

femme mirror

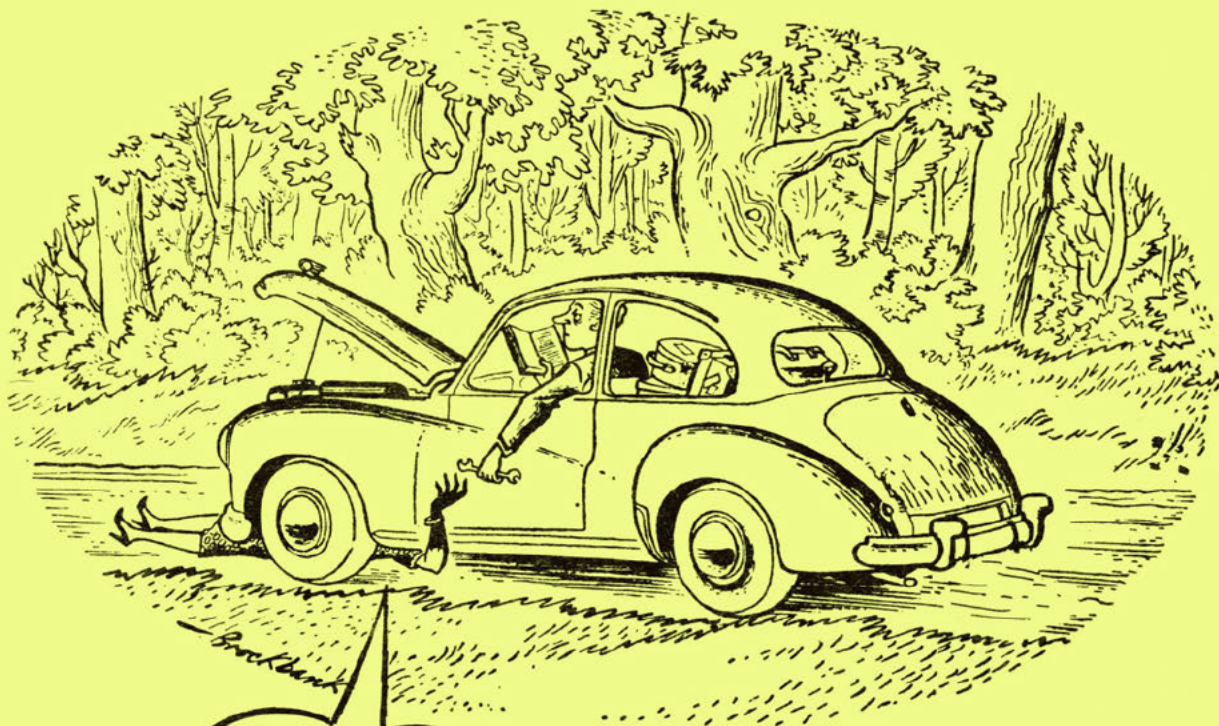
Reflecting the Feminine



VOL. 4, NO. 3

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CAROL BEECROFT, Editor



You're the one
who was too chicken
to dress for the Tri-Sig
meeting. Why do I have
to fix the car?

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SYMBOLS & PSYCHOLOGY



by Virginia Prince

Our society and culture are filled with situations in which fiction is taken for fact, fantasy for truth; and symbols are confused with the things they stand for. The latter occurs in the field of our interest, too, and often we do not realize it. It seems worthwhile, therefore, to call attention to it as one of the bits of mental discipline which we ought to perform now and again in the interest of the wisdom, moderation and, particularly, the perspective that I often refer to.

In the present case I am thinking of our attitude toward women. Women are facts of nature and should really be considered as such, but let us pause a moment and ask ourselves if our own particular brand of psychology doesn't lead us to confuse fancy and fact quite a good deal. As males, we are attracted to females as we mature. Our attraction is something more than that of a cat or a dog . . . simply instinctive and sexual. We tend to glorify the female a great deal, to put her on a pedestal and then srite songs about how we'd swim the widest ocean and climb the highest mountain, etc. just for her. This attitude helps make everything rosy during courtship but it also provides a large bubble that

bursts sometime after the wedding ceremony, leaving the male with the disconcerting task of rearranging his sense of value to deal with his wife . . . as she *is* and *not* as he imagined her to be. This task is accomplished, more or less, in due time, and things settle down . . . for ordinary males, that is. For TVs, married or not, the tendency is to keep on dealing with the symbol rather than the reality. True, those of us who are married have to come to terms with this matter of reality in our wives, but in our own little world we don't. We still think of woman-kind, her clothing, her lot in life, and everything about her as being above, beyond, better in nearly every way, than our own level of existence.

The TV focuses his attention on clothes, but he is likely to see what they represent TO HIM . . . the symbol . . . to the exclusion of what they *are*. Women just don't look at their own clothes as we like to imagine they do, or as we do. We see this clothing through the eyes of a man and see it as part of the symbolism and glorification with which we endow womankind. We don't see the reality of it. We tend to get kind of annoyed when a girl gets careless with her clothes and just dresses as she feels like. We think to ourselves, here she has the means of being beautiful, and she is just plain sloppy. But how about her? Probably she couldn't care less at that particular moment about looking beautiful. She has a lot of other things on her mind, and just wants to use clothing for its most utilitarian purposes — i.e., to keep warm and be modest. She doesn't want to be Bridgette Bardot at that point. The TV is not likely to be willing to let the woman just be another kind of human being with her own share of discomforts, problems, frustrations, etc. To him she is a symbol

of the good, the beautiful, the desirable, etc., and her clothing becomes the outer shell of this symbol. He feels that to don these robes he, too, can partake of this goodness, this beauty. Thus in his imagination and fantasy, he is tricked twice . . . once into thinking that a woman is something much above and beyond what she actually is, and secondly because he endows her clothing . . . the uniform of this goodness . . . with qualities that it does not possess.

For example, it cannot be argued from simple fact that a tight bra and tight girdle are "comfortable" in the proper sense of that term, and most any woman will agree. But because some TVs enjoy the constriction of the girdle and the sense of femininity that a properly padded bra gives them, they hold forth at great length about these "wonderful" garments and how comfortable and at ease they make him feel.

