

M0053911NC

T2154 ✓

NC 0017932 9



**The National College of Art & Design
Faculty of Design
Department of Fashion & Textiles**

“All Dressed Up”

**A look at the role that Drag Queens and
Transvestites play in Society and Performance.**

By

Fiona Cribben

**Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design
and Complementary Studies in candidacy for the
Degree of BA in Fashion 1999.**

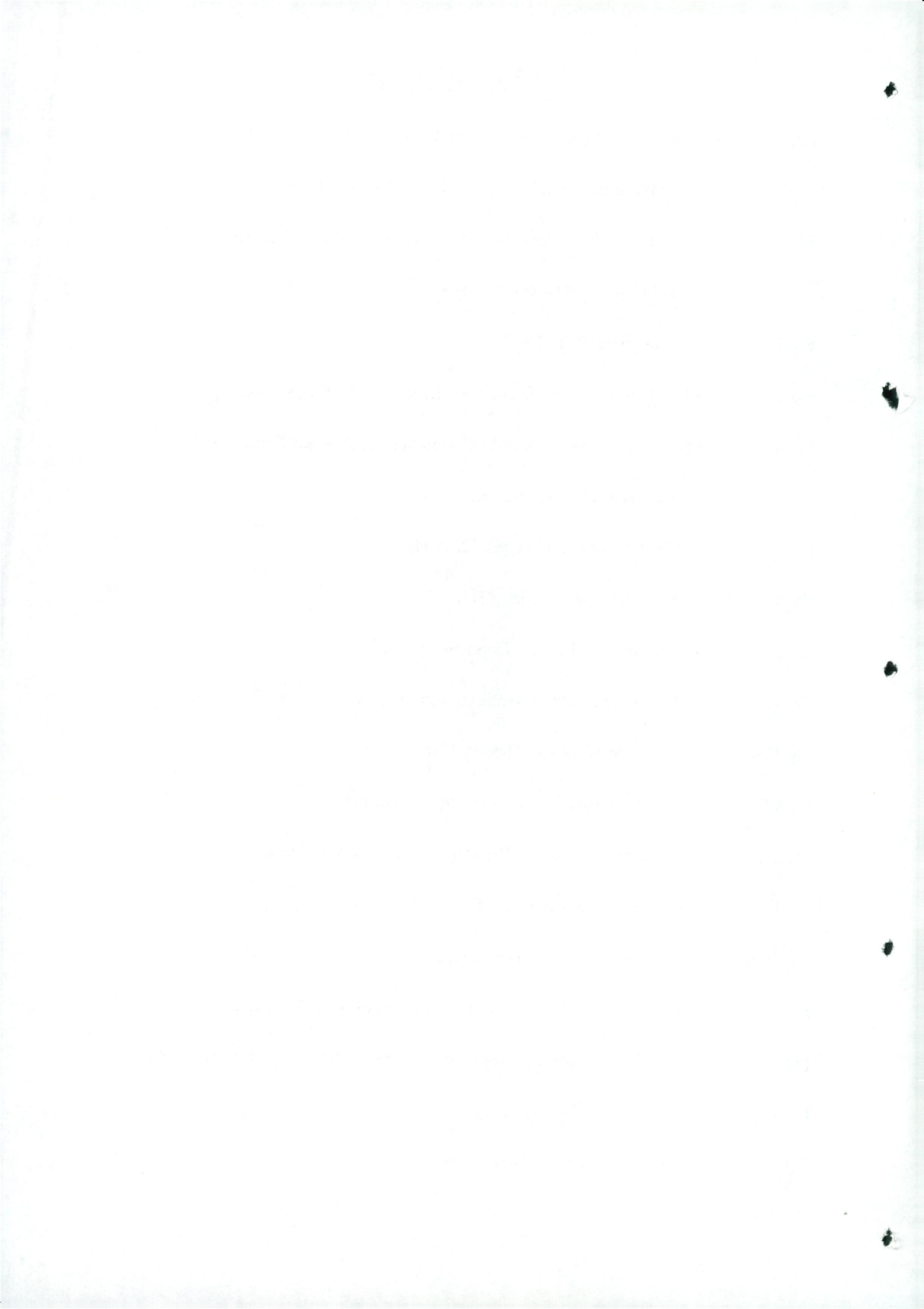
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Lists of Plates:		Page 2.
Introduction:		Page 5.
Chapter One:	A closer look at drag and transvestites.	Page 6 - 15
Chapter Two:	Drag and Transvestites Accepted and rejected.	Page 16 - 24
Chapter Three:	Drag and Transvestism In performance.	Page 25 - 36
Conclusion:		Page 37
Appendix:		Page 38 - 40
Bibliography:		Page 41 - 42

I want to thank Anne Mealy, Rory O'Neill, Larry and Joan for their assistance in the research for this thesis.

LIST OF PLATES:

- Fig 1: Drag Queen at the Mardi Gras San Francisco. (Coleman p. 12).
- Fig 2: A Transvestite in San Francisco 1973 (A look inside, p. 10).
- Fig 3: Transsexuals from Cork, Lorraine O'Regan and Erica Scanlon
(Irish Independent November 1998).
- Fig 4: A Transvestite (Gay Times).
- Fig 5: Kings Cross, Sydney, famous district for transvestite prostitution.
- Fig 6: Ru Paul, Flyer for 'Gay Pride Celebration' Castro, San Francisco.
- Fig 7: A Drag Queen in performance.
- Fig 8: Soldiers in skirts. (Drag, p. 142, 1994).
- Fig 9: A Berdache (Drag Diaries p.10).
- Fig 10: A Transvestite Shaman. (Dressing Up, p.162).
- Fig 11: A Transvestite in the seventeenth century. (Men's Fashions, p. 94).
- Fig 12A: An example of Kabuki Theatre. (Drag, p. 95).
- Fig 12B: An illustration of Kabuki, (Cheung Lee, p. 11).
- Fig 13: A Dame in Pantomime. (Brendan O'Carroll, The Gaiety).
- Fig 14A: Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon, (Drag, p. 71).
- Fig 14B: Dustin Hoffman in Tootsie. (Drag, p. 72).
- Fig 15: The New York Drag Queens, (The Queens of New York, p.12-27).
- Fig 16: David Bowie in the transvestite image (Irish Independent December 1998).
- Fig 17: Danny La Rue (Drag, p. 102).
- Fig 18: Dame Edna Everage, (Drag, p. 98).



