviews, the participants commented on my reactions to their stories. They would tell me things such as; "please don't be upset for me" or "please don't be sad." They would then describe to me

triumphs and achievements and I would change my emotional state to feeling happy for them and proud of them.

By the end of the interviews, I found myself having a deep desire of wanting to bring this group of people equality. I felt that more could be done to help transgender individuals gain better access to the types of care that is needed when going through this long and difficult journey to finally be the person they have always felt they were. I thought about the many struggles that these individuals face daily and how much I could not imagine having to overcome the same hurdles. From simple decisions like which restroom to enter, this community of people is presented with constant struggles both physically and emotionally.

Although the participants were able to identify my emotions through body language such as facial expressions, my responses in tone remained neutral. I remained a careful listener and directed the topic of the interviews to stay on task. At the completion of the interviews, the participants were left with my email address and an invitation to ask further questions or for guidance to additional resources if needed.

Limitations

A significant limitation to this study is a small sample size. This is due to the fact that the subject matter is of a sensitive nature. I had almost 20 volunteers when the project was to begin but as it came time for the interviews, many people declined to be formally interviewed. I feel that with more time allowed and further research there will be an ability to generalize more across the transgender community but at this time the findings are restricted to those interviewed. The impression management that these individuals operate under provides a unique way to study gender and continuing to study this community can enhance our knowledge of gender performance and identities.

FINDINGS

Transition is a time of performance for transgender individuals and this is when they actively engage in impression management. The performance uses anything that an actor on a stage would include: an audience, props, scripts, a controlled appearance and manner. All these components come together to create an image about how the individual not only perceives themselves but also how they want to be known in society. In this particular study the participants were asked about their daily lives both during transition and after, if they had already completed it. Since these participants are in some way conforming to the medical model for transitioning there is likely to be similarities in the underlying way they set a stage.

Transitions and Passing

In the beginning of discussions there were many ideas that were shared that could have come directly from the DSM IV. It is as though, in order to properly discuss their lives they needed to run through disclaimers. During my interview with Mary, she talked about transitioning and how, though there are maps for people to follow, they can make their own way if they want. This idea of making their own stage and script after following the medical model rang true throughout all the interviews. When we were able to pass the initial questioning and relax into the interview, the participants were able to discuss more freely how they felt about transition.

> There are a number of clinically outlined ways to transition. Following one of these processes is supposed to be the healthiest way, or most correct way, to transition. The truth is there is no official or unofficial way to transition. It is like growing up, learning to be the person we want to become. Each individual must find his/her own way. -Mary

When speaking with another participant, she talked about how she tried three times before she fully transitioned. She went to several therapists, tried following the step by step program and didn't feel as though it fulfilled the need that she felt. The next step for her was to go out on her own and just "do it." That is, live in a way that would give her congruency between how she looked and how she felt.

> …This go round [attempt to transition] started at age 39; I decided, you know, I am gonna to try to let it happen the way people in our own culture develop [gender identity]. I am going to do it the way that real people do. I am going to let it happen organically. ….. I chose to take estrogen and let people perceive me as they will. We will see where it goes and I figure that when nine people out of ten without prior knowledge of my background perceive me as a female I am not doing too bad.-Erica

Passing is an important aspect of the transgender life when beginning to develop performance. It is referring to, as the term implies, whether or not the individual is passing as his/her intended gender.

> Passing is just being as basically male or as basically female as you can get away with without anybody noticing or bothering you with it.- Marshal

This simple term defines whether or not the culmination of all the mentioned methods of transition such as props, mannerisms, appearance and performance have been successful in defining the individual and the role in his/her particular gender. Without passing, transgender individuals may never truly feel complete. They go through the transition to make their life as natural as possible without having to feel they are ridiculed or not accepted for who they are.

