

Contrary to the impressions of your reviewer, (GN 201) last week's trilogy of BBC TV films 'A Change Of Sex' was a considerable disappointment given the time and money allocated to the project.

We are concerned that viewers will assume the transsexual featured is typical of all transsexuals. No transsexual can justifiably be taken to

represent us all, and the decision to concentrate on a single example was a fundamental mistake. By using this technique serious issues were avoided. The makers of the film seem to have chosen a person with the greatest potential for voyeuristic exploitation. In fact, few of us have such a colourful background in entertainment, and we regret the reinforcement of this stereotype of transsexuals as drag queens, which is already so firmly entrenched in the popular imagination.

Over-indulgent and often superfluous, the result was a wasted opportunity, because the programme failed to explore the subject in any depth. Many of the problems facing transsexuals were glossed over or omitted. For example, the tremendous self-

confidence needed to go out in pub-

TRANSSEXUALS

GAY NEWS Nov 80

lic as a woman was never examined. There was little discussion of the changing roles of the sexes, the new set of problems Julia will face as a woman, and the irony involved in going to so much trouble to be a woman, when many women are struggling to escape from the images

and roles of female stereotypes. Above all, there was so little acknowledgement of the existence of other transsexuals — those who *were* shown being a very welcome part of the story.

A different technique would have been better — such as the use of real actors re-creating situations more illustrative of a wider experience. The attempted realism of the camera following the subject often lent an artificiality to the whole proceedings and indeed the inevitable modification of the subject's behaviour throughout, due to the interference of the media, renders the validity of this biography somewhat dubious. Let's have the film of the book next time!

Transsexual Action Group
London WC1

no 202

During the course of the recent BBC2 programmes tracing the fortunes (and misfortunes) of the transsexual Julia Grant, the psychiatrist involved was never filmed, only recorded, and every time his name was mentioned (and the name of the hospital) it was bleeped out.

Unfortunately, this dreadful man is — and has been for many years — one of the very few National Health psychiatrists involved in referring patients for transsexual operations, and over the years a good many transsexuals have had no alternative but to face, often with bruising effect, his inhumane approach to their problems.

Anyone who saw the programmes and may be contemplating seeking advice about transsexualism will now at least know what they are in for before placing themselves in this man's hands — always assuming they realise before they get into his grip that he is the same psychiatrist. It is really disgraceful that a man who plays the role of God should be allowed by the BBC to do so anonymously, and for the record he is Dr John Randell of Charing Cross Hospital and 118 Harley Street. Michael De-la-Noy, London NW6

JULIA
GRANT
TV

from

PRESSMATS

[PRESS MONITORING AGENCY
FOR TRANS-SEXUALS]