INTRODUCTION:

When you meet a person the first distinction you make is male or female and you are accustomed to make the distinction with unhesitating certainty. Transvestites and drag queens I argue are closely linked, but this is merely speculation and like the analysis of the causes, conditions, acceptance and performances of transvestism and drag recorded in this thesis, is open to question and ambiguity. I came to this subject as an outsider and have in a sense remained one, since it is still to me a puzzling varied and often contradictory phenomenon. What can be said with certainty is that publicly, drag and transvestism represent a visible form, a spirit of difference. If it were possible to dispel the miasma of moral and sexual taboo, which surrounds so essentially a simple and distinctive activity, drag and transvestism could take a small but interesting place in the history of human expression.

In Chapter One I distinguish between the different types of cross-dressing that exist. I compare and contrast the characteristics of the drag queen and transvestite. Through my analysis I look at theorists such as Freud. I argue that drag is not misogynistic and give a synopsis of how this fetish began for the drag queen and transvestite.

In the course of this thesis I examine under a number of different headings, the similarities between drag and transvestism and how they differ, how transvestism in certain cultures is associated with ritual, transvestism and drag in performance, and how acceptable today is drag and transvestism in society.

In Chapter Two I examine historic references to transvestism, when it was accepted and rejected. I begin by looking at religions and cultures in certain African and Indian tribes where the transvestite played a powerful role as the leader of rituals.

I analyse the transvestite and the drag queen under the headings of sacred and secular.

In the third Chapter I examine transvestism and drag as a contemporary phenomenon in the entertainment industry. I discuss the two in comedy, fantasy and joyful disorder, in film, music, theatre and literature.

I look at the relationship between the audience and performer as many well known artists have taken on the role of a cross-dresser at some point in their career i.e. David Bowie, Mick Jagger.

CHAPTER ONE

Throughout the history of theatre, literature, drama, or music from Shakespeare to Wilde, from Bugs Bunny to the Bashevis singer, gender play has served as an instrument for transformation, not only for those who are overtly transformed by the cross dressing threshold, but also and more importantly those for whom the drag queen comes into contact. Drag, in my opinion, has a unique power to confuse and reassemble the elements of desire, which is one of the most powerful narrative tools available.

Having endured and prevailed over my own rite of passage as a spectator of friends and acquaintances in the world of drag queens and transvestites, I set out in a less passive mode to answer some questions ("I can't define it, but I know when I see it ...") wouldn't suffice. The first question is what is drag? and what are transvestities? I know there exists a frustrating variety of notions – it turns out everyone is an expert. Furthermore appellations and terms differ from era to era and from locale to locale. One could simply posit that "drag is when a man dresses up in women's clothing", unfortunately, lots of men do, so this is a problem. We should be able to see the differentiation between a man in a dress from a fully-fledged drag queen and a transvestite. I have worked up easy definitions of drag per se; the following is a brief catalogue of those things for which drag queens are mistaken.



Figure 1: Drag Queen:



Figure 2: Transvestite.

Firstly, there are the cross-dressers. One may think that these are men, who purely delight in adorning women's clothes, however it is a little more complex. Cross-dressers can be divided into four groups. The first is the peripheral cross-dresser who is not excited by women's clothing nor does he cross dress in order to express an inner feminine self. He uses women's clothing as a means to an end. This would be the exhibitionist and female impersonator or gender illusionist. They are paid to recreate the personae of legendary beauties such as Marilyn Monroe, Barbara Streisand, Betty Davis, Tina Turner, Judy Garland and daughter Liza, Cher, to name but a few. (For a drag queen to impersonate these women would be redundant because almost all drag queens today create their own personae rather than copying ones who have already been done).

But there are three other types of cross-dressing – the cosmetic, the full time Cross-dresser and the fetishistic Cross-dresser. I call the drag queen the fetishist. The fetishistic cross-dresser is said to be unconsciously seeking an emotional connection with a particular woman, typically mother, aunt, or girlfriend. He establishes this connection through clothing, which he uses to symbolise her. Straight men who cross-dress derive satisfaction from wearing the opposite gender's clothes. To cultivate these special needs, clubs and societies proliferate for men whose bliss comes in the form of high heels, big hair, and the classic profile of a mini-skirt and Chanel jacket.

Next there are transvestites – they have a lot in common with cross-dressers. Most people call cross-dressers “transvestite”. However a “transvestite” is sometimes used to describe a man who dresses as a woman in return for some (usually illegal) remuneration. Throughout religious history transvestites have been accepted, e.g. recorded incidences in diverse cultures, for example: the Dakota Indians and the contemporary Shamens in Brazil, (see Chapter Two).

Thirdly, some men who dress in women's clothes are transsexuals or at least on their way to becoming so. Drag queens have little to do with transsexuals so far as society is concerned. Dominant culture cannot accept those individuals who are betwixt and between male and female existence. Some drag queens and transvestites have experimented with more permanent changes and have gone through major surgical rendering to achieve their wanted look. For example: these two transvestites from Cork in the photograph. They are no longer drag queens; surgery has replaced theatre and that's no fun. The special theatrical power of mixing the two genders is lost.



Figure 3: Transsexuals Lorraine O'Regan from Baltimore, Co.Cork, and Erica Scanlon from Cork City.