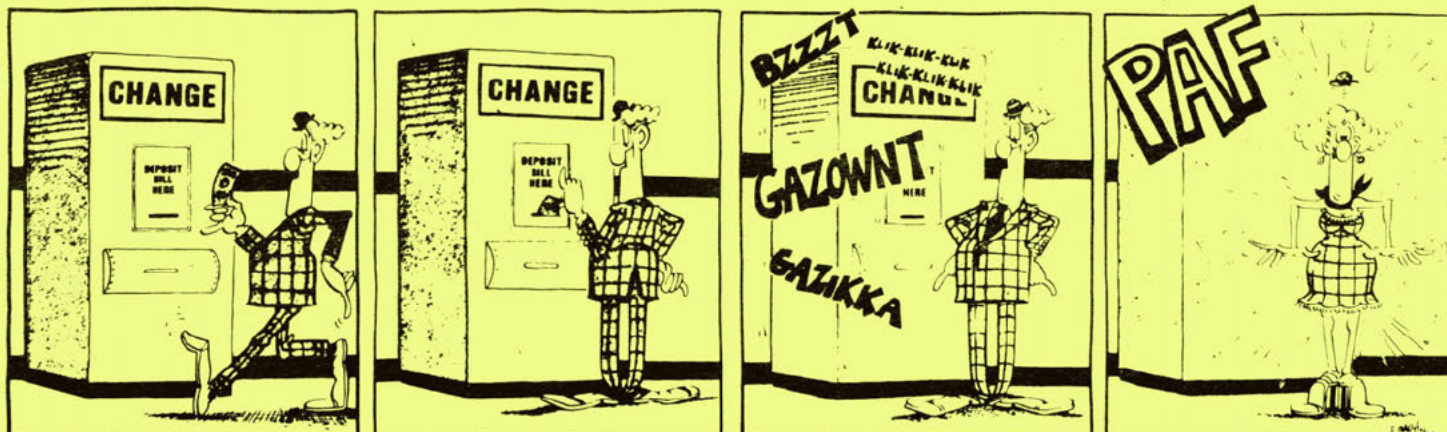
Am I a traitor to the cause to suggest that he has a mixed-up sense of values? No, not really. I once felt that way, too, but I've been fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to express Virginia practically to any degree I wish, more or less whenever I wish, and thus I've arrived at what is actually a more feminine viewpoint . . . more the viewpoint of the average woman. Now I can see why a wife gets out of her birdle, bra and high heels at the first opportunity. Let's face it — they are not "comfortable" in the way we would apply that word to anything else, but they are strong symbols of femininity for which we yearn, and, therefore, we tend, through our own characteristics psychological approach to things, to take the symbol as reality.

However, we can have neither wisdom nor perspective if we allow ourselves to be confused in this manner, and thus this editorial intended simply to call attention to the matter and to stimulate a certain awareness and consideration of this aspect of our pattern.

Virginia

DON MARTIN DEPT.

ONE NIGHT IN THE MIAMI BUS TERMINAL



WIVES TALK BACK

WITH BERNADINE



Another issue of the *Femme Mirror* is ready to go to press, so we must begin chatting again. Over a year ago Carol asked me to discuss our worries and fears so our husbands would have a better understanding of our own problems. She said, "I want you to lay it on the line." I have waited a long time before coming to grips with this aspect of our relationship with our beloved guy; and I step lightly in this area of their feelings, but it may help many of us to know that these are common fears.

The biggest fear is that something will induce our dearest beloved to seek transsexual surgery, thereby destroying the very basis of our married relationship. For the thousands of us who have weathered many years with our unusual mates, we have discovered that although he may harbor the idea sometimes, and may even fantasize it once in awhile, nothing could ever make him go so far as surgery. He may have his day-dreams, but he isn't about to cut off his REAL FUN.

Let's think about this together. First of all, our guys are heterosexual males. They are attracted to women and they fell in love with us, otherwise our children would not have been sired by them. That should be enough proof to settle our doubts and fears. What would the surgery do to a heterosexual? Think about this for awhile and I believe your worries will vanish into thin air.

Another common fear is that our children will be influenced in some negative manner by the fact that their father is a transvestite. Let's ponder this question for a few moments. How many parents among your acquaintances want their children to develop the same traits that have caused themselves to be hurt? And then, again, how many children grew up and copied the same character traits as their parents? Usually the son or daughter understands far too well the pitfalls that his own parents fell into, and he

avoids them with a purple passion.

The illegitimate son or daughter becomes puritanical about marriage, the alcoholic's offspring make drugs and alcohol tabu, the child of a self-righteous bigot becomes a free-thinker, and our children will also go out of their way to avoid becoming hurt by the problems that entrapped their parents.

Now, let's look at it from Father's point of view. Most of the transvestites that I have met in Tri-Sig have been very careful to conceal the fact of their "dressing" from their children, and especially from their sons, for the very reason that they didn't want their children to have to carry this problem around with them. As we all know, it does put a tremendous strain on a person to have a "family secret" that we must be careful not to divulge. This may be one of the causes for so much "alienation" in our society. It is very difficult to relate in a close manner to anyone unless we can also share our secrets and our problems. Also, I have yet to meet the man who actually desired that his own son would suffer the torments and disappointments to being a transvestite.

Now, we'll observe this problem from the outside vantage point of a psychiatrist or psychologist. The same circumstances that brought about the transvestism are not going to prevail in the lives of his children. No two people, even brothers, share the very same experiences. If a man's parents were too harsh, or his childhood was too isolated, he is going to attempt to treat his own children more gently, or give them more companionship. He is going to consciously avoid the mistakes of his own upbringing, thereby eliminating the chance of his children copying his own psychological problems, even though this doesn't even cross his mind. Because we do not inherit psychological problems. We only inherit physical characteristics, and those only to a limited degree.

