



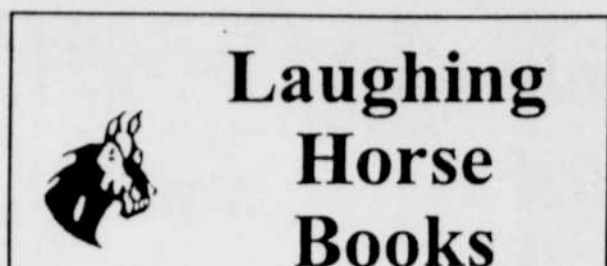
Beaverton ☎ 646-3824
4000 SW 117th

Corbett ☎ 244-3934
5909 SW Corbett

Division ☎ 233-7374
3016 SE Division

Fremont ☎ 288-3414
3449 NE 24th

Hillsdale ☎ 244-3110
6344 SW Capitol Hwy



Laughing Horse Books

featuring

Rude Girls and Dangerous Women
cartoons by Jennifer Camper
\$8.95

3652 SE Division ♦ 236-2893
Open Mon-Sat 11-7 ♿

BRADLEY J. WOODWORTH

ATTORNEY AT LAW

920 CROWN PLAZA • 1500 S.W. FIRST AVENUE
PORTLAND, OREGON 97201
(503) 273-9146

•
Free Initial Consultation
•

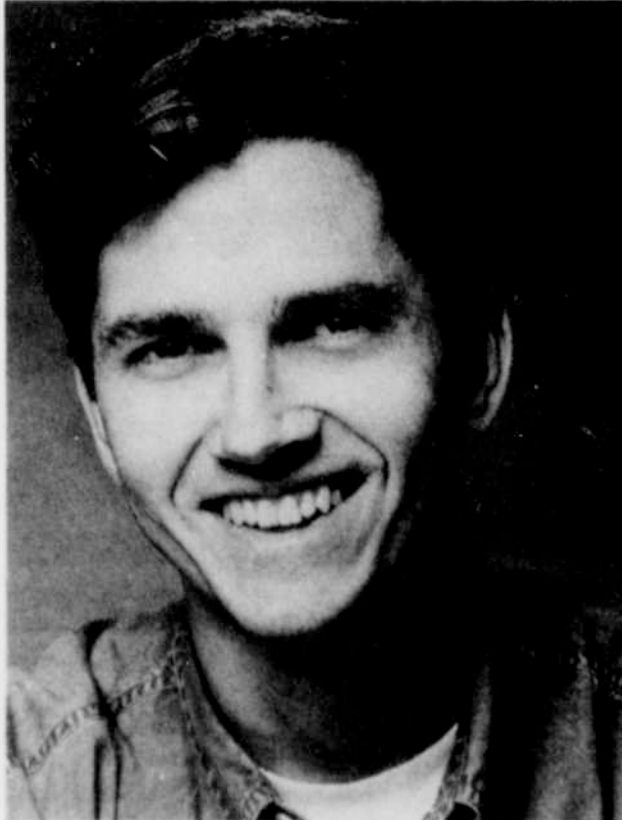
SERVING THE LEGAL NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

• ACCIDENTS & INJURIES (NO RECOVERY, NO FEE)	• WILLS & ESTATES
• CRIMINAL LAW & DUII	• BUSINESS LAW AND LITIGATION
• DIVORCE AND CUSTODY	• REAL ESTATE
	• LITIGATION IN ALL STATE AND FEDERAL COURTS

Meet Bob Smith, author of
Growing Up Gay, Monday, June 26, 6-7 pm at

TWENTY-THIRD AVENUE
B·O·O·K·S

1015 NW 23rd Ave. 224-5907



BOB SMITH GAY COMIC

Later enjoy his show as seen on HBO and David Letterman at *Darcelle's XV*, 8 pm
Monday, June 26—\$10 at the door
208 NW 3rd Ave. Portland • 222-5338

A CLOSER LOOK AT GENDER

In Gender Outlaw, Kate Bornstein examines the so-called "natural" genders, only to find that male and female are sorely lacking

by Andrea L.T. Peterson

I'm not a woman; I'm not a man," explains *Gender Outlaw* author Kate Bornstein. But, "because people need a handle, and because it [the label] is convenient," she'll "cop to transgendered."

While most people take their gender for granted, Bornstein, born Albert Herman Bornstein almost 50 years ago, never had that luxury. As a youngster, Al never perceived himself to truly be a "boy" by society's definition, and as he grew up,

for naturally gendered people, the culture may, in fact, be *creating* the gendered people. In other words, the culture may be creating gender."