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The facts are, the better you pass, the better chance you are left alone. That is all

I really ask for, to not be recognizable as being a transgender woman. This is

why passing to me is an essential part of my life.-Mary

As the individual attempts to navigate the world as a different gender, mislabeling of

gender was a major concern. In most instances this is a cause for alarm but it can also be a

positive thing for a newly transitioning individual.

Being mislabeled was a weird positive in the beginning when I was

experimenting with more feminine attire. I remember when I was walking home

and the truck drove by with the windows down and I heard one of the guys

inside say "hey do you know if that was a boy or a girl" and at that time

someone being unsure was a step in the right direction.-Tracey

There was an idea of stealth that was brought up by each individual when the term

passing was discussed. This is a term used by members of the community who go beyond

simply passing and create a whole new past for themselves that does not involve being

transgender or transitioning. They create a life story of them being born and growing up as

their accepted gendered self. Most of the time, these particular individuals do not maintain

contact with the people in their lives prior to transition. One participant explained the idea

quite elegantly when we were discussing the ideas of passing and transition:

Have you seen that movie Trans America? That was the first time that stealth

had actually been introduced to me as a term and a life style. It got me

thinking… at first angry. I am like, "No! You don't hide 'cause if you hide you

show people that you are ashamed." I had a friend that I knew back when he

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was female and he ended quitting his job and it was a really good job. I asked him why and he said, "well because I just want to marry my girlfriend and move into a house and just live my life without everyone knowing that I am trans" because he transitioned at this work place. I couldn't help but feel kind of offended because I was like, you know, who cares? But then I realized that I was just projecting my own personal feelings, my gender is very tied in with my activism. I feel it is really important for me to be open and honest about being trans. I need to remember that there are some people that don't feel like they are trying to change the world with how they present their gender, it is just another facet of who they are.-Parker

There were strong feelings when it came to stealth. Some people understood that it just has to be done, while others were strict in the idea that it is a closet. As Luis said, "Stealth is just going from one closet to another." One of the respondents shared with me how, when she was transitioning, transgender individuals would be beaten in the street if they were "outted." She explained that some people just want to live a life in peace and the only way for them to get that peace is to start with a clean slate. Another participant, Brice, was also sympathetic to the idea of stealth when he said:

Stealth is letting go of your past and telling stories like when I was a little boy, but they were never a little boy, you were a little girl. To me they get in that mind state where they have always lived that gendered life. None of their associates, co-workers or friends are aware that they are transgender. Passing is just a perceived notion that you are male as opposed to no one knowing that you ever were not.-Brice

While speaking to several participants, they expressed the utmost importance to their emotional well-being as being accepted into their intended genders. This is, after all, the ultimate goal in the transgender transition process. Thus, passing is the gateway for these individuals to a new gender status. By creating the proper gendered impression, passing and maintaining a passable performance, these individuals can achieve the desired status. Passing is a transitional state that is only temporarily used. Mary stated:

I am female. I don't think there is anything unusual about me I am fairly

typical. I like movies, gossip, fashion, boys; all normal college girl things. The

only thing unusual about it is that this is not the gender I was expected to have

at birth.

Once a transgender individual has successfully transitioned into his/her desired gender, there is no longer a need to "pass." The impression management techniques would then be the same techniques used by individuals who are not transgender. Erica explains it as:

It is part of a social contract. There is a large amount of personal information

that we have that other people just don't want to know. There are things that just

put up a social barrier like a big "don't go there" sign. Like having cancer for

example, for the most part, unless you are intimately close to someone most

people don't want to know it.

With this statement Erica is trying to express that gender is not something that we usually just bring up in conversation with strangers. Once she transitioned there was not a need for her to pass anymore. She just went about her day like any other woman would and impression management was no longer used for passing. Instead it functioned much in the way

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that it does for other people in their daily lives. She did not stress about "passing" or being "outted" because she no longer felt like she would have to talk about her gender.

