

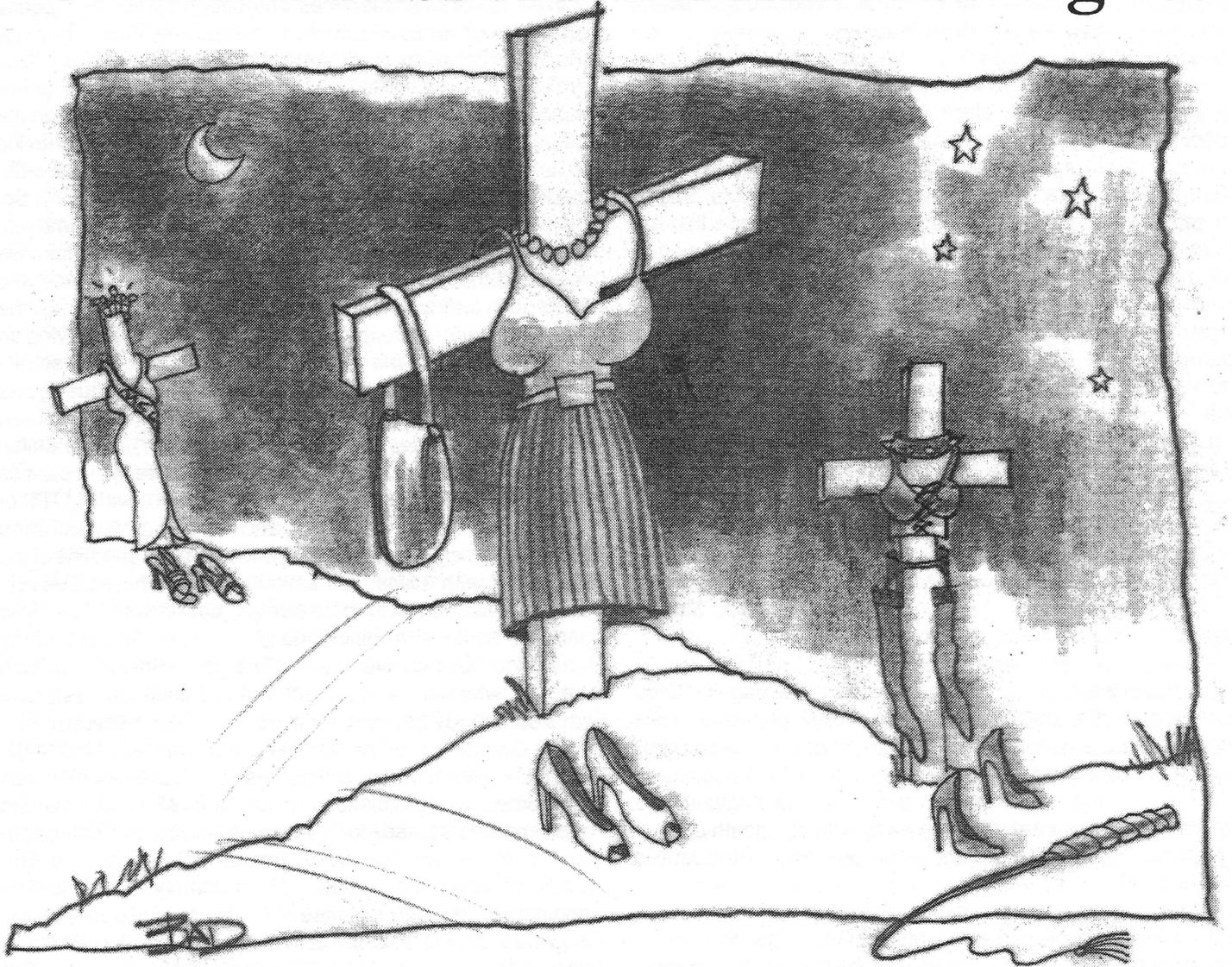
TV GUIDE

Vol. I, Issue 10

A Polygenderous Polemic Still In Process

Feb./Mar., 1992

Cross Dressers Strike At Night!



Striking evidence of the existence of Cross Dressers is becoming more and more evident to Mr. & Mrs. America and all the little Bo-Beeps that see. This depiction greeted all the readers reading this caption, and will continue to stand as mute testimony to the fact that things are indeed not what they seem. Proving that Bumps are not the only thing that "go in the night," it can now be surmised that Cross Dressers can be playful as well as pretentious.

Calendar— see back page

Billie Jean Blabs

Dear Darlings,

Gosh, here it is March 6 already, spring has sprung—and my my my, doesn't time fly when you're having fun? Well, just to have a little balance in this opening paragraph, I've had a terrible cold since the middle of February: coughing, sneezing, dizzy, and alla that kinda stuff, too.

I really liked Cindy Martin's comments about me in ETVC's newsletter, especially that **TV Guise** is *the indispensable source* to find out where Billie Jean has been and what she's been wearing. So let's just get on with it shall we?

I wore man-drag to ETVC's social of January 30, except for a pair of red panties, black knee-highs and black leather boots, my tiara, scepter and "Miss ETVC" banner. Hadda good time visiting and blabbing. Wore about the same outfit Feb. 1 (sans tiara, scepter and banner), to the "Ms. Sacramento Valley Leather Contest" at JTC (two people told me they didn't know what "JTC" meant—Joseph's Town & Country). The place was packed with happy people. My camera, after twenty years of almost faithful service finally crapped out. So, during the week, I shopped around in my tan pants, tan and brown shirts, white socks, black tennis shoes and various colored panties (I mean I do change my underwear daily—how am I doing Cindy?) until I bought a new used one (look an oxymoron!). Hadda a mini-family reunion with some relatives who came in for a rodeo in Sacramento, but the most fun was taking the women shopping (who else could they trust?). Oh yes indeedee, mom finally got to spend her Macy's gift certificate. She spent an hour or more checking out dresses, finally picked one out and started for the cashier. I caught up to her and said, "Mom, I bought the same dress last month."

"Good," she said, "we'll do lunch."

So when we do, expect a photo within these pages (Cindy seemed a little disappointed that I *only* published *four* photos of me last month—gee whiz, girl, at least I liked em—which is more than I can say of the one ETVC published. Crapola, Leslie is staring forward, Loren is beginning to speak, and there I am blabbing away with my mouth open... hmmm... I guess that's what I look like most of the time... never mind).

Made it to both of the last CGNIE Court meetings, where I was warmly congratulated as Miss ETVC—Thank You my Imperial siblings. The big news with the Court is the upcoming Coronation and stepping down celebration for Emperor XVIII Leonard Harris and Empress XVIII Lady Garnet, April 25, 1992. As with all Courts, the candidates for new Monarchs will be campaigning until a week before Coronation. This year the candidates will be introduced after "La Cage Awful," a show to introduce and select the awfulest drag queen in town, which will be held at The Townhouse, 1517 21st Street, Sac. 8pm. Also, as with all Courts, the Thursday evening before Coronation will be the "In Town Show & Roast," and on Friday, the "Out of Town Show." The Sunday after will be a "Victory Brunch" at Faces (check calendar for dates, times, costs). For those who might wish to integrate

and outreach, volunteers are needed to help serve brunch—call Al Congleton, the caterer at 927-7525.

Hadda another good time in Walnut Creek with the Diablo Valley Girls and guests. The instigators of that group have pledged support for the three fund raisers I have suggested as Miss ETVC. Basically, I want to do a fund raiser for a women's group, a men's group and a homeless/hungry provider group. Persons with ideas and energy are invited to contact this writer.

Well, full of antihistamines and cough syrup, my spouse and I took off for San Francisco on Saturday, February 27 for the SF Coronation, "OZ, Were The Rainbow Begins." She drove while I shaved my legs with the 'ol electric razor (a few curious stares from other cars while I had my legs up on the dashboard—what'sa matter, ya never seen a guy shaving inna car?). Then the 'ol car overheated and we got side-tracked while I fixed it (sure glad I didn't have my nails on). So, by the time we got to The City, there wasn't much time left. Scrape, scrape, splash-dab, smear-pat, some careful lines here and there, stuff-stuff, and Presto! I had my face and body on in *only* two hours! And, since I had spent almost the entire day before shopping for a frock for this event (trying on a dozen dresses and gowns— in man-drag of course, it's faster and besides, the salesgirls think it's cute), I **just gotta tell ya what I wore!** (Are ya ready Cindy?) First, some lacy, skimpy blue panties (they "hold" better, see?), some shiny, gold-tone pantihose, with another pair of white, lycra panties (the final "hold"), a little demi-cup cream bra with LOTS of padding (for Mondo Cleavage), and this cute, spaghetti strap blue cocktail dress with sequins and satin and crinoline slips, topped off with a little blue satin top with gathered sleeves, and bottomed out with blue pumps, set off with blue glass pendant earrings, a rhinestone bracelet and anklet and my tiara. Hoo-boy did I ever feel SPIFFY getting into the cab with the Mrs, who was resplendent in a red satin jumpsuit (she says somebody has to wear the pants in our relationship).