So we have solved a couple of our deepest worries and fears. I hope our husbands and sweethearts have forgiven us for being faint-hearted sometimes. They understand us even better than we do ourselves, and I am sure that they have wondered often about these same things. Some of the men have told me that the hormones turned out to be more of a curse than a blessing, and I am very happy about the fact that doctors are becoming more aware of the real nature of drug therapy and hormone treatment. But surgery is a horse of a different color, and we can stop worrying about it because no heterosexual is going to cut off his REAL FUN.

POET'S CORNER



"IT COULDN'T
BE VERSE . . ."

A shuffle down
Limerick Lane.

A TV by the name of O'Grady
Made a very effectual lady.
One day near a shop,
A policeman did stop,
So convincing she was not afraidly.

A femmephile out of L.A.
While buying a slip one fine day,
Caught his Boss, Mr. Kay
In silk lingerie.
Now he's got a big raise in his pay.

Two boys who were both very tall,
Dressed up like young girls for a ball.
The clothes felt so good,
They remained in the mood,
And went out to a show after all.

When Joe passed, in his memorobelia,
They found the clothes of his femme-self, Emeelia.
His mother, they say
Said, "It's surely okay,
He was happy in his femme-philia."

An auto mechanic named White,
Dressed up like a woman at night.
He was great at his trade
And a beautiful maid,
His cars were all "transves" tight!

NOTE: As of the September issue of *TRANVESTIA*, the publication will be published by Carol Beecroft. Articles, suggestions and pictures will be sent, therefore, to CAROL for publication. New ideas are welcome!



Connie NY-25-N



JOANNE CA-57-C



MAUREEN & JO ANNE FCA-4-C



SUSAN VA-5-R



MONICA PA-7-P



CAROLE MA-5-A



VICKI & DONNA (CHI CHAPTER)



LESLIE MA-19-R, PATRICIA NY-20-G
EILEEN NY-9-M, SHIRLEY CT-3-B



MURIEL NY-26-W



LU, CALIFORNIA



CAROLE MA-5-A



ELANDA, BOSTON



RUTH ANN WI-14-L



LEE, PENNSYLVANIA



LESLIE MA-19-R, EILEEN NJ-9-M

CONFESSIONS OF A FEMALE VOYEUR (Or Why Men Should Wear Skirts)

By Priscilla J. Kucik

Bill Cushing, a 34-year-old former construction worker in Kentland, California, draws stares because he prefers to wear a skirt. He admits this has caused problems in job interviews, not to mention his two previous marriages. But he feels his simple shin-length blue denim skirt (complete with fly) is more comfortable than trousers and he shaves his legs because he not like the feeling of his skirt brushing against the hair. He sees himself as a pioneer of male freedom.

Cushing is probably the sanest person on earth.

Skirts have been a male adornment since the first caveman donned a loin-cloth. Throughout most of recorded history, men have worn dresses of varying lengths. Egyptians had their pleated aprons, Turks their caftans, Greeks their chitons, Romans togas, Japanese kimonos, and Malaysians sarongs. Romans fought in short skirts and medieval men wore robes. Elizabethan men wore tights to display their legs under knee-length skirts. (Would you call Henry VIII effeminate?) Scottish men have always looked their sexiest in kilts. Even the Vatican, with its strong stand against homosexuality, dresses its clergy in long robes.

In the 4th century A.D., Roman law forbade the wearing of trousers, which were equated with barbarianism. In 800 A.D., when Charlemagne visited Rome, the Pope refused to grant him an audience until he replaced his trousers with a civilized Byzantine long robe. Even in countries where fashion favored trousers, men started wearing tights, and the trouser-like garment started to resemble a skirt.

In the first half of the 18th century, men's long waistcoats still resembled full skirts. Around the middle of the century, coats became shorter for a while, but soon grew into the knee-length frock coat. Men wore nightgowns until the 1880s, when pajamas were introduced, and young boys often wore frocks until the age of seven.

One basic difference between men's and women's clothing throughout the ages was that men's garments were usually more seductive. While women's dresses concealed their shape, men's garments were designed to reveal their anatomy, especially their legs. During periods in history when women sought to assert themselves, they did so by imitating men's bifurcated garments or baring their legs completely. Early feminists wore bloomers; flappers wore short skirts; liberated women of the 60s wore miniskirts and (shudder) pantsuits. (In December of 1969, when U.S. Rep. Charlotte Reid

dared to wear a pantsuit to the House, a male colleague yelled, "Hi, guy!" an indirect lesbian accusation.)

Until the 1880s, "good" women did not even wear underwear, since a bifurcated garment would violate the Bible's injunction against women wearing men's clothing (although in the 1850s, some daring women did adopt Turkish trousers under their dresses). When women began to wear drawers, it was considered so daring a statement of equality that it was muted by making the garments "feminine" with laces and ribbons. And thus underwear became "sexy."

When did men cease wearing skirts altogether and the trouser-like garments become considered exclusively a male form of dress?

At the end of the 18th century, men stopped using their clothing as a means of sexual allure. Sexual suppression led to rigid sex roles. Out went jewelry, lace, perfume, curled hair, tights and close-fitting breeches. Victorians decided that these items were "feminine." Trousers became loose and non-revealing. The only chest ornament allowed was the phallic necktie. Jackets were cut higher; collars became stiffer. With the ramrod suggestion of men's clothes and the soft, straight-laced cut of women's clothes, any suggestion of similarity of the sexes was denied.

These differences entered the very language of our culture. Men's clothing was equated with strength, women's with weakness. Thus, "wearing the pants"

in a family meant being the boss, the male prerogative. A woman who wore slacks would "threaten" a man's authority. "Hiding behind a woman's skirt" denoted cowardice. "Tied to his mother's apron strings" was a euphemism for immaturity.

Since men's and women's dress were clearly differentiated in times of sexual repression and rigid sex roles, it is no surprise that today people are adopting unisex attire (such as the student uniform of blue jeans and t-shirts) or that traditional men's and women's clothing are becoming interchangeable. Women now wear slacks and pantsuits without fear of being considered "unfeminine." Men have changed their formal wear from stiff suits and phallic neckties to necklaces and open (plunging?) necklines.