As I want to specifically look at drag queens and transvestites, I have put them both under the title of fetishistic cross-dressers. The contemporary clinical definition of transvestite is more specific: it is described as an act of cross-dressing which is accompanied by fetishistic obsessions. Transvestites and drag queens are closely related in so far as they are both aware of their male identity and this plays a major role in their activity. Although there are connections there are also differences which I will trace between the two phenomena; drag is primarily a homosexual performance while most transvestites are heterosexual. Drag is a publicly acceptable way for homosexuals and transvestites to relieve their obsession, (through performance) but instead of implicitly adhering to the prevailing sexual and social codes,

what transvestism does is seemingly misogynistic in origin and intent, but I argue that it is not. The contemporary male transvestite only wishes to create an illusion of femininity “to pass” as a woman publicly or privately whereas the drag queen is a performance for the public. For the transvestite, female clothes are a serious expression of fetishistic tendencies.



Figure 4: A transvestite (Gay Times)

The word ‘fetish’ is derived from the Latin ‘facere’ which is the root word for the Latin words ‘facticius’ and ‘factitius’ which denote that which is fictitious. ‘Facere’ also is the root of the word ‘artefact’ – which is a term used to characterise those objects that denote masculinity and femininity, (Allen, 1996 p. 43-70). Fetishism has its origins in gender. Gender is something that society has imbued with great symbolic power. Gender can be represented by symbols, the most obvious in this case being clothing. ‘Symbol’ derives from the Greek ‘symbolon’ and denotes a token, a pledge, or a sign by which one infers a thing. The artefacts, (artificial product) of gender are the tokens we use to infer masculinity and femininity. The drag queen and transvestite therefore are a fictitious woman. Psychology argues that women’s

clothing has symbolic value, and that the violations of that symbolism are what constitutes fetishism. After all, if there was not women's clothing, then could there be drag queens or indeed transvestites?. This distinction presents a conundrum. On the one hand, women's clothing and cosmetics must be seen as artifactual in order to free women from being defined merely by such artefacts. On the other hand, those psychologists who wish to attribute the weight of symbology to women's clothing and cosmetics to explain the behaviour of the drag queen, ironically perpetuate the definition of women – as a collection of artefacts.

In giving fetishism symbols or symbolic meaning, by categorising women's artefacts, psychology is essentially saying that clothing and cosmetics embody the meaning of women. Yet it is demeaning to argue that one half of the human population, the female gender can be symbolised by mere apparel – but this is an important way in which the sexes are divided.

Freud and other theorists have researched the question of transvestism. Freud never gives an explicit account of the phenomenon but its presence can be traced in his essay on sexual aberrations;

In all the cases we have examined we have established the fact that future inverts, in the earliest years of their childhood, pass through a phase of very intense but short-lived fixation on a woman (who is usually their mother) and that, after leaving this behind they identify themselves, with a woman and take themselves as their sexual object. (Sexualities, 1962 p. 34)

This overt-eroticism involved is of relevance to the condition of the transvestite. Male transvestites speak of their condition as deriving from infant memories and obsessions whether through some traumatic experiences of loss or betrayal or through the fixation upon an individual garment. This garment or female artefact may have acted as a safe and unthreatening substitute for the female body which the infant desires. The wearing of female clothes charges the body of the transvestite with a diffuse but powerful sexual excitement – as though it were a febrile re-enactment of the skin to skin contact with the mother which he enjoyed in his infancy. The mother's warm acknowledgement of "you are part of me" has never been erased or repressed. This notion has been passed as so many mothers dress their male infants as little girls; and so it returns in bizarre and incongruous forms. So the gesture, in this sense, of wearing women's clothes is a way of reuniting the transvestite with the image of his mother he retained and like the drag queen it is a way of alleviating the permanent psychic discomfort of male clothing. Magnus Hirschfield has noted that certain transvestites dream of maternal happiness and try and re-enact it by for example, dressing as a pregnant woman.

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

4. The fourth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

5. The fifth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

6. The sixth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

7. The seventh part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

8. The eighth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

A further aspect of Freud's analysis which is of peculiar relevance to the transvestistic phenomenon is, "The child believes that it is only unworthy female persons who have lost their genitals – females who, in all probability, were guilty of inadmissible impulses similar to his own. Women whom he respects, like his mother, retain a penis for a long time". (Freud, 1905, p.62). The image of the mother, which the adult transvestite recreates in his own dressing, is that of a "phallic woman". Freud is suggesting that the image of the woman which the transvestite recreates in his dressing is only motivated in this way, however it can be argued that stimuli such as the transvestites environment, the people his is mixing with, the topics he talks about, books he reads.

Earlier I had called women's clothing 'artefacts' but they could also be 'camouflage' in this case as the spectacle of a man dressed as a woman as both a re-enactment of the mother (as Freud put it) or someone possessing a penis, and an image which explicitly denies the subsequent knowledge of her castration and all the anxieties which that induces: " ... if a woman has been castrated, then his own possession of a penis was in danger ... the fetish is a substitute for the woman's (the mother's) penis that the little boy once believed in and - for reasons familiar to us - does not want to give up"... (Stoller, 1985, p.29). Another argument was that female clothes which the transvestite wears might in themselves be a symbol of castration as they are free and flowing - yet the penis, centre of obsession, is secure beneath. The 'camouflage' therefore becomes a way of resolving the conflict of wanting to be a woman but remaining male. This is according to Stoller, a very efficient way of handling very strong feminine identification without his masculinity being threatened.