The Coronation for the "Mother Court" was full of MONDO-Production numbers and costumes. Each presentation was awesome. Congratulations to Emperor Michael Bowman and Empress Caresse for a year well served, and Congratulations to the new Monarchs, Emperor Douglass and Empress Velveeta Mozzarella. Unfortunately for some, the whole thing "drug" (past tense of drag—get the pun?) on too long (like until 1:30am). ETVC was introduced with the visiting dignitaries, and Mrs. Billie Jean and I were introduced as, "Miss ETVC and her lovely wife." Way cool.

So we returned to our comfy room and played around there, really not much that would be of interest to readers who belong to "non-sexual social and support groups." Later that Sunday, we went shopping at the South-of-Market outlet

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stores (fabulous earrings, darlings). And, guess who bought two dresses? Yes, the girl who has worn pants all winter!

Well, to make what isn't a short story into a longer one, I spent the next Tuesday packing, packing, packing so I could fly to San Antonio Wednesday morning to attend the fourth annual Texas 'T' Party. Flew Southwest Airlines, which means ya get a cheap fair, but ya gotta take-off and land four times to get to San Antonio. Six hours plus a two hour time difference (yes, they even tell time differently in Tex-ass), and six teeny little bags of peanuts later, I ARRIVED. I stumbled outta the airport and lucked into the hotel shuttle and bingo! I wuz checked in and unloading my bags by 7:30pm, only a half hour past the time for the evenings event (FOOD!).

Now I gotta tell ya about an article that Cynthia Phillips, one of the organizers of the 'T' Party had written about why male-women shouldn't wear mini-skirts (dress yer age and stuff). So, that's enough about the article.

As soon as I unpacked, I raced through my transformation, slipped on some lace stockings, dropped a sheer lace top over a black bra, slithered into a black lace mini-skirt, topped it with an off-white blazer with black trim, added some silver accessories, stepped into a pair of black suede pumps and called the front desk to find out where the "Magic Time Machine" was (location of the feedbag). "Not in the hotel," said the voice. Hmmm. But she found out it was a cab ride away and called a cab for me. The driver was bummed ("Can't make no money") because the Secret Service had a bunch of downtown blocked off because our National Father Figure, George (The Pinhead) Bush was in town for an International Drug Conference. Anyway, I walked into the MTM at five after ten, and was told the entire party had left "about five minutes ago." The restaurant was closed but the bar was open so I hadda bottle of mineral water to go with my "Tex-Mex Chicken Fingers" appetizer (chomp chomp). It took another thirty minutes to get a cab back, and this driver wanted to know: "Are you wearing panties?" (He should read this newsletter!)

When I got back to the hotel, there wasn't any evidence of Party Girls around the lobby so I asked where the bar was, found it, and found the Party Girls! And Dan the bartender. Then I found out there was a Hostility Suite for the 'T' Party where you were supposed to register. So I registered and met Cynthia Phillips (her spouse Linda had already retired for the evening). Back at the bar, I blended into the Party Girl crowd and hadda great time closing the bar. Coupla daze later I told Cynthia about reading her article and deciding to wear a mini-skirt for the first evening. "You looked great," she said. "I actually wrote that with one specific person in mind." (Cynthia is a more complex and interesting person than this implies.)

Of course, the next day I wore a mid-calf outfit in a magenta floral print with genuine silk stockings from Victoria's Secret (with a white garter belt from Penneys'), and made the "Fashion Show Luncheon" at poolside in the lobby. A buncha the ladies got to model lingerie, and another group modelled dresses custom tailored to the unique requirements of male-women, *after we had all ravaged the feedbag*. Then I spent most of the rest of the day blabbing, attended a coupla

seminars and showed up at the dinner banquet IN THE SAME OUTFIT (by contrast most everyone else had changed two or three times). Did have to touch up the face a coupla times. Managed to get out of the bar before closing, though.

Went on a "City Tour" the next morning (10am). Charter bus to here and there and downtown where we all went on a barge ride on the San Antonio River. The river is really a bunch of canals that pass through the day and night spots. We had several chances to wave and smile at the locals (one small group who "made" us and let out a great cheer deserves special mention). Back on the bus to the Alamo—much walking walking walking through the tourist attraction—then the "Governor's Guest House" or whatever—nobody really cared for anything other than LUNCH. Our tour guide got the message and we cruised on to the barbecue feedbag location and Chomped away. I wanted to check out a coupla seminars back at the hotel so I excused myself from the charming group of ladies and shared a cab back to the hotel with another 'T' participant from Southern Ca. (ya know, there were forty-nine people from Ca, but I was the only one from the North—what gives? Scared of the redneck reputation? Forget that, everyone during my entire stay was benign and several were outright friendly). So after the seminars, I went shopping with Anne, a friend from Fantasia Fair. We walked around the biggest mall and Anne bought a skirt from Sak's, where we got a perfume sample (I was only looking for cool shoes but none of the stores carried gunboat sizes). OH! DAMNITALL ANYWAY! I forgot to tell ya what I was wearing—gee wilikers, sorry about that. Okay, basic lingerie with plum colored wool pants and a cream blouse that was sheer enough to show off a lacy camisole; black flats, pearl accessories and rose-colored sunglasses—day wear!

(I oughta mention a few other people from FanFair besides Anne: Andrea Susan, Gloria, Virginia Prince, Vickie; the IFGE contingent—Merissa, Yvonne, Holly Cross, Laura Smiley, Nancy Cole; in fact the whole Board was at the 'T'—Linda Buten, Ellen Summers, Jane Ellen Fairfax, et al. Also met Trisha (what a gas), Patricia Ann, Rudi, Linda, Joanne Roberts (Nevada), Kristie, Lauren Frieden, Leigh, Jackie, Marlayna Lacie, Melissa Foster, Suzannah, Bren & Ruthann Piranio, and about too many other people I can't remember right now. Ya know what kids? There were 285 people at Thursday night's dinner and the first official day was Friday.)

Back at the hotel, I changed into the aforementioned blue cocktail dress and tiara, rode the elevator to the lobby with four or five other "ladies," and hung around the lobby for a few minutes smiling and saying hello to everyone. I paused for a while and reflected on what was happening: two-thirds of the hotel were being occupied by 'T' Party guests and vendors; a few of the regular hotel guests—businessmen mainly—were hanging around the lobby checking in and out and waiting for elevators. A small group were talking together and I started to get an idea of what it was like for them: They were outnumbered. They were the minority (do ya think they might have started thinking about maybe they should have brought a nightgown or something?)

There were 335 people at dinner, seventy of them spouses

(Continued on next page)

Billie Jean Blabs, and blabs — (Continued from page 3)

accompanying their spouses. By this time Anne had her fifth outfit of the day on (she started the day by wearing a floral nightgown under a—get this—mink coat!).

One of the most special people I met there (we had corresponded before) was Dallas Denny of AEGIS. Such a warm heart and fine mind— she's very special in many ways— check out Chyalis Quarterly if you can; if you are TS inclined: Buy a subscription. Another special person I met was Phyllis Randolph Frye, Attorney and much, much more.

Actually, everyone I met was special, and I don't have a negative thing to say about anyone or any of the "segments" of the 'T' Party—EXCEPT FOR NOT INTRODUCING MISS ETVC AT SATURDAY'S BANQUET—it was a fun social.

Okay, moving right along here (although I may expand on the 'T' in a future issue), we might as well get on to... what I wore on Saturday!

Well, I woke up in my pink nightgown (from Goodwill, naturally), stripped it off and jammed on my man-drag pants, T-shirt and windbreaker, slipped on the 'ol black leather boots, grabbed my room key and wobbled to the elevator, dropped down to the coffee pot, bought a blueberry muffin, refilled the coffee cup and ascended back to the ninth floor

(basic morning routine). After a quick shit, shower and shave, I painted my face, performed a breast and hip enhancement procedure, wiggled on a pair of new pantihose, slipped into a red camisole and matching half-slip, and donned the aforementioned suit-dress that matches moms', stepped into a pair of red pumps, accessorized in red and gold and booked.

Later that evening I changed into a long, pleated split-skirt (you know, pants), a black silk shell, and a black, boxy, long blazer with brass buttons, accessorized with giant pearls and bottomed out with the black suede pumps.

So that's what I wore during the 'T' Party, darlings. Except for the next day at breakfast: man-drag. Hell, it's easier, faster and I don't care if it gets wrinkled on airplanes.

Then I caught my flight, puddle-jumped back to Sac, crashed in my crib, woke up, fetched the mail, read Cindy's column, digested it for a coupla daze while recovering from a lack-o-sleep, and then dashed over to the keyboard and tapped this out COMPLETELY AND ABSOLUTELY DRESSED IN MEN'S CLOTHES!

Luv,

Billie Jean



Poolside for the Fashion Show Luncheon.



Friday Night Fashion Models.