<div align="center">Impression Management: Character and Performance</div>

Transition is a process that uses impression management to achieve a new gender status. Though the main focus of this process is passing, it all begins with a realization. The realization that comes to an individual when they find that there is a process that they can go through to attain the preferred gender. This realization can be likened to Goffman's idea of "character" (1959). Character can be defined as how a person understands themself to be; where they can self-identify and lay claim to the identity that they are going to perform. These findings were discovered during my analysis of interviews. When I asked participants to describe themselves in terms of gender, the responses were initially inside the gender binary with responses of "female" or "male." But when I asked for further clarification, one of my respondents said:

> I don't talk about my gender. I just don't. I say Hi I am Tracey. - Tracey

Only one respondent used "trans" as a self-identifier:

> I present as male and like to be identified as male. I am very open about being
> trans so I like also being identified as transgender…. just depending on my
> mood or what kind of group I am in at the moment.-Parker

I found that 7 out of the 9 participants had a moment in their lives when they "knew" and accepted their true selves. For one participant it was a moment that was clear in hindsight. She was having a hard time in her teens accepting herself. Being curious, she did a lot of research on the Internet about her feelings of self-identity and was not left with a healthy

impression of how she could live her life. The idea that how she felt was some sort of sexual deviance and an area of fetish made her suppresses how she truly felt until her early twenties. This is when her moment happened:

> It was the first moment. I took a trip to goodwill and found myself in the dresses. It was a fun excursion and it was the moment when I had this realization that, huh, this is weird, I like this but not in a sexual way, as I had expected, thanks to the wonders of the Internet. It was the same time I found a thread on a forum where I saw people my age that had done or were doing this [transitioning] and I realized oh that is actually possible. You can do that and come out as a normal happy person. That sounds like a good idea to me -Tracey

When she no longer associated her feelings with a "sexual way" and found a positive outlet for how she felt, she embraced a new path. She found a therapist and began her journey through transition.

One of the participants, a transman, described to me his moment of self-discovery as one of many private moments with God.

> When I was very young one of my chores was taking out the garbage. We had a very, very long stretch of driveway and we lived out in the country. I would always take my time doing it and …. On these trips I would talk to god basically, and that was the first time I came out to anybody. And at age 14, I came out to my mother. -Parker

During another interview, a participant spoke of how her moment of clarity in reference to her gender identity was a feeling of trepidation and freedom all at once. She described the

experience as though she had been embarking on a journey that she only had a vague idea of what the destination would be.

> There was a lot of stuff going on at the time but I remember a sort of a feeling
> of possibilities and conversely a feeling of "oh god this is unlocking stuff I have
> to deal with." You could call it freeing on that level. It is hard to separate the
> two you know. - Betsy

Performance is the second part of Goffman's idea of role, character being the first (1959). The performance is when a person is introduced to an environment, and the self needs to be presented in the form of a public performance. This is when a person is able to take his/her personal identification and create a public image that fits with-in society's expectations of his/her desired self. During the interviews the participants gave many examples of performance in terms of gender.

Betsy discussed her feelings regarding performance. She describes her exaggeration of performance, which takes place because she feels that this is what is necessary. It helps to mask aspects of her appearance that she is not yet comfortable with to be considered as passing for her gender role without scrutiny.

> …. certain extent there is more in the beginning, not because you are correcting
> actions but because there are so many visual cues and physical things you are
> trying to disguise. So you try putting more actions in, adding more things as a
> camouflage. Someone put it best when they were asked "why do some trans
> women do the hyper feminine thing etc."? and she smiled sweetly and said "it is
> to keep from getting murdered dear." And that very much seems be the feeling,

it is more that everyone is trying to pick things out and you hyper read glances

as more than they are. - Betsy

Performance varies among the transgender individuals. Some believe that performance is an exaggeration of reality while others feel it should be as close to the truth as possible while still allowing for the gender role to be displayed. As Susan noted "I wouldn't say I would put off an impression for another person that isn't the right impression of myself." Here, Susan is explaining how she integrates her idea of self into the performance. She is aware that she is living life as a performance, however wants it to be understood that this performance is showing the true her as she was meant to be; she does not want to give a false impression of herself to fit into the gender role.