In terms of my theatrical and club experiences and interviews with drag queens it is rare for a queen to want to be a woman. On the contrary, the essence of drag for those who do it is irony. Any reader of, say, Harold Bloom knows that irony is among the highest of the arts. However, what irony succeeds in doing, apart from providing a few good laughs is critiquing putative societal notions of what the feminine and the masculine are supposed to be like. Through parody and theatrics sexual mimicry and innuendo, the drag queen presents by his/her very existence a caricature of femininity – by his adornment of female artefacts and his own masculinity as it is understood by mainstream commercial culture. By donning a pair of false breasts, eyelashes and the sine qua non of drag, a wig, drag automatically asks the question what is it we expect of our women and our men? By exaggerating most, if not all, of the female anatomy and traditional modes of dress, the drag queen highlights the unnaturalness of the expectations of these body parts. What drag queens bring to their work which is missing from that of others who trade in sartorial subterfuge is a critical distance

1871

1. The first of the three main branches of the
theory of the origin of life is the
theory of spontaneous generation. This
theory holds that life can arise from
non-living matter. It was first
proposed by Aristotle, and was
later revived by Lavoisier and Berzelius.
It was finally disproven by Pasteur's
experiments on the growth of
microbes in sterilized broth.

2. The second main branch of the theory
of the origin of life is the theory of
pangenesis. This theory holds that
all parts of an organism contribute
to the formation of the germ cells.
It was first proposed by Darwin, and
was later developed by Weismann.

3. The third main branch of the theory
of the origin of life is the theory of
evolution. This theory holds that
all life forms have evolved from a
common ancestor. It was first
proposed by Darwin, and was later
developed by Huxley and Wallace.

from the characters they create. One example of this is 'Cher' whom many queens impersonate. She is more like a drag queen than the impersonators are. For example, the reality is the idea of Cher – a theatrical representation of glamour, fame, and hyperidealised femininity, displays all the characteristics of drag. There is a distance between Cher 'the woman' and Cher 'the character' and in relation to drag it may not be as great as the garden-variety drag performer and his drag persona. Simply when a man dresses as a woman and performs, this is an obvious gender change, or supposedly! However, to impersonate Cher on stage may be an act of gender illusion, but to be Cher on stage, for all practical purposes, is, to be a drag queen. I will develop this in Chapter Two.

When one watches a drag queen perform, one rarely gets the sensation one is watching a woman; it is strange. There is a whole world of fantasy locked in the world of drag. For those who expect the ironic, the parodic and satiric, there is much to enjoy. To view a drag as hateful or misogynistic is to miss the irony that is at its heart. Maybe it is due to the widespread failure of readership or perhaps a political reaction that causes so many to assume that everything a person enjoys, creates or represents artistically is necessarily being promoted by a he/she a him or a her.

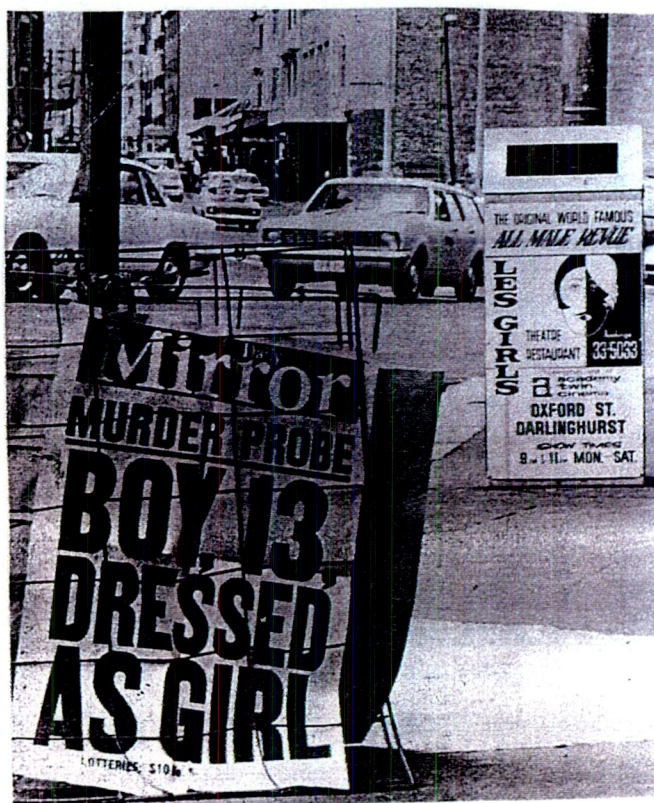


Figure 5: A street scene in the Kings-Cross-Sydney.
A famous district for entertainment and
transvestite prostitution.

To anyone who considers themselves both a feminist or pro-drag – the issue of drag has little to do with a queen trying to be “like a woman” (as I’ve previously said) and everything to do with his trying not to be “like a man”. So what is a drag queen trying to do? One can argue that drag is essentially an act of liberation, a push forward, and a man shaking off the role of masculine expectations attached to the accident of being male. In the tearing off of the

masculine qualities (shaving moustache or chest) and in the donning of feminine artefacts, the drag queen chooses to dress in the feminine way due to society and culture so averse to anything in between, the mixing of the two. As it is my belief that it would be more opposed if the queen was to take on the two genders; by donning a moustache and a dress at once. Secondly for those who believe that drag queens are merely men who wish they were women fail to grasp that the power of drag grows directly out of the layering of one gender on top of the other. This act couldn't be done otherwise. The idea of drag would be effectively wrong if the assumption was that the queen was a self-loathing malcontent acting out of deep-rooted fantasy of gender transformation. However, it was interesting to see and read that some of the most exciting and mature theories about the nature of drag and other similar forms of gender subversion have come from non-reactionary feminist writers and critics, for example Judith Butler.

It was Judith Butler who said gender is thus a fantasy enacted by "corporeal styles that constitute body significations".(Butler, 1990). In other words gender is an act, a performance, a set of manipulated codes, costumes, rather than a core aspect of essential identity. Butler's main metaphor for this is 'drag'. All gender is a form of "drag" according to Butler; there is no 'real' core gender to refer to. Therefore drag queens in reference to this quote are not anything out of the norm. As Ru Paul said, "We're born naked, the rest is drag". Why make a big issue of a man who likes to perform in women's clothes. (Baker, 1996 p.112).