Photo Credit: Andrea Susan.



With Virginia and Andrea Susan.
Photo Credit: Anonymous (with Andrea's camera).

Is Cross-dressing "Wrong?"

© 1992 by Lauren Hotchkiss

Well, I'm really going to walk right in and put my foot into this time.

I was told when I was young never to discuss politics and religion if I wanted to get along with people. Well, it's certainly already too late for the former: as a gender activist and Outreach Director of the Gender Alternatives League I am steadfastly violating the first rule, while with the risky title of this article, I am as certainly obliterating the second. I sure hope SOMEBODY still likes me when they've finished reading this.

During our journey along the path of self-acceptance, most of us have experienced a good deal of guilt around the issue of cross-dressing. Beyond the usual fears we all had in growing up—wondering if it meant we were gay or wanted a sex change—we also had to confront, at one time or another, our feelings regarding the issue of whether it was morally "right."

The Bible actually says very little on the subject other than a brief reference in Deuteronomy 22:5 which, in the King James version states: "No woman shall wear an article of man's clothing nor shall a man put on a woman's dress; for those that do these things are abominable to the Lord your God." It is a quotation that has been mistranslated and taken out of context from the original Aramaic text, in which, in a more literal translation, would read: "No man shall put on a dress to enter the woman's tent (*fear of rape*), nor shall a woman wear an article of man's clothing for the purposes of entering the holy temple (*from which women were prohibited by ancient Judaic Law*)." Its change from a conditional to an absolute is reflective of both the political and moral climate of the time and of the translating body.

Somewhere along the line, the whole subject of cross-dressing was blown out of proportion and transformed into a societal taboo. The issue, I feel, is not one of what clothing we choose to wear upon our bodies—I mean, c'mon, God could care less—but of how we feel about ourselves and the manner in which we treat each other. It is as "right" for us to express ourselves in the gender-expanded manner in which we do, as it is in others choices to live non gender-challenged lifestyle. In my own experience, I believe that I have grown as a person and in my spiritual awareness and ability to love, through the acceptance of who I am. I was much less at peace when I did not allow myself to express the true spirit of who I was. It interfered with my ability to connect with others from the heart.

It seems very strange, when I stop to think about it, that most of us feel we need to "dress" in order to give ourselves permission to display what we have separated and compartmentalized as "feminine" qualities. Spiritually, as well as biologically, we all have both the feminine and the masculine within us; gender having very little to do with the sex of the bodies that we inhabit. This being so, the concepts of male and female are not the "opposites" that we have been taught,

but are, rather, compliments: two parts of one complete whole.

The societal separation of male and female, stereotypically dividing the male into the hard "doer" and the female into the soft "planner" is an interesting phenomenon, as it was very much an aspect of humanity rather than God's. The Almighty never decreed, as far as I am aware, that things in life be segregated from each other as being either male OR female behaviors. The fact that we accord certain rights and respects to only one "sex" while denying it the expression of emotion and display of more gentle behavior than we allow in the other is of little value in any real sense.

Perhaps we should question the whole male/female relationship construct. Obviously it is not working when our entire society, its movies, books and television programs, are full of instances of the "opposite" sexes unable to relate to one another.

On the broader scale, the existence of war and aggression have, I feel, much to do with the sublimation and non-expression of the totality of the male/female balance within each of us. Perhaps the evolution (and the survival) of the human race lies in learning to integrate the male and female within ourselves.

It has often been said that we of the gender community are not like other men and women, but such is often the way of change. It takes the few to lead so that many will follow. Whether this involves, as it does for many of us, wearing a dress, or just learning to see from different perspectives, it's all a part of our forward progress and growth as a society and as individuals. Possibly, in time, the whole concept of masculine and feminine will no longer be necessary. As we evolve as a species, perhaps we will get closer and closer to the unity of ourselves and of all, and as such, a schism will no longer exist between the male and female essences of our being.

Hopefully the day will come when biological sex is no longer the arbiter of permissible dress and behavior, and it will no longer matter what we choose to wear, nor how we wish to behave, as long as we do no harm to others.

Whether we believe in God, the power of the universe, or the great Goombah is of little importance. It is faith that is important. Faith in ourselves and in the path that we follow. Isn't it time that we accepted ourselves and each other for whatever personal spiritual truth we are called upon to follow?

Gratuitious Filler

Back issues of **TV Guide** (April, May & June) are still available by mail for one-fifty (\$1.50) postage paid; the July, August, September, October, November & Dec/Jan issues are available for two bucks (\$2.00) postage paid (first class USA only). Also, for those may want **TV Guide** to continue, contributions (articles, letters, etc.), and faith donations (cash preferred) will be gladly, joyously, gratefully accepted. Due to demand, future issues will be mailed on a month-to-month basis for \$2.00 each, paid in advance (please include your address and make checks payable to Billie Jean Jones).

Sex, Gender & Sexual Expression

(Part 1 of 2 or 3)

Admitting Guilt

(The following bit of blabbing was prepared using excerpts from various publications and articles, including a textbook on Human Sexuality [Our Sexuality by Robert Crooks and Karla Baur, fourth edition © 1990, The Benjamin/Cummings Publishing Company, Inc.] All quoted material was used without permission.)

Introduction

Here I go into another exploratory adventure—so settle in, fasten your seat belts, and please, please, please, keep your arms and legs inside the ride at all times.

Sex, gender and sexual expression. How many sexes are there? How many genders are there? How many ways to express sexuality?

Some Ramblings

Are there only two sexes? Just male, or female? Biologically speaking, isn't that what we have been taught? We don't seem to consider "inter-sexed" people as a separate sex, do we? Hermaphrodites almost seem to be a mythical construct carried from the mists of antiquity—for example, how many hermaphrodites can you name? I can't name a one. Nor can I recall any mainstream cultural examples or stories that illustrate the existence of a biological "third sex" (or for that matter, a fourth or fifth). Of course, we have our X-rated "third sex" thanks to Kim Christie's (and others) exploitation of "chicks with dicks" in video movies. However, these are all males on hormones, with tits and dicks, and all these videos show is a lot of cock sucking and butt fucking—the so-called third sex being reduced to receptacles for penetration by macho males; essentially homosexual sex acts with a variation on anatomy. Certainly a variable as to biological classification—however, what do we call them? DNA coded males with combined hormonal balances and secondary sex characteristics? Pre-operative transsexuals? What if they opt for surgery? We would call them post-operative transsexuals (or "new women"). But neither is a biological classification. Neither is there a biological sex classification for a female who takes testosterone. That person is likewise called a pre-op transsexual, and after surgeries, a post-op (or "new man").

How long is a new man or woman a "new" one?

To make matters even more confusing, what do you call a woman who was classified female at birth, has always lived as a female-girl/woman, and undergoes a DNA test which reveals a male chromosome? We have the recent case of an Olympic athlete who has brought international focus to this issue—she was barred from competing as a female in the 1988 Olympic games, but has now been reinstated as a female. Literally thousands, perhaps millions of women may "fit" this, or a similar situation (chromosomal sex does not match anatomy). They marry, cannot get pregnant, and so they adopt children. Many of them do not menstruate.

What is the biological difference between a post-op transsexual (an XY "woman") person, and a no-op XY "woman" person? Is the no-op XY woman a biological or genetic

"transsexual?"

(For the purpose of chromosomal sex differentiation, X equals female, Y equals male; typical human cells other than reproductive cells have 46 chromosomes arranged in 23 pairs, of which 22 pairs match [autosomes, which are the same in males and females] and either a similar 'pair,' XX for females, or a dissimilar 'pair' XY for males.)

And what of Klinefelter's Syndrome? These are people born with an XXY sex chromosome structure, they develop anatomical male structures, are typically sterile with underdeveloped penises and testicles. They often experience breast development, rounded body contours and have low sex drives. Their sex chromosome contains a mix of both XX and XY; it is believed that any presence of a Y chromosome will cause some male anatomical structures to develop, and in the XXY person, it is believed the extra X impedes, or slows down the development of male characteristics.

There are people with XYY sex chromosomes, XO chromosomes, and at least sixty-seven other sex chromosome variations that are atypical from the typical two (XX and XY).

How many sexes are there is a fascinating question if one sheds the rigid idea of only two, and looks at the variations that nature produces. It is unfortunate that our contemporary (English) language reinforces the notion of only two sexes through the entrenched and prevalent use of the personal pronouns "he" and "she." It is also unfortunate that our language perpetuates the "superiority" of "he" over "she" through the use of *female*, *human*, *markind*, *woman*, and the literary use of "he" to describe everyone (at least this is slowly changing). Likewise, it is unfortunate that the dominant religion in our culture is pro-male, with an anthropomorphous male god who "created" men *first*, and then, "gave" the world a male son, seemingly without the willing cooperation of a female (reducing the importance of females—if god {a male} wants a son, the woman has no choice, she must submit to the dominant sex).