Clothing itself has little to do with male dominance. Ancient Romans and medieval men and women all wore robes. In Persia and China, both men and women wore trousers. Yet men ruled, in spite of the absence of a distinguishable form of male clothing.

Perhaps a true indication of liberation is men and women feeling free to wear whatever clothes they consider comfortable and attractive, without regard to what is considered masculine or feminine. Why are unbifurcated garments considered feminine and bifurcated ones masculine? There is no logic to it, nor any historical precedent.

FROM THE DAILY CARDINAL
OF MADISON, WISCONSIN

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE, OUR OWN RUTH ANN WI-14-M
REPLIES TO THE FOREGOING ARTICLE.



"Where is station TRI-SIG-TV?"

Our Own Ruth Ann Replies

Ms. Priscilla J. Kucik
c/o The Daily Cardinal
821 University Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

Dear Priscilla:

I was terribly pleased to see and read your column, "Confessions of a Female Voyeur (Or Why Men Should Wear Skirts)", which appeared in today's *Cardinal*. Your point of view, your sympathetic portrayal of Bill Cushing and others like him, will help to break down the prison of gender that has forced most people in our society to give up a full half of their souls, the masculine (if you're female) or feminine (if you're male) side and potential of your personality.

Though I fear that your headline may be interpreted as a rigid imperative by men who have no such desire, I *am* intensely interested in the question of what to do about men who *are* in touch with a desire or need to wear women's clothing. Such men are generally hit with the label "transvestite" (TV) or "cross-dresser" (as if cross-dressing is the only thing they do with their lives). Most are classified by "helping" professional as "psychologically disturbed," and tend to be ridiculed by a society — by *people* — who don't know any better.

As you may have guessed, my intense interest comes from actually *being* one of these people. That is, a TV (though I accept the label reluctantly, for lack of anything better). Those who have heard about us or had any personal contact with us, professionals included, are terribly misinformed about the whole phenomenon. They fall prey to the stereotype that all TV's are homosexual, that they are trying to mock women, that they are trying to get attention by being deliberately outrageous. This impression usually comes from some kind of contact with "drag queens" or professional female impressionists like Craig Russell. The most *extreme* examples of the cross-dressing phenomenon, these are taken to be the *norm*.

In fact, in virtually every way — demographic and otherwise — TV's are just like their non cross-dressing counterparts. Overwhelmingly *heterosexual*. Family men in actuality or aspiration. All races, religions, national origins, ages, income groups. You name it.

Most TV's, however, are terribly afraid of being "discovered" by unsympathetic people and subjected to ridicule and harassment. (In some areas, the mere act of cross-dressing in public is illegal!) Many are afraid to tell their wives, families, friends. And so most TV's relegate

their cross-dressing to the "closet," whether it be the privacy of their own bedroom or a motel room rented for just this purpose. So unlike the drag queen or impressionist, we're not apt to be seen on the street or in the bar.

Little is really known about what "causes" men to want to cross-dress (though most "experts" agree that it has little to do with sex and sexuality and everything to do with gender, i.e. with masculine-feminine rather than male-female or gay-straight). Many shrink react to TV's as they do to gays; i.e., they will try to "cure" them. Perhaps anticipating or knowing this, most TV's have rarely if ever been to a shrink. In fact, many TV's aren't particularly disturbed by their cross-dressing desires. What does disturb us, depress us, make us paranoid, is the social environment in which we do what we do. The fear of rejection and punishment from an unsympathetic and threatened society. (As with gay people, only the most unhappy ones do much therapy around their dressing, and yet professionals generalize about us on this basis.)

My view, and that of increasing numbers of others, is that cross-dressing is somehow bound up the universal personal drive toward androgyny. I sense that in a truly androgynous culture — i.e., a genderless but not sexless one — there wouldn't be any such thing as cross-dressing, or indeed could there be. It would have no meaning.

For me, cross-dressing has been — in retrospect — a wedge. Not a deliberately-chosen one, by any means. But an effective one nonetheless. A way into becoming a more whole and healthy male person. (I do not want to be a woman, and those male cross-dressers who do are usually on the transsexual path, not the TV one.) Over the past year, as I've given my femme-self more freedom, I've been able to integrate more and more of my feminine qualities (especially of dress and movement) into my day-to-day life. Whether dressed as a man or woman.

My desire to express my idea of beauty through my appearance, to be graceful, to be stroked by the smooth feel of those fabrics, to sometimes be passive and receptive, to get attention, and so on, are all bound up with my cross-dressing. With those women's clothes on, there's a relaxation that I feel as these parts of my soul come oozing out.

I don't mean to say that cross-dressing is or should be the decisive wedge for all men. I encourage all men — as I hope all feminists, and non-feminists for that matter, will — to find their own personal wedge. For some it may be dance. For others, child-rearing. As far as I can tell now, cross-dressing will probably not be

the decisive wedge for most men (though my experience in men's consciousness-raising groups has shown me that many men — far more than I ever imagined — have at least some continuing cross-dressing desires).

Meanwhile, back to the question to what to do about men who feel the urge or need to cross-dress. First to those men, you are not alone! There are many others like you! We are organizing ourselves and invite you to meet with us. There is a national support group where you can join to meet and/or correspond with others like yourself, to find acceptance and dignity and friendship. It is the *Society for the Second Self* (256 So. Robertson, Beverly Hills, CA. 90211). There are also some good, sympathetic books on the subject. I recommend Deborah H. Feinbloom's *Transvestites and Transexuals* (available in paperback at the University Bookstore) and Virginia Prince's *Understanding Crossdressing* (available for \$7.15 from Chevalier Publications, P.O. Box 194, Tulare, CA. 93274).

Second, to the rest of Madison and the world. Please try to see us and treat us as individual people. Try to understand what we're doing. Maybe even pick up one or both of the books. Please try to treat us as you would any other person who has not hurt you and is not trying to hurt you. As you would any other person who is trying to be true to himself or herself.

Third, to you Priscilla, thanks for helping to hasten the day when this sort of acceptance of, and respect for, cross-general behavior will be commonplace.