Figure 6: Ru Paul on a flyer for a club in San Francisco, Summer '98.



Female clothing becomes a desirable and necessary substitute for the female sexual being. The transvestite who adorns feminine clothes defends himself against what he senses to be the implicit threat posed by female bodies. In Freud's theory females may be castrated although in their image he is identifiable as a woman and he is a better woman; as he was not castrated. In this way the drag queen could be compared to the transvestite as such beliefs also suggest a kind of exhibitionism: the overt display of inappropriate clothing is an indirect way of drawing attention to the penis which lies underneath.

It can be argued that the transvestite like the drag queen never wants to be a woman. As in Stoller's account it resurrects, a desired sense of masculinity and maleness' in every sense in which it had once been threatened. This was perhaps either due to being dressed as a girl as a child, either for a punishment or to feminise him, or perhaps the child became attached to a female who later abandoned him, it may be a question of wanting to be part of a certain group gay community, there are many theories, and

'by a remarkable tour-de-force he takes the original humiliation and converts it into an active process of sexual mastery and pleasure'.

If the transvestite or drag queen did want to be a woman, it is not a sin or even hard to get a sex change. I would argue that these men are very much in touch with their masculine side as they can see the difference between men and women and enjoy acting the feminine side by putting on women's dress.

Dress has always been worn for the purposes of protection and ornamentation, but it is adopted to project the wearer's appropriate place in the social and moral order of the community. I believe that both transvestites and drag queens should be taken at face-value: as a harmless and colourful way of alleviating those tensions which social and family life may induce. The difference between the two is that drag queens are accepted as a performance but it is harder for the average person to accept a man in women's clothes. However, my next chapter deals with transvestism as accepted or rejected in different cultures.



Figure 7: A drag queen in performance.

CHAPTER TWO

This is a quotation from the Bible: “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a women’s garment; for all that do are an abomination unto thy God” (Deut. 25:5, KJV). In Christian communities any man in women’s clothes was connected to social embarrassment. Roger Baker author of ‘Drag’ recounts that his mother took him to a show performed in the immediate post war years by ex-troopers, “soldiers in skirts,” and she quickly whisked him away saying that it would be “unsuitable”. As it was not accepted within his society, some transvestites and drag queens were imprisoned and even executed.

Soldiers in Skirts toured throughout World War II and well into the 1950s.



Figure 8: Soldiers in skirts.

However, these feelings have not been expressed by all cultures. There have been cultures in which transvestism has been institutionalised and transvestites themselves have been given a generic status, i.e. the Dakota Indians. These transvestites otherwise known as ‘berdaches’ were as Ruth Benedict put it, are “leaders in women’s occupations”. They played a large and well-integrated role within certain societies. Due to the transvestite being both male and female, it would have an increased sense of power, in my opinion, over any other single sex. In many shamanistic cultures, transvestites are regarded as sorcerers or visionaries who, because of their double nature, as men dressed as women, are sources of divine authority within the community.



Figure 9: A Berdache – from the Dakota Indians.

It is not surprising then that this double nature was seen as sacred. In Africa, for example, one of the principal deities of the great god Shango can be represented as either male or female; and contemporary shamans in Brazil worship Yansan, who is the 'man – woman'. Even in the Bible, again, Scotus Erigena asserts that Christ at his Resurrection "was neither man nor woman". We are dealing here with something that is deeply rooted in the human psyche of these cultures. A man in a dress, in some parts of the world has a lot of meaning. The persistent identification of cross-dressing with ideas of growth and rebirth marks most fertility rites and it is one, which still persists, in contemporary harvest festivals. Therefore a man who dresses as a woman in religious settings, who possesses all the gender balances of a woman (maternity, fertility,) has been a worshipped figure as he has the power of the mixture of the

two sexes. Androgyny, in which the two sexes co-exist in one form, is an original state of power. The power to change sex, or at least to represent that process by adopting female clothes, links the shaman in African tribes to the double-sexed and self sufficient deities. For example, if one of the people is sick or mad, the shaman pleads and fights on behalf of his people. The shaman must be reborn before he can assume his proper role, and to mark the rebirth he may assume female clothes, by being summoned in dream. As Ioan Lewis puts it in 'Ecstasy Religion'.

"The initial experience withdraws the victim from the secure world of society and of ordered existence, and exposes him directly to those forces which, though they may be held to uphold the social order, are also ultimately threatening".(Ackroyd, 1979 p.53). The question is what could be more conformist than the clothes that mark sexual gender, and yet what could be more 'threatening' than the uses to which they are put by the transvestite shaman?



Figure 10:

A Transvestite, Shaman.

Of course, it would be wrong to suggest that all shamans are transvestites (or that all transvestites are shamans), however the persistence of cross-dressing among primitive priests is worthy of notice. James Frazer reports in "The Golden Bough" (1962) that in the Pelen Islands a goddess chooses a man, not a woman, for her minister... He wears female attire, he carries a piece of gold on his neck, and he labours like a woman in the tano fields. The acceptance of transvestites in Frazer's report shows that it is not just a power trip for the transvestite as he 'labours like a woman', therefore it is not all high and mighty living, however he does possess the title of a 'minister'.

There are explanations for the persistence and the apparent universality of transvestism and transvestism as a sacred and powerful condition in many cultures. As we have seen cross-dressing has been taken to represent the communal order of 'Mother Nature' as opposed to the hierarchy of male-dominated society. It has been suggested that the male priest dressed as a woman symbolises the confluence of earth, the female principle and sky, the male.