Our language owes its *gender specific* limitations to the Judeo-Christian institutions which form the legacy of our contemporary culture. Sex for procreation became Hebrew law in order to sustain Hebrew culture in the face of persecution, slavery, and exile from traditional lands ("be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth..."). Thus, penile-vaginal sex became "the norm." The early Christian church took this further when the writings and teachings of Paul of Tarsus were incorporated into the New Testament (the importance of overcoming "desires of the flesh"; and that celibacy was spiritually superior to marital sex—non-marital sex already being taboo). Subsequently, this dogmatic and fascist church, through the oppression of "the dark ages" (one-thousand years) managed to eliminate rational thought, scientific inquiry, cultural diversity, biological diversity, personal choice; censored the majority of previous human history and development, especially philosophic and spiritual developments in other cultures; and perpetuated the lack of equality for females; and perpetuated the right to own "slaves" of either sex. While other "religious" institutions have built and maintained patriarchal control systems of oppression, in this

culture we have "inherited" the Christian institutions which permeate nearly all of our contemporary social structures and cultural institutions. Thus, we are "controlled" to behave in accordance with our legacy of dehumanizing oppression, especially as regards specific gender role rigidity, bodily function "shame," and that sexual expression is "sinful."

In large measure, the power of this religious institution to control every aspect of a person's life was dispelled by scientific rationalization. While it is recognized now that the Earth is not the center of the universe, and that all other celestial bodies do not revolve around our planet (excepting our moon and various asteroids), we still say the sun *rises* and *sets*, even though we have the knowledge that our planets revolve into and out of our sun's discharge of an electromagnetic spectrum. And, even considering that there are at least seventy-two sex chromosome variations, virtually everyone in this culture believes there are only two sex classifications, and that if push comes to shove, a visual examination between the legs is conclusive.

In this modern world of medical advances, visual observation is no longer a precise indicator of sex classification, although it remains the basic method of classifying newborns. Due to world wide variances with the two primary sex classifications—a great variety of "atypical" births—and the advent of surgical "changelings," sex chromosome classification "tests" were designed to confirm whether a person was either male or female—which is another example of making theory fit the facts, rather than collecting the facts and developing a theory (for example, at the time of the Olympic athlete's chromosome test [1986], scientists knew there were at least seventy-two sex chromosome variations [1977]). Why perpetuate only two classifications? Say it's because our culture depends on perpetuating itself regardless of whether it is accurate.

Actually, scientific development recognizes sex chromosomes as one of six different levels of the process of sex differentiation, which are: 1) chromosomal sex; 2) gonadal sex; 3) hormonal sex; 4) sex of the internal reproductive structures; 5) sex of the external genitals; 6) sex differentiation of the brain.

In typical *mature* reproductive cells (ova and sperm) there are 22 autosomes (matched pairs) and an X chromosome (female egg or ovum, or male sperm), or Y chromosome (male sperm). At the moment of fertilization, the 23rd "pair" typically becomes XX or XY by "joining."

About six weeks after conception, the first step in the process of sex differentiation begins in the gonads (prior to that, prenatal development is identical for all human embryos). It is believed that perhaps a single gene (called TDF for testis determining factor) on the Y chromosome triggers "maleness" in the gonads, so that they begin developing as testis, rather than ovaries. Without this gene (or combination of genes) the gonads will develop as ovaries. Additionally, a substance called H-Y antigen, which appears to be under the control of the male-determining gene(s), must be present or the undifferentiated gonadal tissue will develop as ovaries. So, in spite of a Y chromosome, gonadal tissue will develop

as ovaries without specific masculinization signals.

As soon as the gonads differentiate into testis or ovaries, genetic influence ceases, and the control of biological sex determination is passed to the sex hormones, which belong to the general family known as steroids. Ovaries produce estrogens and progestinational compounds. Testes primarily produce androgens. Adrenal glands in both sexes also secrete sex hormones without regard to the sex of the person. Of the estrogens, the most important one for the complete development of female characteristics is estradiol; of the progestinational compounds, progesterone is important in regulating the menstrual cycle and stimulating the uterine lining in preparation of pregnancy. Of the androgens, testosterone is the most important for developing male sex characteristics, and sexual motivation. If a male fetus does not produce enough androgen secretions, and at the right time, its sex organs will develop as female in form and appearance. No specific female hormone is necessary to develop female structures, only the absence of male hormones is required.

About eight weeks after conception, two paired internal duct systems (the Mullerian ducts and the Wolffian ducts) undergo changes. If the fetus is chromosomally male and the gonads have differentiated into testes, the newly formed testes begin secreting two substances, one of which is called Mullerian inhibiting substance (MIS), this chemical causes the Mullerian ducts to shrink rather than develop as internal female structures. The other substance, androgens, causes the Wolffian ducts to develop into male internal structures: the vas deferens, seminal vesicles, and ejaculatory ducts. Without testosterone to stimulate its growth, the Wolffian ducts degenerate. When not suppressed by testes produced MIS and testosterone, Mullerian ducts develop into female internal structures: the fallopian tubes, uterus, and inner third of the vagina.

External genitalia begin developing after the sixth week. Prior to that all human embryos possess undifferentiated rudimentary external genital tissues which are located below the umbilical cord, and consists of: the **genital tubercle**, **genital folds**, and the **labioscrotal swelling**. In the absence of testosterone, the genital tubercle becomes the **clitoris**, the genital folds become the inner vaginal lips (**labia minora**), and two sides of the labioscrotal swelling differentiate into the outer vaginal lips (**labia majora**). If testosterone is adequately present and begins circulating in the bloodstream of males, it is converted in some tissues into a hormone called dihydrotestosterone (DHT) which stimulates the labioscrotal swelling to fuse and form the **scrotum**, the genital folds to fuse around the urethra to form the **shaft of the penis**, and the genital tubercle to differentiate into the **glans of the penis**. By the twelfth week, the process is complete and observable.

Brain sex differentiation primarily occurs in the hypothalamus where, at the onset of puberty, the hypothalamus directs the pituitary gland to release female hormones in a cyclic fashion, creating the menstrual cycle. In males, the male hormones are released at a steady rate. It is believed that the

(Continued on next page)

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presence or absence of circulating testosterone during prenatal differentiation determines the estrogen sensitivity of certain specialized receptor cells in the hypothalamus— if testosterone is present, the cells become insensitive to estrogen, otherwise they develop a high level of estrogen sensitivity. The cerebral hemispheres of the brain (left and right) are also thought to have sex differentiation characteristics, although these may be a result of social influences (left brain specialties such as language, in which females “score” better; right brain specialties such as spatial relationships, in which males “score” better). However, there is evidence that the cerebral cortex in the right brain hemispheres of males is larger than the left, and that in females, the cerebral cortex is larger in the left than in the right. One theory is that testosterone inhibits left hemisphere development and results in greater development in the right hemisphere.

For the purpose of this dialog, the preceding is a typical path to biological sex classification that would result in a typical female or male person. (*Writer's self admitted bias note: I am avoiding the terms normal and abnormal due to their negative connotations.*) As mentioned, there are at least seventy-two variations of chromosomal sex differentiation, which is only the first step in the process.

Some of the more interesting biological variations include **True hermaphrodites**, who have both ovarian and testicular tissues in their bodies (very rare), and may develop one ovary and one testis, or two of each, or their gonads may be a combination called ovotestes. Their external genitalia often a mix of the typical two, and in some cases may have functional penises, sperm producing testis and, completely functional uteruses (including menstruating and egg production). It is a matter of conjecture as to whether a true hermaphrodite (TH) can self-impregnate— however, there are recorded instances of THs who have birthed babies.

More commonly found are **pseudohermaphrodites**, whose gonadal sex matches chromosomal sex but whose internal and/or external sex structures do not match or are incomplete. Such biological sex classification is called *ambiguous*.

Fetally Androgenized Females (FAF) are XX chromosomally and develop female internal sex structures but due to excessive androgens in the prenatal environment, they develop masculinized external sex structures. That is, the clitoris looks like a penis, the labia are often fused and appear to be scrotums. Through hormone therapy and surgery these children can become fully functional females, although if the condition is not recognized they become more masculinized through puberty. In a study of twenty-five of these people who were identified at birth as atypical females, and given medical “correction,” all continued to live a feminine gender role, although 80% expressed significant dissatisfaction with their gender identity (compared to twenty-five typical females without androgen influence).

Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS) in male (XY) children results in incomplete internal sex structures and female external sex structures. This condition is usually not recognized at birth, the children are raised as females, and the condition is usually discovered when they do not begin

menstruating. They experience breast development and other secondary sex differentiation because the undescended testes produce estrogen and they are insensitive to androgens. Additionally, since their internal sex structures have not developed, they only have a shallow vagina. Minor surgery can increase the barrel of the vagina to accommodate a penis, but “she” cannot reproduce. In a study of ten of these children, nine developed feminine gender roles despite XY chromosomes and male gonads; the tenth, who had a very disturbed family background, developed gender identity confusion.