Sincerely,

Ruth Ann WI-14-M



SHIRLEY (OR-7-B) COMPILES TV BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Shirley (OR-7-B) is busy compiling a "Directory of Shops and Services" for us which will be separately printed and distributed on an on-going basis. Please send all information on shops and businesses which cater to TV's in your area to Carol Beecroft for inclusion in this special directory.



TRANVESTISM & TRANSEXUALISM IN THE CLASSICAL WORLD

Cont'd from previous issue

Mnesilochos made fun of this, demanding to know how Agathon dressed or acted when he wrote about satyrs or other characters. Agathon defended himself, and even loaned some of his feminine clothing to Mnesilochos. Though Mnesilochos is eventually unmasked by the ladies he was given freedom in return for Euripides' promise to quit exposing the ways of feminine deception.

In Roman times, a similar incident, perhaps because it was real rather than fictional did not have such a happy ending. Publius Clodius Pulcher in 62 B.C. is said to have engaged in intrigue with Pompeia, the wife of Julius Caesar. She managed to slip him into her house in female disguise during the celebration of the rites of Bona Dea at which no men were supposed to be present. Clodius, however, was detected by Caesar's mother who exposed him. In the ensuing trial Clodius was acquitted of committing a sacrilege supposedly by the distribution of lavish bribes. Caesar refused to testify at the trial but proceeded to divorce his wife even though Clodius had been acquitted. He justified his action with the famous statement that the wife of a Caesar must be above suspicion.

Aristophanes reversed the sex impersonation role in his *Ecclesiazusae*, a play usually translated under the title of *Women in Parliament*. In this play women dressed as men in order to attend the all male meetings of the Athenian assembly. In their disguise they successfully introduced and passed a motion to turn the government of Athens over to women. Aristophanes then devoted much of the rest of his play to comic interpretations of the kind of legislation the women would introduce. Basically he implied that the women would establish a kind of socialist utopia in which everything including women will be held in common. The laws of the state would require that the men make love to the least attractive women before they would be allowed to approach the more desirable ones in order that no woman would feel cheated.

Cross-dressing was also a part of various festivals, particularly those associated with the god Dionysus. The prevalence of transvestistic episodes at the Dionysian rites may have been due to the legend that Dionysus had been reared disguised as a girl by King Atham (or Orhoemnus) and his Queen Ino. Dionysus was also

said to have appeared as a girl in various stages of his career including an appearance to the three daughters of Minya who refused to acknowledge him. In Egypt at the beginning of the fourth century B.C. men arrayed themselves as women in the Dionysian procession. In the first century A.D. Apollonius of Tyana is said to have seen in the disguises of the Anthestria (celebrated in February or early March) an insult to the heroes of Marathon. At the great feasts of Hera at Samos, men donned long white robes sweeping the ground, their hair encased in golden nets, wearing feminine bracelets and necklaces. In the month of Hermaios the Argives celebrated the Hybristika in which women dressed as men and men dressed as women. In Plutarch's time it was said that this custom commemorated the heroism of the poetess Telesilla who at the beginning of the fifth century B.C. had put herself at the head of an army of women to defend Argos against Cleomenes, king of Sparta, who was laying siege to it. This is again a kind of pseudo-historical explanation invented only after the real meaning was lost. In fact the very name of the feast suggests a kind of carnival complete with jests and coarse witticisms.

The ubiquity of such festivals might well indicate that the Greeks who draw rather strict sexual barriers, needed periods in which the barriers were somewhat removed. The ancients themselves recognized some of this. Philostratus who described the rituals of such festivals said that the image or the person impersonating the god was accompanied "by a numerous train in which girls mingle with men," for the festival allowed "women to act the part of men, and men to put on women's clothing and play the woman." Artemidorus in his *Interpretation of Dreams* stated that while the best omen in a dream is to see oneself dressed in his usual clothes, it was not harmful for a man to be seen in a parti-colored garment or a woman's garment providing the dream seemed to take place during the course of a feast or festival. The custom must have been fairly widespread since some fifteen vases depict bearded figures in women's clothes, all seemingly bent on pleasure. Some of the individuals appear to be men in disguise, others are women wearing false beards.

Transvestic Gods

Even some of the gods seemed to be worshipped in transvestistic guise. The most famous was the bearded Aphrodite (Aphroditos with the masculine ending) on Cyprus. The statue of the god was said to have had a woman's body and clothing but the beard and sexual organs of a man. To sacrifice to it, men dressed as women, and women as men. The erotic connotation of this was emphasized by the comic poets and lexicographers who associated the statue with priapic implications. Unfortunately none of the statues

or statuettes of Aphrodite found on Cyprus have been of this hermaphroditic god, rather all have been completely feminine. As a result some have argued that this androgynous Venus (the Roman name for Aphrodite), the goddess of motherhood and conception, might well represent the ancients ambiguity about the very nature of procreation. Several other dieties in ancient times seem to have hesitated between the two sexes including Pales, Pomo-Pomona, Tellumon-Tellurus-Tellus, but again all that we can do today is to make conjectures as to the reasons. It was this legend of Cyprian Aphrodite whom he called Venus Castina that C.J. Bulliet dedicated his history of transvestism.

Further confusion over the role of the priests of Venus Castina comes from the fact that on the island of Cos the priests of the Heracles cult wore feminine robes while sacrificing. Plutarch explained this attire as being due to the fact that Heracles in his flight from his enemies took refuge with a Thracian woman who hid him by lending him her garment. Later Heracles married the daughter of Alcipos, and on this occasion he also wore a kind of feminine robe embroidered with flowers. Plutarch added that this was why the priest sacrificed on that very spot, and why "newly married husbands in Cos put on feminine clothes to receive their bride." This is just another of those tantalizing episodes in Greek history. From that particular incident, however, there came to be a belief that cross-dressing, as Heracles did, promoted health, youth, strength, longevity, and perhaps even conferred a kind of immortality.