Interestingly, in contemporary cultures, the priests of androgynous cults, as in the worship of Yansan in Brazil, are effeminate homosexuals. They dressed sometimes in women's clothes. There is no reason to believe that this was a necessary or even prevalent condition, but it was a mere speculation on the sexual identity. As most drag queens are homosexuals, this is a universal statement that is accepted.

It can be said that drag queens possessed a double persona the sacred and the secular. The sacred presided over the creation of drama in ancient Greece. Peter Ackroyd observed that "when cross-dressing ceases to be stylised, preserving a cool arena of illusion between performance and artist only the grotesquely remains". This is what happened in the eighteenth century when the drag queen resigned her dramatic authority and took on the sacred role. (Chermayeff, 1995,p.21-25). It didn't work. It had false meaning on stage, in my opinion, in comparison to the religious beliefs that were behind the performances of the transvestites who performed during rituals. Cross-dressing was a way of lifting all established social and sexual constraints. As transvestism acted during the rituals above was in preparation for rebirth: to change nature, man must change himself. It mocks conventional human values by knocking moral, economic and political sign systems which human clothing represents, a modern interpretation of it would be that it becomes a radical act for the individual and society. Mircea Eliade has suggested that transvestitic practices, are a representation of that ultimate but fruitful chaos which the myths of androgyny confirm. Man has been deeply dissatisfied with his own nature, and through this he has been torn in half by sexual and generic difference

– but through these transvestitic festivals, he aspires toward some original unity. In Plato's Symposium, Aristophane's quasi-comic speech on the nature of love puts the same point in a less generalised way: "So ancient is the desire of one another which is implanted in us, reuniting our original nature, seeking to make one of two and to heal the state of man. Each of us when separated, having one side only, like a flat fish, is but the tally-half of a man, and he is always looking for his other half". This is the original unity. (Ackroyd, 1979, p.63).

In this sense, ultimate reality is something the rational mind does not comprehend; this is due to conventional society and sexual conditions. Man was designed to be irrational, to possess grandeur, hysteria and madness, like the drag queen. Through his appearance, the transvestite resolves the divisions of ordinary human existence by cross-dressing.

Transvestism and its sacred purpose in religious festivities could survive only as long as the phenomenon was feared and respected. When those sacred ties were let go all that remained was the grotesquely striking similarities with the drag queens in the eighteenth century disparities which cross-dressing embodied. A man in women's clothing evoked a range of anxieties in many people, but the fear could be dissolved by laughter which is what happened in the world of drag. It was for comic diversion in the late eighteenth century that drag queens took this form.

In the reports of transvestitic activity in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries no real distinction is drawn between transvestites and male homosexuals. The abandonment of the convention of men playing female parts on stage, in the seventeenth century, is only one symptom of a vast transition in sexual and social behaviour. When boys or men played female roles, cross-dressing was in a sense institutionalised as a medium for self-expression and public display. However by the end of the seventeenth century, transvestism was no longer considered acceptable as a means of representation. This was a time when even language was stripped of ornamentation; luxury and ornamentation were in themselves seen as vices and could, like ornamental style, lead to social divisiveness. However in the nineteenth century drag was accepted, only in the form of comic or lurid drag. Men's fashion slimmed to tight utilitarian clothing, women's fashion was graceful and elegant and the male transvestite was seen as offensive at every level in society. As cross-dressing is an entirely visual performance a transvestite was seen as perverse and vulgar. Cross-dressing was seen as a sexual act which totally disregarded women in the social order.

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

4. The fourth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

5. The fifth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

6. The sixth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.



Figure 11: A transvestite in the seventeenth century – adorning woman's hat and corset.

However it is recorded in Holloway's 'R,' "The Phoenix of Sonons" (1813), that the Swan pub in London's Vere Street turned into a place for homosexual transvestites. The police raided one of their meetings but the cross-dressing was so skilful that a "miscreant escaped the vigilance of the officers and the examining magistrates, and was discharged as a woman". Transvestism was not uncommon in the nineteenth century being related to homosexuality, especially in London.(De Deckert, 1987, p.38). This is one example because one of the transvestites/or drag queens was done up so well, looking almost like real women that he was discharged as a woman. It is a similar situation when any drag queen dresses up, if they are looking well, have good make-up, hair, height , people respect them more and do not mock or even pinch them.

Transvestism associated with homosexuality was not uncommon in the nineteenth century. One of the first examples of this kind can be seen in "The Sins of the Cities of the Plain" (1881) which was written by a cross-dresser Jack Saul. It is an anecdote of his own assuming of a "charming female costume".

The cross-dressing recorded here is of an outrageous kind which I would relate to contemporary drag, although it was seen as transvestism. In an oppressive, moralistic society, deviations in human behaviour become more outlandish as they are generally elements of guilt. By this I mean due to these homosexual transvestites being exhibitionists it suggests a need of induced desire for exposure and punishment. Due to society being so structured some men needed to break away. In the "Phoenix of Sodom", Holloway describes how many of the men took on female appellations as well as female dress, "Kitty Cambric" was a coal merchant. "Black-eyed Leonora" was a drummer and "Duchess of Devonshire" was a blacksmith. These are examples of the breaking down of those barriers of society and class, which are themselves based upon social and economic stereotypes. The mockery of sexual stereotypes involves the mockery of social stereotypes, ultimately, when one social code is breached, they are all at risk.