DHT-Deficient Males are XY chromosomally, but due to an inability to prenatally convert testosterone into dihydrotestosterone (DHT) they do not develop external male sex structures. At birth they have internal male structures but their testes are undescended, their stunted penises are mistaken for clitorises, and they often have partially formed vaginas and incompletely formed scrotums. Eighteen of these “boys” who were identified as females and reared accordingly in the macho Dominican Republic were studied by a research team from Cornell University (study published in 1979). While their early development could not be studied, at puberty some very strange things occurred which form the basis of the study. At puberty each one of these “girls” undescended testes began an accelerated production of testosterone, their voices deepened, their clitoral-like organs enlarged and became penises, and their testes finally descended. All but two of the eighteen assumed a masculine gender role. One remained in the feminine gender without surgery, the other sought surgery. In a related study of Sambia (New Guinea) DHT-Deficient Males, with similar results, the researchers concluded that cultural valuation of the male role makes gender switching (F to M) pragmatically adaptive.

While my main purpose herein is to illustrate biological basis of sex differentiation, and to a degree biological gender attributes, the above also touches upon cultural gender roles— something that is perhaps infinitely more complicated than biology, and which will be touched upon later. For now, I desire to explore some biological conjecture.

Who can say that our earliest ancestors were not true hermaphrodites? Capable of self fertilization, and capable of fertilizing and being fertilized.

In some theories of the evolution of one-celled organisms into multi-celled organisms, it has been posited that the one-celled organisms *consumed* each other— as food. At some point the action of consuming resulted in a *joining* of cells and multi-celled organisms developed and evolved. Taking that concept a million years later, say we have true hermaphroditic ambulatory bipeds who, instead of self-impregnation, repeated the “joining” sexually (from genetic, cellular memory) and produced atypical organisms (when possible— remember there were no “communities,” people were mainly nomadic). They began cross-fertilizing and a greater variety of ambulatory bipeds were birthed, fewer and fewer who were *typical* hermaphrodites. Thus, due to the random matching of random sex chromosomes, people evolved who were

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due to testosterone, females develop fat deposits (bust, hips, legs) due to estrogen. If either sex-type were to undergo atypical hormone therapy at the time of puberty, the effects would tend to be opposite of the typical.

Further, due to the effects of testosterone, males develop coarser body hair that is widely distributed over the body in higher density than in females. Males also find themselves with deeper voices and pointed tracheas.

So, now we come to biological sex gender attributes: Generally, males are taller, speak in deeper voices, have coarse facial and body hair, tougher skin, broad shoulders and narrow hips. Females are generally shorter, speak in high registers, have sparser, finer facial and body hair, softer skin, narrow shoulders and wide hips. Females live with a monthly hormonal cycle of ovulation and menstruation (roller coaster emotions) in addition to daily adrenal releases; females carry fetuses to term. Males undergo a daily cycle of organic hormone releases with testosterone producing a more aggressive state of emotions.

In behavior attributed to biology, females menstruate and attend to the result, males do not; females generally swing their arms wider than males (to avoid hitting the hips); males impregnate females, who carry fetuses to term and lactate; females squat to pee, males stand; females "intuit," males "rationalize"; and, owing to body size, males lift and carry heavier objects, and reach for higher objects than females; males tend to expose their bodies to rougher treatment by the elements of nature than do females who must protect their softer epidermis.

In spite of the differences described, the sexes are more alike biologically than not, and we all metabolize, circulate blood, breathe, drink, eat, burp, fart and shit about the same.

It appears that most all other differences "between the sexes" are cultural gender attributes, not biological.

One of the curious cultural behaviors due to a biological difference is that males shave their faces almost daily— is that emulation of females? I mean, wouldn't a "real man" want to show off his hairy face? (Hey, girly-man, why you got such naked face?)

Anyway, let's go back to the Olympic athlete for a moment. A medical committee of the International Athletic Federation (IAF) recommended that sports directors abandon their increasingly complex genetic tests in favor of just looking at the individuals' genitals!

This runs counter to the International Olympic Committees (IOC) adoption of testing for "male" genes in cells— a test which, in light of scientific research, can not be accurate due to the facts that there are too many variations in sex chromosomes and hormonal development to determine just what constitutes "femaleness" and "maleness."

Dr. Maria New, head of pediatrics at New York Hospital—Cornell Medical Center, in an article related to the above published in the New York Times, stated that, "It is unfair to single out X and Y chromosomes as sole determinants of gender and who has a genetic advantage in sports." She also stated that "among her patients are hundreds of little girls who have typical sex chromosomes (XX) but have male-muscle

patterns and masculinized genitals (estimating one in 13,000 births have this condition)." Further, that she "often sees boys and men who, despite having typical male chromosomes, are unexpectedly found to have a uterus."

Dr. David C. Page of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology stated in the same article that, "If there is any justification at all for testing athletes, it is to bar those with male muscle mass. The connection between the presence or absence of a Y chromosome and muscle mass is very indirect and requires a number of intervening steps. To focus on one of the first features in sex differentiation—the presence or absence of a Y chromosome—when what you really care about is hormonal differences that underlie muscle mass really misses the mark."

Golly, kids. I can see it all now: The 1996 Olympic games where XY gender explorers can compete in the Sixty-yard High-Heel Hurdles against Fetally Androgenized Females (Pre, Post, or No—allowances given). Gosh.

To sum up all this blabbing about sex chromosomes, scientists do not believe they determine gender (let alone sex). In my own not-so-humble opinion, I believe there are about 10,000 or so sex types. Yeah, that sounds about right; of course, there could be about a million, more or less—who knows? (certainly not the scientists). I suppose the only people who think they do know are the No-Choicers, like moralists, politicians, accountants, warriors and lawyers who are trying to maintain rigid control of this planet and its inhabitants who sometimes tend to follow the fluid and flexible path of the Universe we find ourselves being woven into—the Universe of change (the constant), and entropy (the second law of thermodynamics).

As far as biological classifications of sex is concerned, we have Females, Males, True hermaphrodites, and Ambiguous, all of which have several variations—it's kind of too bad we barely have words and symbols to describe these classifications. However, I believe there are enough examples of complexity to determine that the area of sex differentiation and classification is not a simple-minded, binary case of one or the other. (This "trashes" the concept of "opposite sex," doesn't it?—opposite of what?)

As far as gender perception, identity, presentation, choice, etc. is concerned, I believe only a fool would rigidly adhere to any single model as typical for a "sex." And, I include those who reject aspects of themselves, and others, in order to construct models they are in favor of, such as a well-known figure in the so-called "gender community" who advocates taking a femme name completely unrelated to one's masculine name in order to "get rid of" vestiges of masculinity. Likewise, those who advocate that male-women of the cross-dresser variety should sit on toilet seats with their "feet pointing the right way" in rest rooms that are specifically reserved for cross-dressers, are sexist fools (the absolute majority of female-women that I know avoid public rest rooms, preferring their own bathrooms to the point of extreme bladder pain—and the latest development in urinals for females is a stand-up version).

(I gotta tell ya about another little annoyance of mine—

every time I see a certain prominent "leader" of the so-called "gender community" when I'm in typical man-drag, she points out that she has seen me "look better"—i.e. in femme-drag. So, at a recent event, she started in on another person I was talking to by saying to them: "You look much better 'dressed.'" That person said, "Well, I..." And I jumped in with: "Wait a minute, You're wearing a sweatshirt and so is she; you're wearing pants and flats and so is she; you're wearing no make up, except a natural lip color, same for her except no lipstick; you both have a gold chain; your hair is longer than hers—what's the difference?" For this comparison, I received a, hmm, shall we say a "cool glance?").

(This writer could easily suggest that a matriarchal social structure could develop that is just as oppressive as a patriarchal one, but the honest point being rather that we would all be better off if we diffused our differences to the point of tolerance, acceptance, and ultimately embraced diversity as the harmonious way of the Universe.)

In conclusion, there is no conclusion, so check out some quotes: the first from the Gospel of Thomas, recorded as sayings of Jesus, which was excluded from the *New Testament* by the "fathers" of the Christian church—

"And when you make the inner
as the outer, the outer as the inner,
and the upper as the lower,
and when you make male and female
into one, so the male shall not be
male and the female shall not
be female, then you shall enter
paradise."