Appearance is linked to first impression, which is how the individual is perceived despite the use of props. The individual's goal is to produce the appearance of the gender role that they are trying to achieve. Whether or not it is realized, everybody stereotypes individuals based on their first impression of that person. For the transgender individuals it can be an even more important task to create the right first impression. Making the right first impression helps ensure an easier job playing the role that they are working so hard to achieve.

Tracey shared a recollection of how her appearance and first impression on a stranger was successful in displaying the correct gender role that she was working towards achieving. In her example, she recalled feeling satisfied in her appearance portraying the gender role without the use of rehearsed mannerisms and props.

I recall specifically, at the start of this year, a new freshman coming in after the

rainbow continuum meeting. I was just walking home talking to this guy and I

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realized that he has no clue what's going on. He is talking like have you ever

considered modeling. And I am like what the hell are you talking about? That

has never crossed my mind. When he started the topic that everyone has parts of

their body they are unhappy with, I started laughing inside. 'Cause not everyone

has parts of their body they are unhappy with like I have parts of my body I am

unhappy with. It was this moment, where he had no idea I was trans, he was just

treating me like another girl and that was a pretty cool feeling - Tracey

A similar experience was experienced by Erica; she too described a general feeling of

accomplishment when her appearance was immediately recognized as the correct gender role.

I remember that when I got pulled over before with my old driver's license

which looks like my new one but the name and sex are different the officer said

"you know your parents sure gave you a funny name." I just smiled; I think that

the cop was just bewildered and was like "thanks ma'am, drive safe." -Erica

Manner is an aspect of impression management that is referred to in this discussion as

how the actor interacts with the audience. It refers to the mannerism and voice used to create

the final appearance. A female person would work towards a higher pitch tone of voice along

with a more feminine vocabulary and speech pattern whereas a male would deepen his tone

and make use of a more masculine pattern.

During one interview, a respondent discussed her method of changing manner using

voice lessons. This particular participant describes her lack of need to change any speech

patterns from her typical routine as she feels she has to conscientiously refrain from what has

always felt natural to her.

I am still working on my voice. I have appointment with someone in a few

hours to do that. I didn't consciously change any mannerisms or anything, um,

if anything it would be more of if there were any mannerisms that changed it

would be because I stop restraining myself from those sorts of things [feminine]

that I had been doing in the past -Tracey

Most transgender individuals make use of hormone therapy during their transition.

Mary shared with me how she has seen no effect on the tone of voice from the use of estrogen

and must conscientiously use a higher pitch voice to portray the appropriate gender

appearance: "Taking estrogen doesn't have much effect on a person's voice, so I have to make

sure to use a high [feminine] pitch."

Props can be used to help manage an individual's appearance and contribute to the

manner in which the appearance is accepted. Brice spoke with me regarding the prop he uses to

create an appearance while not making it obvious to others that there is a prop involved:

Are you familiar with the term packing? I felt as though that was a very

important part of it [male gender performance] and now five years into it I

don't think that defines what a male is or isn't. -Brice

The term packing in this discussion is in reference to using a device to create the

impression of having male genitalia. Packing can consist of something as simple as rolled up

socks but in the context of these interviews it was more likely a soft rubber like phallus object.

It would be used so that there was the expected bulge and creates a certain kind of gait when

the person walks. Though the packing device is a prop it creates the appearance of male like

qualities that a passerby may use to assign gender.

Props are used by the actor during the performance to help create a stage. The stage is where the actor displays the performance and works on creating the desired impression. In this case gendered props are used to tell a specific story about the person's gender. A prop that is significant to both male and females are hormones. These are used to help change the physical body without surgical alterations. Though every participant spoke of using hormones as a first step, they did not discuss them anymore than in a brief mention that hormones are used.