When the Heracles cult was transferred to Rome, men put on women's garments to take part in the mysteries. Although



"George, we've made a mistake. It isn't going to be a costume party."

only one surviving relief shows Hercules (his Latin name) in any kind of feminine garment, the emperor Commodus was probably impersonating Hercules when he appeared in the arena in feminine dress. There seems to be something more than mere impersonation of Hercules, however, since Commodus later adopted the dress of an Amazon and is said to have given himself the surname of an Amazon.

Some Transvestites

There are various other cases of alleged transvestism in Greek and Latin literature. One of the earliest is the Persian king Sardanapalus who is reported as having spent his time in the palace dressed in women's apparel. According to tradition (there was no Persian king named Sardanapalus) this conduct eventually led his satraps to rebel. Though Sardanapalus twice defeated the rebels they continued to move against him, forcing him to retire to Nineveh where for two years he held off a siege. Finally, unable to hold out any longer, he collected his treasures, wives, and concubines, placing everything in an immense pile which he set on fire, destroying himself in the process. Though some incidents in the story parallel the life of Ashurbanipal who was defeated by the Medes, Chaldeans, and others in the seventh century, the transvestistic aspect of the account cannot be proven.

Several of the Roman emperors seem to have indulged in cross dressing, but particularly Caligula and Heliogabalus. Heliogabalus would seem to have been a homosexual, but this was not the case with Caligula. There are also transvestistic episodes in the life of Nero who imitated Niobe, Canace, and other heroines of mythology on the stage. He is said to have impersonated a woman to marry his freedman whom Suetonius called Doryphorus. Nero's appearance in feminine clothes on the stage, however, was nothing unusual. The Greek and Roman theater customarily used male actors to impersonate females, and as a general rule women were not allowed either on the stage or in the audience. During the reign of the Emperor Domitian, an actor by the name of Paris, who was noted for his impersonations of nymphs and goddesses, attracted the attention of the emperor. Juvenal bitterly attacked Paris, as well as Bathyllus and Urbicus, who were also professional female impersonators. The satirist also described the wild celebration of the Bona Dea which had apparently been transformed since Clodius had profaned them in Caesar's day. Juvenal claimed that the rites were started by women but after the women had worked themselves into a kind of frenzy, young men dressed in the filmiest of female garments and wearing hoods were introduced into the ceremony.

Juvenal also complained about men who dress in women's clothes and are

sometimes regarded as harmless by other males because they seem to be homosexual. He claimed that women consulted them about marriage and divorce, and learned lascivious ideas and notions from them. He cautioned his readers to beware because

that teacher is not always what he seems: true he darkens his eyes and dresses like a woman, but adultery is his design. Mistrust him the more for his show of effeminacy; he is a valiant mattress-knight; there Triphallus drops the mask of Thais. Whom are you fooling? not me; play this farce to those who cannot pierce the masquerade. I wager you are every inch a man; do you own it, or must we wring the truth out of the maid servants? I know well the advice and warnings of my old friends: "Put on a lock and keep your wife indoors." Yes, but who is to ward the warders? They get paid in kind for holding their tongues as to their young lady's escapades; participation seals their lips. The wily wife arranges accordingly . . .

Conclusion

In spite of the incidents in Rome, however, it is the Greek literature (and its Latin preservers) which has the most incidents of transvestism. It was also in Greece that the sex lines were the most rigidly drawn, and it would seem that the very repression of the female encouraged transvestism, just as it seemingly

encouraged homosexuality. The Romans continued the Greek mythology and stories, but there were fewer incidents of purely Roman cross dressing just as there was less acceptance of homosexuality in Rome. In both societies, however, there seems to have been a deep seated need to impersonate the opposite sex, most especially among men. Though Juvenal wrote satires about it, and the individuals who did change clothes lost status (witness the slavery of Heracles), the hostility so evident in the Biblical injunction about women not wearing what pertaineth to a man, nor a man that of woman, was lacking. Surprisingly, only a few of the instances seem to have homosexual overtones. Most of them on the contrary were clearly heterosexual. Though neither the Greeks nor the Romans have left us many instances of individual cross-dressing, the festivals which seem to be so ubiquitous, as well as the theater allowed plenty of room for those who rebelled against the strict segregation of the sexes and undoubtedly gave the experience greater erotic implications. The evidence, in sum, seems to agree much too closely with modern studies of transvestism to deny that large numbers of Greeks and Romans had transvestic inclinations. It may well be that when the sex barriers and the gender roles are so sharply demarcated as they were in Greece, and to a lesser extent in Rome, cross-dressing, whether reported or not, is widely prevalent, particularly among males.



"Well, if you're not going to dress for the meeting, you'd better keep your opinions about how the rest of us look to yourself."

HERE AND THERE

OPAL HAS MOVED!

Our good friend, Opal Pollinger, now has a Merle Norman Studio at DON HENRI'S SALON located in THE MARKET PLACE' 6477 Pacific Coast Highway (at Westminster Blvd.) in Long Beach. Her phone number is (213) [REDACTED] 9.

Opal still owns the Merle Norman Studio at the LeMirada Mall ([714] 994-0781) but she is usually there only on Thursdays. Call to make sure of her schedule as it may change before you read this.

I have not seen it, but Opal's description of her new store sounds like a TV's paradise. Opal's operation is just part of a large salon that includes a beauty shop, nail care center, gym and sauna, wig shop, electrologist and fashion boutique. Opal assures me that her partner, Don Henri, is anxious to assist TV's any way he can. Opal does recommend calling ahead for an appointment. However, if you are in the neighborhood and would like to look around, she will be delighted to give you the deluxe tour.

For those who have not been fortunate enough to have met Opal at one of the Alpha Chapter meetings or at her La-Mirada salon, let me fill you in. Opal is a very sympathetic and knowledgeable friend of TV's. She is an expert make-up technician, she is a very helpful critic in other aspects of cross-dressing. Not only will she enhance your face cosmetically, she is always ready with helpful hints for flattering styles and colors for the individual TV. If she spots a "give-away" mannerism, she will point it out and give advice on overcoming bad habits that seem to plague cross-dressers. More than once she has chided me for my unfeminine smoking habits. Opal takes a real pride in seeing one of our sisters leaving her shop looking and acting like a real lady.