Bornstein, perceiving herself to be "standing outside the 'natural' gender," thought that she was "some monster" and that her being a monster was her own fault.

What Bornstein does—in her book and in her life—is examine the so-called "natural" genders, only to find that male and female are sorely lacking.

Books

he never believed himself to be a "man" either.

Decades later—and almost a full decade after undergoing the surgical procedure that would make him the closest thing to being a woman, by our culture's definition, that he could ever get—Bornstein (no longer Al, but Kate) is certainly no longer a male: "The culturally agreed-upon marker," she explains, "is gone [surgically and very permanently removed]."

So Bornstein, and others like her, require some new category. If one considers the variations on Bornstein's theme, one would find a countless number of groups of people who clearly transcend the narrow confines of accepted definitions of male and female. All fit easily under Bornstein's heading, "transgressively gendered," from the heterosexual woman who adopts the tough, no-nonsense business demeanor—complete with power suit and rigid (often thought to be frigid) interior—to the post-op male-to-female who may (or may not) believe she is a lesbian.

"There are many intelligent people who insist they are women who have definitions [of being a woman] I don't fall into," she laments. Hence, no longer male, Bornstein isn't exactly female either.

All transcend definitions of male and female, all "break the rules, codes and shackles of gender" in the eyes of the society that will not provide a place for them.

While Bornstein has been more than adequately "re-formed" surgically and she has been living as the woman she perceived herself to be for most of her life, there can be no denying that young Al Bornstein was still raised to be an empowered, privileged member of society—a male. Bornstein makes this point very clearly in *Gender Outlaw*. "It's something," she says, "I work on every day of my life," referring to her struggle to "overcome that socially ingrained garbage that makes a man a man."

The difficulty of finding a "new category" doesn't trouble Bornstein. "Instead of imagining gender as opposite poles of a two-dimensional line," she says, "it would be interesting to twirl that line in space, and then spin it through several more dimensions. In this way, many more possibilities of gender may be explored."



Kate Bornstein

"It was a "Zen gender moment," she says, when she realized that she was neither male nor female—by Webster's definitions—and "there was nowhere else in the culture to turn."

Instead of labeling all of these new-found possibilities, Bornstein asks why we need labels to begin with. As she says, "people need a handle," a way of understanding, but, as history reveals, the damage done by and the limitations imposed by labels frequently do more harm than good.

In her book, she explains: "I write from the point of view of an S/M transsexual, ex-cult member, femme top and sometimes bottom shaman... of a used-to-be-man, three husbands, father, first mate... minister, high-powered IBM sales type, Pierre Cardin three-piece suitor, bar mitzvahed, circumcised yuppie from the East Coast. Not too many women are writing from that point of view."

Bornstein envisions a "third space" that would include "anyone who falls through the cracks of the cultural floorboards; it would include anyone who challenges a cultural binary; it would include anyone who is Other."

"I write," she goes on, "from the point of view of a used-to-be politically correct, wanna-be butch, dyke phone sex hostess, smooth-talking, telemarketing, love slave, art slut, pagan Tarot reader, maybe soon grandmother, crystal palming, incense burning, not-man, not-always woman, fast becoming a Marxist. And not too many men write from that point of view."

This kind of understanding would turn the culturally accepted standard on its head. The question of who and what are normal and who and what are queer would become extremely challenging.

For the author of *Gender Outlaw*, this book is both an ending and a beginning. It is the culmination of 40-plus years of trying to understand her unique focus on the so-called male/female spectrum—what she refers to as "the male/female binary" that pretty much rules our culture.

The perceived minority—so perceived because it is so fragmented and rife with infighting—would likely turn out to be the majority.

And, it is also a beginning. For, in and throughout *Gender Outlaw*, Bornstein seems to realize new questions, new interpretations, and possible new options.

Bornstein raises dozens of questions in her book. Some are questions she must answer for herself, and some must be answered for all of us and for the well-being of our society. What seem like simple questions have universal implications.

Among Bornstein's premises is this: "The culture [ours] may not simply be creating roles

The answers to the questions and the solutions to the challenges do not seem to be forthcoming. Bornstein, however, has an interim plan: "Until that time [until there is this third space], my feeling is that today we need, as queer artists, to strengthen our outsider sensibility, keep it fluid enough to be inclusive of other groups, inflammatory enough to challenge and wear down dominant ideology, and full of enough grace and humor to welcome with a laugh the inevitable challenges to our own rigidity."