



Sissies and Tomboys: Gender Nonconformity and Homosexual Childhood

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In 1973, homosexuality was officially depathologized with a revision in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatry. In 1980, a new diagnosis appeared: Gender Identity Disorder of Childhood (GID). The shift separated gender from sexuality, while it simultaneously reinforced traditional concepts of "male" and "female" and made it possible for cross-gendered behavior and/or identification to be deemed psychiatric illness.

What is the difference then between a child being called a sissy on the playground and being labeled with a disorder in a psychiatric hospital? Combining theory and personal narrative, this volume interrogates the meaning of "the normal" that pervades the literature on GID and investigates the theoretical underpinnings of the diagnosis. Sissies and Tomboys considers how the stigma of illness influences a child's development and what homosexual childhood, freed from the constraints of conventionally acceptable gender expression, might look like.



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