Well, it's not very difficult to understand why that wasn't included. Second quote is from *Orlando*, a biographical novel by Virginia Woolf, originally published in 1928; briefly, in this story, Orlando, born a male, grows up to be a distinguished and decorated man, and at the height of his station (seventeenth century Dukedom), wakes up to discover he is a woman (with female anatomy). We join the narrative at a point where the writer is describing the differences within Orlando; such differences as have been changing since the transformation:

"...what was said a short time ago about there being no change in Orlando the man and Orlando the woman, was ceasing to be altogether true. She was becoming a little more modest, as women are, of her brains, and a little more vain, as women are, of her person. Certain susceptibilities were asserting themselves, and others were diminishing. The change of clothes had, some philosophers will say, much to do with it. Vain trifles as they seem, clothes have, they say, more important offices than merely to keep us warm.... Thus, there is much to support the view that it is clothes that wear us and not we them; we may make them take the mould of arm or breast, but they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking.... That is the view of some philosophers and wise ones, but on the whole, we incline to another. The difference between the sexes is, quite happily, one of great profundity. Clothes are but a symbol of something hid deep beneath. It was a change in Orlando herself that dictated her

choice of a woman's dress and of a woman's sex. And perhaps in this she was only expressing rather more openly than usual—openness indeed was the soul of her nature—something that happens to most people without being thus plainly expressed. For here again, we come to a dilemma. Different though the sexes are, they intermix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what it is above."

(I always wanted to write about the Truth, and that's why I find literary fiction to be so worthy of attention.)

The third quote is from something I've read but I can't remember exactly where, and so this is a paraphrase: "Gender is what divides us from our shared humanity."

At first glance a rather simple statement—but consider that in our culture, gender is an attitude of opposites, of opposition. In the 1950's, rigid stereotypes in dress, mannerisms and appearance (except smooth faces) served to divide us as people sharing our experience (this is our contemporary legacy). In the Western concept of duality, everything is held in opposition—force vs. force. In early Hindu spiritual philosophy, duality is held as complimentary—inseparable, one can't exist without the other. In modern physics, the study of sub-atomic structure has progressed from "a basic building block of the Universe," meaning that there is a divisible element that underlies all matter and energy, to "an integrated model of dynamic tension," where complimentary (and seemingly opposite) forces are indivisible—one can't exist without the other. In *The Tao of Physics* (second edition), Fritjof Capra writes (referencing Eastern mysticism):

"The basic oneness of the universe is not only the central characteristic of the mystical experience, but is also one of the most important revelations of modern physics. It becomes apparent at the atomic level and manifests itself more and more as one penetrates deeper in matter, down to the realm of sub-atomic particles. The unity of all things and events will be a recurring theme throughout our comparison of modern physics and Eastern philosophy. As we study the various models of subatomic physics, we shall see that they express again and again, in different ways, the same insight—that the constituents of matter and the basic phenomena involving them are all interconnected, interrelated and interdependent; that they cannot be understood as isolated entities, but only as integrated parts of the whole.

"One of the main polarities in life is the one between male and female sides of human nature. As with the polarity of good and bad, or of life and death, we tend to feel uncomfortable with the male/female polarity in ourselves, and therefore we bring one or the other side into prominence. Western society has traditionally favored the male side rather than the female. Instead of recognizing that the personality of each man and of each woman is the result of the interplay between female and male elements, it has established a static order where all men are supposed to be masculine and all women feminine, and it has given men the leading roles and most of society's privileges. This attitude has resulted in an overem-

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phases of all the yang—or male— aspects of human nature: activity, rational thinking, competition, aggressiveness, and so on. The yin—or female— modes of consciousness, which can be described by words like intuitive, religious, mystical, occult, or psychic, have constantly been suppressed in our male-orientated society.

"In Eastern mysticism, these female modes are developed and a unity between the two aspects of human nature is sought. A fully realized human being is one who, in the words of Lao Tzu, "knows the masculine and yet keeps to the feminine." In many Eastern traditions the dynamic balance between male and female modes of consciousness is the principal aim of meditation, and is often illustrated in works of art. A superb sculpture of Shiva in the Hindu temple of Elephanta shows three faces of the god: on the right, his male profile displaying virility and willpower; on the left, his female aspect—gentle, charming, seductive—and in the center the sublime union of the two aspects in the magnificent head of Shiva Mahesvara, the Great Lord, radiating serene tranquility and transcendental aloofness.

"In Tantric Buddhism, the male/female polarity is often illustrated with the help of sexual symbols. Intuitive wisdom is seen as the passive, female quality of human nature, love and compassion as the active, male quality; and the union of both in the process of enlightenment is represented by ecstatic sexual embraces of male and female deities. The Eastern mystics affirm that such a union of one's male and female modes can be experienced only on a higher plane of consciousness where the realm of thought and language is transcended and all opposites appear as a dynamic unity.

"I have already asserted that a similar plane has been reached in modern physics. The exploration of the subatomic world has revealed a reality which repeatedly transcends language and reasoning, and the unifications of concepts which had hitherto seemed opposite and irreconcilable turns out to be one of the most startling features of this new reality."

New reality? The concepts expressed by Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism predate the Christian Era, and were completely isolated from so-called "Western" societies. It is unfortunate that most of us in this culture have not been exposed to Eastern spiritual philosophies except by "our" Western institutions, which describe them as primitive, pagan, backward, heathen, heretical.

Under patriarchal society, the feminine has been devalued, suppressed and discarded *as defined by men*. Women are working to resurrect the feminine to equal status. The fifth quote is from a *Magical Blend* interview with Jean Bolen:

"Well, it's all about resacralizing the earth as a living goddess— Gaia... Mother Nature. Women need to start to identify with a divinity that is feminine, meaning the earth and the body. When there is no spiritual, sacred, divine dimension that is feminine, a woman cannot identify herself with an image of God or say "The Goddess is within me." The religious traditions we have do not affirm women— one of them begins a morning prayer with, "Thank God I was not born a woman." That's Judaic. Eve in the Bible and Pandora

in Greek mythology are blamed for all the problems or sins in the world. As long as women are identified with that which is negative or missing (which is what Freudian psychoanalyses says), they can feel like there is something wrong with them. Until there is a feminine aspect to divinity, there can't be a sense of equality between the sexes or between what masculine and feminine represent."

And from Marion Woodman in the same issue, in answer to the question "What is femininity?"

"I would say it refers to an energy that balances a complementary energy. Both energies are present in all fully functional human beings. There's the energy that moves out, and there's the energy that permeates from within. As the day balances the night, so the night balances the day. As I see it, those two energies are like the two intertwining snakes on the caduceus."

And in answer to "Do you think the world is crying out for the feminine principle?" Marion says: "Of course. If you think of the world as matter—mater is the Latin word for mother—the very planet is crying out for femininity to be brought to consciousness. Human beings are the voice of that consciousness. We are finally beginning to realize that the planet is crying out to be recognized, honored, celebrated, and saved. What happened with the Valdez oil spill and the oil fires in the Persian Gulf is utter madness. We are destroying our mother. If we don't bring this to consciousness, we aren't going to survive. Our individual bodies, if they are in consciousness at all, are very much related to the condition of the planet. I think many people are suffering illnesses and pain in harmony with what's going on with the earth.

"If the individual, the microcosm, disregards the feminine principle long enough, eventually he/she loses touch with inner meaning, and an illness may break out. If we don't have a balance between masculine and feminine energy, the body can drive itself to death. I think that's what's happening in the planet right now— that's the macrocosm."

These almost final quotes (are ya gettin tired yet?) are fragments from an interview with Avital Ronell in the *RE/Search* issue on "Angry Women." In response to the question, What's "wrong" with feminism today:

"It's dependent on what *man* does. Feminism today has a *parasitical*, secondary territoriality, and if you respond to present conditions, you're subject to reactive, mimetic and regressive posturings. So the problem is : how can you free yourself? How can you not be reactive to what already exists as powerful and dominating? How can you avoid ressentimental politics? Is it possible to have a feminism that is joyous, relentless, outrageous, libidinally charged— And do women have to be grim and humorless in their response to an admittedly appalling situation?....How can women avoid being the flipside of a certain metaphysics onto which she's already been imprinted?"

And, check out these three excerpts:

"Also, what we're calling 'Woman' has to be rethought, because first of all it's something that feminism has perhaps *unconsciously* borrowed or left uninterrogated; it's a *hand-me-down* that was inherited through our phallic legacy."

"Feminism as a force or intensity has to disrupt all officially charted maps— it calls for the *remapping* of relationships. *Everything* has to be called into question, including the possibility of love."

"What I expect from "true feminism" is a complete breaking up of old orders of language and concepts and values... a *thorough* deconstruction of power."

And in response to the interviewer's comment that women are not supposed to be interested in pornography, that a certain "ugliness" intrudes:

"Well, the ugliness has to be taken seriously, I think, because it's part of a whole politics of demasking or denuding, and getting to a *Puritan* core— like the ban on makeup. All that is part of a *politics of self-presentation* which is still ruled by a *metaphysics* of self-presentation that doesn't consider current thinking about: artifice, technicity and so on..."

Interviewer: "I felt guilty even using the word 'ugly'—" Avital Ronell: "Yes—one of my mentors, the French feminist writer Hélène Cixous, came to America years ago, and one of her first gestures (which horrified American feminists) was to point out what ugly shoes they wore. And this completely scandalized everyone! Hélène is an incredibly beautiful Egyptian lioness— she's splendidly dressed. Somehow the lines between pragmatic American feminism (of course, there are other branches) and French theoretical feminism were drawn along *eyeliner* marks: *artifice*, *seduction* (that a lot of French feminists still believe in; seduction as the power to create distance, to dis-identify with one's self, to mask and play around, and to perform different versions of oneself).