When the condition of transvestism was diagnosed and described, it was only then that transvestites 'came out' in undemonstrative ways. For example Magnus Hirschfeld records that during the First World War men came to the recruitment boards dressed as women. "If I am to become a useful member in society, I must be allowed to be a woman outside my profession, only then can I serve the State with the selfless loyalty I desire".(Hirshfield, 1997, p.40). This was one motive, no doubt others did it as a way to escape the service. This was one beginning of acceptance, as the soldier is a server of his country. One particular case which I have quoted at length, 'gives an insight into the difference between American and European attitudes towards these type of sexual matters. It is one of the earliest records of transvestism, taken from 'The Journal' of Lewiston, Maine (1895)'. The account is unusual both for its courteously ironic tone, and for the bemused and mild reactions of Mr. Robbins (the transvestite) wife and neighbours. All these accounts of incidents which have happened in transvestism involve an element of unconscious humour, (like the element of comedy in every drag queens role: telling jokes to being the joke). It can be argued that this was one of the reasons why transvestism has become more accepted. Cross-dressing at an interview for entrance into the army one would have thought could cause outrage, however some of these men were accepted to represent their country in war times.

Drag covers a multitude of manifestations. Cases such as Francois Timoteon de Choissy(who "was accustomed from childhood to wear petticoats, dresses, corsets and caps" and adorning female attire he, like Cheralier D'Eon from France, are two of the most famous transvestites in European history. These two cross-dressers were obsessive, cerebral and fetishistic. Two transvestites who are different to Choissy and D'Eon are Boulton and Park, who were perhaps

the most famous cases in the (nineteenth century) century. They were outrageous, exhibitionistic and less troubled. They were known as 'Stella' and 'Fanny'.

These four cases show that each transvestite is different in their own way, like each drag queen is unique, in creating their own character. We have seen in this chapter that in some cultures drag has been accepted and in others it has not due to certain religious beliefs. It is hard for society to accept a man in a dress, however society has welcomed it in theatrical, literature and music which is what chapter three is all about.

ENDNOTES:

1. Lewiston Maine "The Journal" (1895)

"Commander James Robbins of Coopers Mill in this State is one of the prominent men of his community, a citizen generally esteemed as a man of integrity and intelligence. Mr. Robbins has a brilliant war record.. if your are on sufficiently intimate terms with him you will find him indulging in his hobby.. he wears petticoats. He wears a sort of dress about his hips. He always wears a number six shoe with high heels and graceful slender shape... his lingerie is elaborately tucked and ruffled, edged with lace and fashioned to the most approved model of any lady's wardrobe. Amazed neighbours, who were not fully aware of the extent of Mr. Robbins hobby, have been obliged to ask for more details when Mr. Robbins has laconically informed them that it is Tim's ironing. In the morning he wears print gowns, for he assists in the housework. Almost every morning Mr. Robbins in his print gown is seen sweeping off the pizza and whisking about the kitchen. One cashmere dress is quite a favourite, and this is worn by Mr. Robbins when he promenades in the orchard.

CHAPTER THREE

Cross-dressing in literature, music and television, in terms of performance has been acknowledged but has been treated critically. There has been more negative criticism than positive. An example of when transvestitic acting had its share of vociferous critics, when it was seen by some as unnatural and subversive. William Prynne (1632) put these fears in a primarily sexual context, “this putting on of women’s array) especially to act as lascivious, amorous, love-sick play upon the stage must be sinful, act abominably, because it not only excites many adulterous filthy lusts, both in the actors and spectators but likewise instigates them to self-pollution and to that unnatural Sodomitical sin of uncleanness. This was a statement and slowly it triumphed the repressed consciences of this time. Puritans closed down theatres in 1642 erasing transvestitic performances. It shows here that a lack of comic diversion in a drag performance allows for negative criticism. Heterosexual transvestism however sometimes propels critical analysis in conventional realistic narrative by driving it in a farcical and melodramatic way. For example, in “*From a View to a Death*” (1939. Anthony Powell) the central character is Major Fosdick who is described as having, “the air of legendary creature of the woods”. During relaxation he adorns a black sequined dress and a “large picture hat”. For a good many years he had found it restful to do this for an hour or two every day when he had the opportunity. In the end of the book Fosdick is caught while dressed in women’s clothing and he goes mad. The book ends with a number of deaths and disasters. In all these imaginative accounts transvestism is seen as bizarre and threatening – an image so potent and pervasive that the narrative itself becomes the victim of its anarchy and disassociation.(Hirschfield, 1991,p.32-44).

Drag and transvestism have added a major element of entertainment in the history of dramatic performance. However, what is it about the nature of human society that nurtures and encourages cross-dressing on stage?

It is clearly not just a comic device – although in modern drama it has more or less become so – but is, rather deeply rooted in the nature of illusion and spectacle. Drag on stage has been used for festivals. One in particular was in honour of Dionysos who was a Greek God, and songs formed part of the initiation too. In Greek tragedy men wore female masks, high buskins and richly decorated clothes, but this feminine camouflage would not have seemed in the least unnatural or inauthentic. The feminine movements and speeches were artfully stylised and designed to be emblematic. Likewise the Japanese and Chinese theatres had the same type of pattern: the drama which employs transvestites has its origins in sacred and

festive rituals, and these rituals generally involved the myths of fertility. The Japanese in the 'Noh' drama performances move very slowly and are infused with an intense refinement and spirituality. The transvestites wear masks and follow stylised routines throughout their performance. This theatre represents a self-enclosed and spiritual world and indeed, it might be said that this type of dramatic cross-dressing is a colourful symbol of the androgyny we see with other religions such as Buddhism. Parting from comedy, transvestites in tour performance have been a serious topic in certain societies. Since the concept of androgyny is incorporated within certain established religions, the presence of men dressing as women – both on stage and off – is not considered as either a moral or social threat. This is most pervasive in Japan. The major form in Japanese theatre would be Kabuki which is more popular than Noh, less ritualistic and not traditionalistic. It is this ability to evoke what is alien, either in appearance or in behaviour, which marks the distinctive talent of the serious transvestitic performer. This also applies to the contemporary transvestite and drag queen.

a).

b).

Figure 12:



Fenton Gray as Koko and Dame Hilda Bracker as Katisha in Regency Opera's production of *The Mikado* (1993). Photograph by Patrick Hayes.