> I eat my breakfast and watch the daily show then throw in my pills. I grab my
> purse head out the door. -Tracey

When pressed on the subject of hormones, another respondent said:

> ….so I took estrogen for three years and people started treating me like a girl.
> Maybe it is the hair. -Erica

Though the hormones were an invaluable asset for transitioning, most respondents did not put emphasis on them. There seemed to be an understanding that, if you were to transition, hormones are involved.

A significant prop for the men is one that is given to them by their therapist and it is called a binder. This is used to tightly bind the female-like breasts as closely to the body as possible to create a more masculine shape. When I asked about their daily lives and appearances, the first thing that each transman spoke of was his binder.

> The binding is still a part of my ritual because I haven't had top surgery. So that
> is a big deal. I go through days when I feel like it is not doing its masking very
> well or like certain shirts work for me for a period of time and I feel
> comfortable in them. My ritual is very based around my binding- Parker

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For one person in particular, her receding hairline posed a problem in creating the proper gender impression. This was something that caused her considerable stress until she was given the advice of getting a haircut with bangs from a fellow transwoman.

> … I had this headband thing that I would use, a lacy sort of thing. I would wear it because I could put it over my hairline, which is not ideal. I wore it as just a cover up until I managed to work up the courage to go into a barber shop. So, basically I got a haircut with bangs that cover the hair line and I don't for see any point where I will not have such a hair style.-Tracey

For all the participants, dress and mannerisms were the most prominent props used. The use of these particular types of props is probably most prominent because they are the easiest to acquire and use in everyday life. Dress provides these individuals the ability to conform the visual perception that the public sees to their intended purpose of fitting in with a gender. It is a very simple task to go to the store and purchase clothing that would send the message of a particular gender. This prop requires minimal time consumption to the individual when using it in his/her everyday routine, no more so than that of a non-transgender individual. Mannerisms are also an easy way to make gender impressions. Mannerisms can be described as a characteristic way of doing something. This includes one's behaviors, speech and general way of going about his/her typical routines. One would typically assume if a person is wearing a dress and walking gracefully that she is of the female gender; whereas wearing baggy jeans, a t-shirt and baseball cap while walking down the street would signal a general assumption of a male.

When I asked my participants when they are most uncomfortable, most raised the subject of restrooms. When going through the transition process, finding a restroom that doesn't have the potential to "out" them is an event in itself.

> There are not many options in terms of restrooms and it wouldn't be a big deal except men's rooms, if they have a stall, I have noticed that they don't even try to make sure that the lock works. So, 9 times out of 10, when I use the restroom it is a urinal next to a stall with a broken door. I keep watching guys walk in on each other too, it looks like it is something they just deal with on the day to day basis and don't talk about in the real.-Parker

The final unifying theme among the participants was identifying with their team, or group of other transgender individuals that did not expect conformity to the gender binary. All the participants discussed the importance of having a group of people that understand what they are going through. They create a safe place to set aside the performance and talk openly about the challenges of impression management and other aspects of daily life. Tracey said it best:

> The only time I am completely open and directly identify myself is when there are other questioning trans people. Then I am all over it, showing them resources and giving advice. Because when I did this [transition] there was no one telling me this and I had to figure it out on my own.

These are individuals who help each other learn how to create the proper performance. They share tips, props, ideas, and even scripts. There seems to be a lot of the script that is given to this group by the psychological arena. They are given many of the tools when they want to

transition. By having a backstage group they are able to feel more comfortable as the new role

is formed.

DISCUSSION

Impression Management is one way to analyze gender performance and by using a transgender sample I was able to apply Goffman's ideas to these individuals' everyday life. These performances are aided by information given to the individuals by their psychologists when embarking on their journey through transition. The standards of care used by the psychological community give the individuals access to resources that allow them to enhance their ability to perform their new gender. The themes that are evolved from the interviews were created out of Goffman's own concepts of stage and performance. The participants were asked to view their lives through the lens of impression management and this allowed for an accurate portrayal of their daily life through impression management.