Opal is deserving of our patronage. It is people like Opal that make TVism much more pleasurable. Stop by or call and identify yourself as a Tri-Sig member and be prepared for the red carpet treatment.

Dianna (CA-48-D)

1st Man: "How long have you been wearing a girdle and nylons?"

2nd Man: "Ever since my wife found them under the back seat of the car."



NEW EVIDENCE FAVORS GOD'S IMAGE AS WOMAN

If man is made in the image of his Creator, then God may be a woman, new scientific evidence strongly suggests.

Scientists investigating the age-old puzzle of what determines maleness or femaleness have come to the startling conclusion that nature has an almost overpowering tendency to want to make all babies female.

In fact, if it weren't for a newly discovered molecule, called the "ultimate determinant of maleness," added to the embryo several weeks after conception, all babies would be girls.

Scientists call this the "Eve principle," and it is part of a major revolution going on in the fields of embryology and genetics.

"Nature's program in differentiating the embryo is to form Eve first, Adam second," said Dr. John Money, a pioneer in the area of gender identification from Johns Hopkins University.

New findings also show that the brain of all early fetuses are basically female and convert to male function and structure only after being exposed to powerful doses of male hormones, said Dr. Roger A. Gorski of UCLA.

"It sort of makes the biblical story of creation somewhat backward. A female may have been created first," Gorski said.

The molecule that leads the struggle to turn the originally neutral fetus into a male was discovered by Dr. Stephen S. Wachtel, an immunologist at the Cornell University Medical School and the Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

"You can think of maleness as a type of birth defect," said Wachtel, "in the beginning we are all headed toward femaleness."

The explosion of new knowledge is helping to explain some birth disorders involving sexual abnormalities. These include babies who are genetically male or female but who have the genitals and other sexual features of the opposite sex.

It also may open the door to "gender engineering," in which medical investigators may be able to make a fetus into a boy or a girl, depending on the wishes of the parents.

Surprisingly, man has already inadvertently dabbled in gender engineering. Some drugs given to pregnant women in the 1930s have converted genetic female embryos into males. Some were born with penises and scrotum and reared as boys.

A better understanding of transsexualism and homosexuality may be achieved

as the new research points to a possible physiological influence for these conditions.

Nature has performed its share of gender mix-ups as well, making genetic males into anatomically perfect females.

In some cases the happy moment of birth is marred when the doctor is unable to tell which sex the baby is. The newborn may have parts of both male and female sexual organs.

Fortunately, a small but growing number of experts are successfully dealing with these problems. Through surgery and hormone therapy, a clear-cut sex can be given to the infant in many cases.

Often they are converted into females, even if they are genetic males, because nature favors female development. They are reared as girls and never know they are anything but female, Money said.

Since something has to be added to the embryo to make a male, more things can go wrong, and indeed, nature does make more mistakes in male differentiation, he said.

The unfolding story of how males and females are formed has changed a lot of old ideas, making the field one of the hottest areas in medical research.

Dear Carole:

Glad to see the two entries I sent you for the shopping guide. Unfortunately, the Twardy Beauty Salon was given as at 800 Percy. Should have been 800 Geary. Could this be straightened out when you publish the picture in *Femme Mirror*?

I Xeroxed the shopping guide page and sent a copy to Ricardo and Jacques. I'm sure it will be much appreciated.

— Phyllis



"I told you this won't do you any good ... I'm a TV!"

The Editor's Mailbag

SALLY ANN GETS IN SHAPE

Dear Carol:

Today was my day to shave my legs, arms, chest and to keep my personal feminine self clean and fresh. My waist is now narrower than my hips, which gives me a real nice figure. I am down to 135 pounds. When I was a child in South America the maids used to tell me in Spanish that I had a girl's figure and would look pretty in a dress. Oh, that would really tear me up and I so wanted to let my hair grow long and curly and to wear pretty pinafores and bows in back and starched petticoats. In Chile one had male clothes made since there were no stores then where you could go in and buy ready-made clothes off the rack. The woman who made some males clothes for me at the store said that she should be making dresses for me as I would look much better as a young lady than a young man. She asked me if I had ever enjoyed dressing up as a girl and I had to lie to her and say that I had no interest in those things. "Too bad" she told me, "as you have such a pretty figure, so slender and so slight. After I got back onto the street I sobbed all the way home.

Sally Ann (MD-7-K)

LETTER FROM A MERCHANT MARINE

Dear Carol:

I work in the merchant marine and ship out six months at a time. This gives me financial independence and I am able to buy things and have electrolysis done when I come ashore. But my feminine side, which I ignored in the past is now a great source of happiness for me. It is just recently that I came to realize that Tvism is a lifetime activity and I have begun to research and plan a future lifetime around my femme self. I just recently enrolled in a dress-making class (home study). I hope to meet some nice accepting female when I return from sea, although the women that I know have had the bad experience of seeing the "gay" drag queens. This has not helped the situation. I feel that I relate to women totally, including their sensitivity. When I was younger I shared my feelings of cross-dressing with several girls and they helped me and even gave me the name of Sandra. They also gave me gifts of lingerie and nail polish and I was able to be Sandra around them.

— Sandra (Massachusetts)



FROM AN ATTORNEY

Dear Carol:

First, thank you for the material you sent. It has been helpful. We would like to obtain another copy of the book *Understanding Crossdressing* to give to our family physician so that he may make it available to others in the local medical community and their patients having similar traits. The experiences that accumulated during 45 years, together with the past three months of intense introspection, coupled with reading and thorough discussion with an intelligent and understanding wife have all made me recognize and acknowledge that I am, have been, and always will be, a transvestite. By the time that the book and letter from you arrived, my wife and I had made significant progress towards resolving the effect my transvestism has had and would continue to have upon our marriage and personal relationship. The discovery and revelation that this is what I am and have been could not have come during a more turbulent time and it is against this background that my cross-dressing literally came out of the closet. Along with the clothes came my tortured tale of actions taken over the years to find ways both expressing and repressing this inner self. We both know that our relationship is special and of primary importance to each of us. We are under no illusions that the future will be completely free of rocky times. Yet, as we have faced, and are resolving our present challenges we will face and overcome future problems. My wife and I would like to meet you and Virginia soon.

