



## **MASS MEDIA MANAGEMENT OF TRANSGENDERED IDENTITY**

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The purpose of our study was to analyze daytime talk shows with transgender themes in order to detect styles of mass media management of transgendered identity. Methodology consisted of content and visual analysis of talk shows devoted to transgendered themes that were aired between 1992 and 1998. Our study was limited to male to female cross-dressing behavior.

Our research findings support Erving Goffman's (1961) seminal work in which he argues that normative behaviors and appearances are protected through the management of stigmatized identity. In analyzing talk shows we discovered a purposeful presentation of versions of transgendered identity that reinforced the common stereotype of transgendered identity as marginal and deviant. This protected the more mainstream audience and allowed them to "accept" the transgendered community as being something separate and alien from their lives and experiences. Clear distinctions between male and female dress and behavior were also maintained as the exaggerated versions of femininity most commonly presented to the audience reinforced the idea that while men may dress as women, they still appear "costumed" as women but are essentially men.

Goffman, Ed. (1963). Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.