By having tools that are given to them, there is active implementation of impression management. From the onset of transition a transgender individual can create a gendered scene by using the concepts of stage, props, appearance and manner. This coincides with comments from the participants that alluded to them feeling that after transition there was no need to "act" anymore. The actual "act" was before they were transitioning and still unable to effortlessly be the desired gendered self. Through the process of transition they were able to embrace their true character.

The time that these individuals most heavily relied on impression management was during transition. This is/was a time that the individual actively created props, utilized manner and appearance, clearly defined his/her character and focused on passing. This real life experience, as characterized by the standards of care, gives the individual opportunity to use impression management in a way to help them find a balance in his/her gendered idea of self. When discussing the ideas of impression management with the participants they vocalized how it seemed obvious that these concepts could be applied to transitioning. Passing is an act until it

is natural and "most people developed their persona from winging it as children," was how one respondent explained.

As a result of my analysis of the interviews and the comments made by the participants, I feel as though transitioning is for transgender individuals a way of restoring the pieces of their lives that were lost during the times they felt conflicted about their gender. Impression management allows these individuals the opportunity to connect with their gendered selves. My observations throughout my interviews were that the transgender individuals start out in a state of confusion, similar to that of a teenager beginning high school. They become extremely unsure of where, if at all, they fit in. There are two distinct gender categories, male and female. These individuals are deemed to fit into one of these categories by society's standards, they however have deep connections to the other. Transitioning allows them to be able to cross into the other category and become the particular gender in which they not only desire, but truly feel that they were born to be. Impression management is a tool that is used to complete the transitioning process and thus be able to take emphasis off passing and become more fluid with gender. All participants agreed that transition and passing were just a stepping stone in their lives.

Future Research

This study involved a small sample size, all of which were transgender participants that volunteered to talk about transitioning openly; therefore it can only be generalized to this subset of individuals. Only two people in this sample had decided at this time to be surgically altered, one was only through the first year of real life experience and the others had completed transition without surgical alterations to this point.

Further research studies should begin by using larger sample sizes to provide the study more validity and more generalizability. There should be a more accurate comparative analysis of onset, during and after transition. This comparative analysis is needed to gain a better understanding of how impression management is used during the different time periods of a transgender life. At onset the individuals are just grasping the understanding of the tools given to them. During transition the individuals are able to utilize the full concepts that have been provided and it would be thought that by the end of transition there is more of the ability for their lives to have a more natural flow with less reliance on the tools available. For further understanding of this there needs to be a cross comparison analysis.

This study incorporated any individuals that considered themselves transgender and were going through the medical definition of transition. Future studies may want to focus on a more narrowly defined subset of the transgender population that is female to male only, male to female only, or gender queer. By narrowing the field of study to incorporate these categories as separate experiences while still incorporating each subset into a final research analysis would provide the researcher the ability to clearly delineate differences in experiences.

AFTERWORD

When I began this project my goal was to look at how transgender individuals use impression management. Since these individuals are a group that is conscious of using the aspects of performance and character, I wanted to know how exactly individuals in this unique community implement these tools. Through research I discovered that there is a tool set that is given, the standards of care, so that individuals can learn to manage life as a new gendered self. I wanted to know if this tool set is all that is used and about the individual experiences using these tools.

The qualifications for an individual to be part of this study were to self-identify as transgender and be in the act of transition. Since I personally did not know if transition was an all-encompassing term or if there is a more personal meaning behind it, I asked each participant what transition meant to them. Also since the act of passing is very much a part of transition I asked that they describe this term to me as well for clarification.

The interviews went on to different aspects of impression management and how the individual felt about using impression management techniques. Though many of the initial answers were simple and seemed to be unrevealing, it was the stories that followed that made the data substantial. What was particularly interesting were the different ways people approached the defining of terms and tools. This is where data were most rich and I found myself spending the most time, both during and after transcriptions. In the areas of transition and passing, I felt the data was also important and should be included in the final results.