"The whole power of *miming*—which makeup has to do with—would be an interesting history to trace, because women were always considered creatures of the simulacra who were fake or false— therefore not 'readable' or reliable. So it's very odd for a European (with another notion of history than Americans have) to note this desire (which is a totally *male* desire) for absolute self-presentation without artifice, makeup, lying and deception...."

Let's break here for a moment and throw in a few quotes from the *Mirabella* article by B. Ruby Rich on "gender bending": — distilling a portion of Marjorie Garber's book *Vested Interests: Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, Rich writes: "She [Garber] takes transvestism to be the ultimate metaphor for our society, the barometer of the culture's self-image, symptom of its unconscious. For Garber, the transvestite (or 'TV') shatters the world as we know it, suggesting the impossibility of fixing anyone as truly masculine or feminine." And from various other academic scholars who are "working on unsettling our views of 'human nature,'" Rich writes: "Whether investigating man or beast, cyborg or drag queen, they maintain that gender itself is merely a performance, an impersonation, a masquerade." And quoting female impersonator Lynne Carter, Rich writes: "Women always wear a mask. It's made of cosmetics and fashion. Women consider it a masculine trait simply to be yourself. But they end up being a caricature of themselves, which makes them easy to mimic."

"Not so fast, Lynne," Rich writes. "A quick perusal of *GQ* or *Sports Illustrated* proves that manliness doesn't come quite naturally, either." Ah, the truth— my female-to-man transgendered friends (both transvestite and transsexual) know that well. But, let's get back to Avital Ronell:

"I think that the artifice has often been on women's side. And the rejection and *demonization* of the artifice is a very strange but basic gesture of American ideology. For me, feminism, as a perturbing *intervention* into *what is*, has to be very suspicious of *anything* that coincides with American ideology. For example, this propaganda about 'sincerity' and 'honesty' which the Right propagates, is always in the service of the greatest *servility* to the law, and *docility*."

"Reality is so complicated, yet our culture wants to simplify it into one total (or totalitarian) truth. A lot of political movements still hang onto a single shred of truth as if it were 'the' truth— this has to be abandoned. That's why one rarely uses the word 'revolution' anymore— or rather '*the* revolution.' I think we're in a very *mournful* and depressed era right now, because all revolutions have disappointed us."

And on some of what ails America now:

"The High-Rising of Illiteracy is a very political problem in America. People are no longer reading, no longer speaking, no longer existing *in* and *as* language, no longer enjoying the *perversion* that an adherence to language always promotes. They're not being liberated into linguistic spaces that really *do* produce effects of self-transformation.

"In the '60s, with one hand people were making fists, but in the other hand there tended to be a *book*— preferably a philosophical book.... There was a rapport to the 'book' which has now been *broken*. The fact that censorship right now is so powerfully deployed on language and general descriptive usage is very important: *there is a desire to shut down the freedom that language always points to*. And it's a freedom beyond the 'transcendental essences,' beyond the repetition of traditional images, values or aspirations. Language always has a random element, a secret track or rebellious provocation. *Language is not beholden to traditional truth value*. The fact that there is a growing *desire for illiteracy* as also part of a libidinal political shutdown."

From an essay, "The Fraying Of America" by Robert Hughes in the February 3 issue of *Time* magazine, which begins with the assertion that poet W.H. Auden, writing fifty years ago, prophesied current American culture in a long work titled, *For the Time Being*, where the protagonist, Herod muses over his decision to choose between massacring the Innocents or letting them get away— Hughes:

"What Herod saw was America in the late 1980s and early '90s, right down to that dire phrase 'New Age.' A society obsessed with therapies and filled with distrust of formal politics, skeptical of authority and prey to superstition, its political language corroded by fake pity and euphemism. A nation like Rome in its long imperial reach, in the corruption and verbosity of its senators, in its reliance on sacred geese (those feathered ancestors of our own pollsters and spin doctors) and in its submission to senile, deified Emperors controlled by astrologers and extravagant wives. A culture

(Continued on next page)

Sex, Gender & Sexual Expression—(Continued from page 13)

that has replaced gladiatorial games, as a means to pacify the mob, with high-tech wars on television that cause immense slaughter and yet leave the Mesopotamian satraps in full power over their wretched subjects.

“Mainly it is women who object, for due to the prevalence of their mystery-religions, the men are off in the woods, affirming their manhood by sniffing one another’s armpits and listening to third-rate poets rant about the moist, hairy satyr that lives inside each one of them. Meanwhile, artists vacillate between a largely self-indulgent expressiveness and a mainly impotent politicization, and the contest between education and TV—between argument and persuasion by spectacle—has been won by TV, a medium now more debased in America than ever before, and more abjectly self-censoring than anywhere in Europe.”

And as to the debate over whether books by “dead white males... the pale, patriarchal penis people” should be included in American educational curriculum any longer because it “creates readers who will never read anything else.” Hughes replies:

“What they [opponents] don’t want to admit, at least not publicly, is that most American students don’t read much anyway and quite a few, left to their own devices, would not read at all. Their moronic national baby-sitter, the TV set, took care of that. Before long, Americans will think of the time when people sat at home and read books for their own sake, discursively and sometimes even aloud to one another, as a lost era— they way we now see rural quilting bees in the 1870s.”

Hey! How ‘bout a twelve step program for the “wrong” kind of TV (television)? I suppose it’s not enough to be the “right” kind of TV without reading something other than fashion and beauty tips and ‘The Transie Times,’ huh?

Ya know, much of the writing I read and resonate with, points to some obviously related issues that are basically ignored by the culture. It is as if we have become anesthetized to the overpowering evidence that things are out of balance on this spinning ball. In my pessimistic modes, it’s hard for me to believe this planet can survive with all of us parasites sucking it dry— like: do we even have another twenty-five years?

Well, gentle reader, I’m outta time, energy and space— so perhaps in the next issue the continued psychological and social aspects of gender, along with some blabbing on sexual expression will be in process. Until then, remember:

Don’t let yer meatloaf.

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Gender Related Organizations

C.G.N.I.E., Inc. (Court of the Great Northwest Imperial Empire, Inc.) POB 160636, Sac, CA 95816. CGNIE was organized to raise funds for charities and continues to do so. Primarily part of the gay community, membership is open to anyone with an interest. Annual events include elections of Emperor & Empress, Grand Duke & Duchess with related campaign events culminating in Coronation Ball and Grand Ducal Ball; and other Balls as selected by the Court. A variety of other events and fund raisers are scheduled by the reigning Court. Court Imperial (general meetings) held on first Tuesday of the month at Faces, 2000 K Street, Sac, CA, 7:30pm. No door charge. Annual dues—\$22 (or \$2 per month).

DVG (Diablo Valley Girls)—POB 272885, Concord, CA 94527-2885. Phone (510) 849-4112. DVG is a non-sexual social club in the Concord/Walnut Creek area. Monthly socials held at Just Rewards, 2520 Camino Diablo, Walnut Creek, CA on the first Tuesday and third Monday of each month, 8pm. No door charge. Monthly newsletter included with annual dues—\$10.

ETVC (Educational TV Channel)—POB 426486, San Francisco, CA 94142-6486. Phone (Hotline) (510) 549-2665. ETVC is a non-sexual organization with the purpose of serving the educational, social, and recreational needs of "gender-challenged" people, their spouses, significant others, family members, friends and professionals in the helping services. ETVC is the largest organization of this type in Northern California and provides a wide variety of support including: rap groups, a significant other support group, print & video libraries, outreach, education and lots of social activities, plus more. Theme socials the last Thursday of each month, Chez Mollet restaurant, 527 Bryant St., SF, \$3. members, \$5 non-members (certain event/themes may be higher priced). Newsletter every other month included with annual dues—\$20.

FTM (Female to Male) Newsletter—1927 Haight Street #164 SF, CA 94117. FTM publishes a newsletter for women cross-dressers and transsexuals, and is currently selling paperback copies off Lou Sullivan's *Information For The Female-To-Male Crossdresser And Transsexual*, \$10.

G.A.L. (Gender Alternatives League) POB 3392, Napa, CA 94558 Phone: (707) 257-1973. GAL is a group attempt-

ing national representation of "Genderists." Predisposed to political activism, GAL is also publishing "The Genderist" four times a year—\$20.

I.F.G.E. (International Foundation for Gender Education) POB 367, Wayland MA 01778. The largest informational organization concerned with the CD/TV/TS Community. Publishers of TV/TS Tapestry Journal, and more.

I.M.A.G.E. (I'm Making A Gender Expression) 2094 California St., Sutter, CA 95982 Phone: (916) 755-1073 between 6pm-11pm. IMAGE is a closed social club; new members must be sponsored by an existing member and accepted by membership vote. Three classes of membership: Individual, Couples & Honorary. Annual dues not established.