— Tom (Minnesota)

SHEILA WANTS TO JOIN

Dear Carol:

Thanks so much for sending me the introductory material about Tri-Sigma. I'm very pleased with the goals and the atmosphere of the Sorority and I want to become a member. Circumstances in my life permit me to once again enjoy cross-

dressing and I now feel in a position to meet and correspond with other Tri-Sig members. I've met one of Tri-Sigma's members in my area — Patricia Louise — who has allowed me to read some copies of the *Femme Mirror*. I enjoyed so much the issue in which the details of your wedding were so beautifully given to us — how fortunate you are.

— Sheila (Pennsylvania)

Dear Carol:

I think the new format of *Femme Mirror* is excellent. Karen's art work is especially good, and articles such as "Sex Roles in the Nursery," by Laura Carper, reprinted from *Harper's*, have enhanced the content a great deal.

I would like to pass on some titles of books I found interesting and/or entertaining.

Splendor, by Edward Swift, a novel that came out last summer, deals with the adventures and misadventures of a young (30) "librarian lady" who returns to her Texas town (Splendor) after many years away. She/he had left town unhappily at the age of 18 with unresolved gender identity problems. This novel is very humorous, cleverly written and, needless to say, great reading for transvestites. It got a very favorable review in the *New York Times* Book Review. I enjoyed it immensely and could not put it down.

Looking Terrific, by Emily Cho and Linda Grover, is a must book for the woman who wants to express herself through the language of clothing. To quote from the jacket: "Emily Cho is the founder of *New Image*, an innovative business designed to help women project their unique personal style through the way they dress . . . *Looking Terrific* focuses first on the language of clothing. How does it affect your life, and society around you? How does it control your behavior? What messages are people sending you through the way they dress? You'll learn the basics — how to disguise body faults and enhance assets . . . Then, considering the special needs and priorities of your lifestyle, you'll plan a wardrobe that will serve you 24 hours a day, come what may."

This is a very helpful book and it is clearly written. One can learn a great deal about color, line and form and many other topics that give the reader the tools for projecting a better self-image. This book should prove invaluable to the transvestite.

— Patricia (ME-3-W)

The Editor's Mailbag

GAYLE HEARS FROM "UNDERSTANDING ONES"

Dear Carol:

Thanks for your nice letter and literature. It is so nice to hear from someone who understands. I have had some long talks with my wife since I wrote you and I think some progress has been made. She still thinks that I am the one with a problem and I think that she would like to find some magic wand to wave over me so that I would become "normal." I have tried to overcome my feelings of femininity without success. I have made expensive trips to the "shrink" without my changing my feelings regarding my desire to crossdress. I regret that the doctor hadn't heard of Virginia and her work as that would have been a great help to me and perhaps also to my wife. In any case my wife has finally allowed me to have some free time to myself, usually during the weekend. It is a bit frustrating, though, to work hard getting myself to look pretty and then just having to sit around the house. I am looking forward to the day that I will become a Tri-Sigma girl so that I can go out and visit with some of my sisters. Hopefully by then, I can convince my dear wife to go with me and perhaps she could then better understand my feelings and be reassured by more understanding wives.

— Gayle (Washington)

RITA FEELS CLOSE

Dear Carol:

It makes me feel good to receive the *Femme Mirror* regularly. It may be difficult for you to understand but I am really cult for you to understand but I am really living in a desert here. I just wish that I had a femme friend around here — shared femininity is much more fun. Thanks to you and all the others for the work that is provided to make the sorority go. Although I am far away I feel close to my sisters in my feelings.

— Rita (FNG-1-S)

WALKING DOWN THE AISLE

Dear Sister Carol:

I just had to write this note to tell you how much I enjoyed reading about your "walking down the aisle." The pictures are so very pretty, and I read the article over a dozen times and each time I could hear my heart beat. I only wish that I could do this with a wife in the future. Carol, the entire wedding party is a picture of loveliness. I can only say one thing — "it's heaven to be a TV".

Leslie Diane (NM-3-S)



DIANE BEGAN AT 10

Dear Carol:

I appreciate receiving the brochure and *Femme Mirror*. After having read them I would like very much to become a Tri-Sigma girl. My first experience with wearing girl's clothing was when I was 10 years old and I have been wearing them for 16 years. I have never been caught although my mother knows about it and even washes and irons my femme clothing. Although I like very much to dress up I need someone to show me the finer points of crossdressing.

— Diane (Iowa)

FROM ANOTHER GIRLFRIEND

It was good of you to send me the literature regarding transvestism. It is for my boyfriend — he is a crossdresser. This is actually a shallow term since it doesn't express how deep these feelings go. Bran-

dy has kept "her" second self from all his friends. But "she" needs friends who will understand "her" and who can share experiences with "her." "She" needs places she can go to be comfortable. I have turned the information over to Brandy. She seemed quite excited about it and I hope that she will be contacting you soon. I think you and bless you all in your endeavors.

— Patricia (Colorado)

THRIFT SHOPPING

Dear Carol:

"... they opened a new thrift shop here and, oh dear, did this girl luck in. For just \$3.00 I got a sleeveless dress with a long-sleeved jacket. The top is white and the skirt is red and when I zip myself up in that dress it is so wonderful. I feel that the dress is a real part of me and it is so nicely made. And it fits great! The Hampton couple that I told you about want to join Tri-Sigma right away and are eager to meet Betty Ann (VA-10-VA-10-L). I also heard from a couple in West Virginia who are also interested in joining our sorority. I expect to meet them soon. The *Femme Mirror* is great — it is for us — by us — and we can read one just a few months old and find something that we missed earlier which helps us enjoy the issue again. That is why we Tri-Sig girls have an advantage over other Tv organizations and that is what sold the Hampton couple. This girl is bargain conscious as you know. And, in a thrift shop one can often find darling momentos of the past that are still fashionable today. The classic little black dress I recently purchased will be the delight of us girls for a long long time.

Sally Ann (MD-7-K)

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