The results of my approach were different than my initial expectations. If I had known that this is where the data would have lead me, and had less time restriction, I would have taken another approach to the subject. I could have found a way to reframe my analysis and possibly revisited willing participants, as in the case of Schrock, Boyd and Leaf's (2007) study

of transmen. Their study began with the intentions of analyzing strategies of passing but changed direction during analysis. They found the emotion work of their participants to be the most intriguing aspect in their findings. From there the researchers were able to reframe their work and take a new, more revealing, approach.

Another approach that may be more desirable is a grounded approach. Dozier (2005) did not set out with a prearranged hypothesis or frame for her study on transmen. This study was based off of questions of involvement with the transgender community, medical community, families, sexual partners and masculinity. During analysis, the ideas of perceived sex and gendered behavior were forefront and she was able to make her argument based on those findings. This approach would have worked for my findings on transitioning and passing. If I had used this method I would have had the freedom to find a framework that fit with the findings and created a more complete argument.

Overall, there were many ways that this study could have been conducted. It is my belief however that had I not gone about it in this manner I may not have yielded the same results. I feel that though this is not a perfect example of the use of Goffman, it is an honest endeavor in revealing a little more about the transgender experience. I will be able to use the insight I have gained here to create studies that are more effective in respect to analyzing data.

APPENDIX A: GENERAL TERMS

Appearance – how the actor is perceived without the use of props; portrays social statuses

Character - how the person believes his or her self to be and can be equated to the "self," in Goffman's conceptualization

Gender Identity Disorder – strong and persistent cross-gender identification, which is a desire or the insistence that one is of the other sex

Impression Management – a form of self-presentation used to decide the person's place in society, the kind of interaction that can take place and the construction of social reality

Manner - interaction with the audience, the person's speech patterns, how they talk to the audience and the gestures that they use.

Passing - the work of achieving and making secure the rights to live in the elected sex while providing for the possibility of detection and ruin carried out within the socially structured conditions

Performance - all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by presence in front of an audience

Personal Front – concepts that are crucial for performance (appearance and manner) can be sex, age, speech patterns, and physical characteristics. This gives the cues to the audience as to how they are to interact with the performer.

Props- items used by the actor to aid performance

Setting – the physical layout of the front stage and includes props

Scripts – internalized social categories that are projected during interactions

Stigma - when the reaction of others spoils a person's identity

Teams – any set of individuals who co-operate in a single performance

Transgender (trans)- an umbrella term used to identify individuals whose gender does not conform to the binary norms. This includes: Drag Kings, Drag Queens, Transsexuals, Transvestites, Gender Queer etc.

APPENDIX B: IRB OUTCOME LETTER

University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Approval of Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
 FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: **Candice S. Campanaro**

Date: **January 12, 2011**

Dear Researcher:

On January 12, 2011, the IRB approved the following human participant research until 1/11/2012 inclusive:

 Type of Review: UCF Initial Review Submission Form
 Project Title: Impression Management in the Transgender Community
 Investigator: Candice S Campanaro
 IRB Number: SBE-10-07283
 Funding Agency: None

The Continuing Review Application must be submitted 30days prior to the expiration date for studies that were previously expedited, and 60 days prior to the expiration date for research that was previously reviewed at a convened meeting. Do not make changes to the study (i.e., protocol, methodology, consent form, personnel, site, etc.) before obtaining IRB approval. A Modification Form **cannot** be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at https://iris.research.ucf.edu .

If continuing review approval is not granted before the expiration date of 1/11/2012, approval of this research expires on that date. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

Use of the approved, stamped consent document(s) is required. The new form supersedes all previous versions, which are now invalid for further use. Only approved investigators (or other approved key study personnel) may solicit consent for research participation. Participants or their representatives must receive a copy of the consent form(s).

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Joseph Bielitzki, DVM, UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Janice Turchin   on 01/12/2011 11:54:08 AM EST

IRB Coordinator

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