RGA (Rainbow Gender Association) POB 700730, San Jose, CA 95170. RGA is a non-sexual social club open to anyone interested in gender issues. Poker Socials, Rap Group (with ETVC), Computer Bulletin Board: (208) 248-4162 (300-2400 baud), plus more. General meetings twice a month (1st & 3rd Fridays at 8pm) at the New Community of Faith Church, 6350 Rainbow Drive, San Jose. No dues or door charge; contributions accepted. Newsletter every other month for \$10 per year.

S.G.A. (Sacramento Gender Association) POB 215456, Sac, CA 95821-1456. Phone: (916) 441-8379. SGA is a non-sexual social club open to anyone interested in gender issues. Social meetings are held on the fourth Saturday of the month at Joseph's Town & Country, 2062 Auburn Blvd., Sac, CA, 7pm if you want dinner, meeting follows, 8pm. \$2 door fee (\$4 non-members). SGA Executive Committee meeting (club business and planning) held the third Friday, same location, 7:30pm, open to members and guests—free. Call SGA for current schedule of their significant others support group. Annual dues—\$20.

Society for the Second Self (Tri-Ess)—POB 194, Tulare, CA 93275. Tri-Ess is a 'sorority' for heterosexual males who cross-dress, and their families. A variety of social and educational services are designed to foster self-acceptance and expression. Individual chapters are located throughout the US and abroad. Publishes the *Femme Mirror* four times a year which is included in annual dues of \$35. Write for application & info.

Support Organizations & Services

RGA Rap Group meets the second Monday of each month at the New Community of Faith Church in San Jose, from 8 to 10pm. Contact Martina at (408) 984-5619.

A peer support group is forming for Transgenderists who have recently crossed over, or are seriously contemplating doing so. Contact: Boxholder 229, 3311 Mission St, SF, CA 94110.

ETVC's Significant Others Support Group meets the second Thursday of each month, from 8 to 10pm. SOS meetings are open to people involved with a CD/TV/TG/TS person, but who are not one themselves. Write ETVC, or call Ginny at (415) 664-1499.

W.A.C.S Newsletter [Women Associated with Cross-dressers Communication Network], c/o Cynthia Philips: POB 17, Bulverde, TX 78163.

The Human Outreach and Achievement Institute is addressed at: 405 Western Avenue, Suite 345, South Portland, ME 04106. (207) 775 0858. HOAI sponsors the following services: GAIN (Gender Awareness and Involvement Network), a service for helping professionals to access and share information relative to counseling and therapy; a Speakers Bureau; dozens of Seminars and Workshops; Information Packets and Periodical Publications; Fantasia Fair; and jointly with Theseus Counseling Services, HOPEFUL (Helping Our Partners Experience the Fullness of United Love), a program for couples who have learned to live with cross-dressing but who want more out of their relationship. Write for free brochures. Theseus Counseling Services is addressed at: 233 Harvard Street, Suite 302, Brookline, MA 02146. (617) 277-4360.

Special Thanks

Special Thanks to Lauren Hotchkiss for her article.

Special Thanks to Dallas Denny, Phyllis Fryre and Wendi Kaiser for sending along informational pre-printed notices.

Special Thanks to Ariadne Kane (who will be at Lily's on 3/16) for the newsclippings, and to Marriette Pathy Allen for sending me the *RE/Search* book, and to Beverly Duffy who lent her human sexuality textbook.

Special Thanks to Cami Lyn for the \$5 faith contribution; to Bobbie for her \$5iver; to Janelle for the \$10; and to Leslie who transmuted by photo transmission a \$5 donation (all received by some strange coincidence at DVG's social).

Special Thanks to Anne for the \$20 donation at the 'T' Party; and to (I believe it was) Trisha for the \$5 at the 'T.'

Special Thanks to Pat Jaffier (France) and Paula (Mary-

land) for ordering issues of TVG (and thank you Alexandria for sending *The Beaumont Bulletin* from England).

Special Thanks and a Hug to the one and only Cindy Martin for having fun— way wacky cool, girl.

Special Thanks to the organizers and participants of the Texas 'T' Party (and a big Hello to Rosemary who I forgot to mention in my Blab column— howz Hong Kong?).

Special Thanks to Andrea Susan for the photos (including the one you FINALLY sent from the Cotillion).

And a BIG-O Special Thanx to B.A.D. for her BAD CARTOON!

A Note of Sadness

Alta Redondo wants people that knew Jill, a Sacramento TG/TS and sparkling individual, to know she passed away in January of pneumonia. Peace.

Upcoming (Mostly) Local Events

Mar. 6- RGA social, New Community of Faith Church, 6350 Rainbow Dr., San Jose. 8pm, donations accepted.

Mar. 12- CGNIE presents "Luck-O-The Irish" at The Western, 20th & K streets, 8pm. Cabaret style Entertainment & Raffle. Donations accepted.

Mar. 15- Vannah Woolsey What presents "La Cage Awful" at The Townhouse, 1517 21st St., 8pm, \$4.

Mar. 16- ETVC presents Ariadne Kane, Director of the Human Outreach and Achievement Institute speaking "Genderlingo" at Lily's, #4 Valencia St., SF, 8pm, \$3.

Mar. 16- DVG meets at Just Rewards, 2520 Camino Diablo, Walnut Creek, 8pm. Open to all, no charge.

Mar. 19- ETVC's SOS Group meets at 8pm in Oakland. Call (415) 664-1499.

Mar. 20- RGA social, New Community of Faith Church, 6350 Rainbow Dr., San Jose. 8pm, donations accepted.

Mar. 21- SGA Executive Committee Meeting, 7:30pm at JTC. Open to all, no charge.

Mar. 21- "Camp Awards" (Sacramento) at JTC, 8pm, call for details, \$10.

Mar. 26- ETVC presents "Leather and Lace" at 8pm, Chez Mollet Restaurant, 527 Bryant Street, SF. \$3 members, \$5 guests.

Mar. 28- SGA monthly social at JTC, 8pm (7pm if you want dinner). \$2 members, \$4 guests

Mar. 29- Alta, in association with Rags, presents "Mardi Gras" at Faces, 20th & K Sts., 7:30 pm. Donations accepted; benefits CARES Clinic & Sac. Children's Home.

April 3- RGA social, New Community of Faith Church, 6350 Rainbow Dr., San Jose. 8pm, donations accepted.

April 6 thru 12- IFGE presents the 6th annual "Coming Together Convention" in Houston, Texas. Write IFGE for details or call (617) 894-8340.

April 7- DVG meets at Just Rewards, 2520 Camino Diablo, Walnut Creek, 8pm. Open to all, no charge.

April 7- Last reigning CGNIE Court Imperial Meeting, 7:30pm at Faces. Open to all, no charge; Potluck- bring food.

April 9- CGNIE "Bar Tour," visit local bars by bus, \$5. Meet

at Faces 7pm.

April 11- ETVC presents "How's Your Image?" by Fashion Image Consultant Wilhemina Beins at Lily's, #4 Valencia St., SF. 11am to 2pm, \$3 donation.

April 12- Raven, in association with Rags, presents "Age Before Beauty," a benefit for the Fairy Godfathers Easter Basket Project at Faces, 7pm, donations accepted.

April 17- RGA social, New Community of Faith Church, 6350 Rainbow Dr., San Jose. 8pm, donations accepted.

April 18- Emperor & Empress elections at Lambda Community Center, 20th & L Sts. 11am to 5pm Free.

April 18- SGA Executive Committee Meeting, 7:30pm at JTC. Open to all, no charge.

April 20- DVG meets at Just Rewards, 2520 Camino Diablo, Walnut Creek, 8pm. Open to all, no charge.

April 23- CGNIE presents the "In Town Show & Roast, Faces 8pm, donation accepted

April 24- CGNIE presents the "Out of Town Show at the Townhouse 10:30pm, donations accepted.

April 25- CGNIE presents "Coronation '92— Nouveau Art/ Dinner at Eight" at Turn Verein Hall, 3349 J Street, doors open 6pm, Ball at 7 sharp— \$20 per person.

April 25- SGA monthly social at JTC, 8pm (7pm if you want dinner). \$2 members, \$4 guests.

April 26- CGNIE presents "Victory Brunch" at Faces, 11am, \$10 per person.

April 29 through May 3- PPOC presents the 2nd annual "California Dreamin," a five day event for "the Transgendered" in SoCal. Write PPOC (Powder Puffs of Orange County) at POB 9091, L.A. CA, 92812, or call (714) 779-9013.

April 30- ETVC presents "April In Pais Is Burning," a combined social & contest at 8pm, Chez Mollet Restaurant, 527 Bryant Street, SF. \$3 members, \$5 guests.

Every Friday Night- Cafè Lambda, 1931 L Street, Sac. Smoke-free, alcohol-free— no door charge.

(The events listed here may be attended in drag [Dressed As a Girl] or drab [Dressed As a Boy].)