When cross-dressing was given space within the established theatre, it was simply to provide comic diversion.

The comic possibilities of transvestism were extended from Roman drama (the *ludi romani* originated, also in harvest festivities). These festivities of which transvestism was an indispensable element were feasts of liberation spreading anarchy and levelling the boundaries between the sexes. Comedy performs, in my opinion, a similar function, since humour is to be found in those situations in which the normal laws of society are mocked and

inverted. During the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth century the comic effects of transvestism were most extensively employed in pantomime. The harlequinade and its derivatives originally adapted from the Commedia Dell'Arte in which the man sometimes adopted the role of the grotesque female. English pantomime derived much of its spirit from the native traditions of farce and satire – both of them providing a context in which cross-dressing was already a popular device.

The dame in pantomime has both basic and constant text to rely on, however this has never been praised. The players personality, powers of invention and improvisation, ability to provoke laughter in adults without alienating the children (and vice versa) and ability to create moments of intimacy as well as broad comedy all are very important in the dame's role. This is quite similar to the drag queen's role. (One of the greatest dames in Ireland was Shaun Glenville the son of Mary Glenville Browne, manageress of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. He did not always play dame, but he always appeared together with his wife Dorothy Ward, who was consequently a greatly admired principal boy).

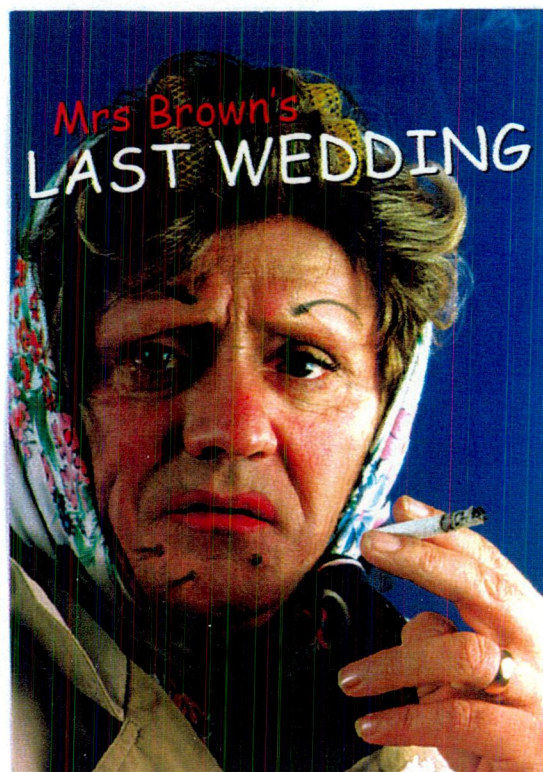


Figure 13: Dame in Pantomime.

If the nineteenth century created a female impersonator who was an almost cartoon-like figure of low comedy, the twentieth century's contribution has been to add glamour and today's dame is as likely to shimmer and glitter as much as her sister the drag queen but always with that essential added edge of caricature. The dame is never effeminate: she is never merely drag queen, since she always retains her male identity. She is a performer, clearly a man dressed as an absurd and ugly woman and much of the comedy is derived from the fact that he is burlesquing himself as a female actor. Many dames engage in a continual sexual banter: "See who's there, it may be a man", *Ugly Sisters* 1937. These are harmless ways of breaking certain sexual taboos. They evoke, for example, fears of feminine aggression and overt sexuality at the same time as they play upon anxieties about male homosexuality. All these fears are subtly represented and then detonated. This transvestism as represented by the dame can be a way of releasing sexual anxieties through laughter.

Different elements of comedy can be traced in transvestism through the medium of the dame. Most of the major American comedians like Groucho Marx, Buster Keaton and Bob Hope have donned women's clothes for comic purposes, is this due to the failure of humour or lack of script or even a hidden desire for female artefacts? Who knows? *Tootsie* (1982) and *Mrs. Doubtfire* (1993) are contemporary films that spring to most people's mind when asked about drag in cinema. Only the most laconic references are made to these acts of professional transvestism in the Guinness autobiography (Blessings in Disguise) '*Some like it Hot*' was probably the most successful commercial movie to be sustained throughout by the use of drag. It was not a metaphor for homosexuality, it was very much about heterosexual men in disguise to preserve their lives who find themselves in heterosexual heaven: surrounded by beautiful women who they can observe but not touch. This witty movie lets the audience in on the central illusion from the very beginning and it is the foreknowledge which creates the comedy. Laughter comes as a release of tension – ultimately these and other movies, which use drag, are neither about cross-dressing nor about women, they are movies, about men, and reinforce male values.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It includes a detailed description of the experimental procedures and the statistical analysis performed on the results.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study, showing the trends and patterns observed in the data. It includes several graphs and tables that illustrate the findings in a clear and concise manner.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the findings and provides recommendations for future research. It highlights the areas that need further investigation and suggests potential ways to improve the current study.

5. The final part of the document is a conclusion that summarizes the main points of the study and reiterates the importance of the findings. It also includes a list of references and a bibliography of the sources used in the research.



Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon in *Some Like It Hot* (1959): 'Billy brought in a female impersonator to work with Jack and me . . .'

Dustin Hoffman in *Tootsie* (1983). An entertainment with intellectual pretensions above its station.



Figure 14:

a).

Figure 14:

b).

There have been more films in which drag plays an important part but does that mean that drag has become acceptable? Does it imply that traditional views of masculinity are changing?. Does the explosion of drag into popular culture intimate that we now live in a world where difference is at least tolerated if not fully accepted?.

It can be argued that the answers to most of these questions is no. Most films which use drag as a plot component use it as a comic device: a man in a frock is seen as inherently comic, a woman in a suit is usually seen as threatening. Two movies with a chilling effect are *The Devil Doll* and *Dressed to Kill*. Nor does an increased incidence of drag in movies imply that traditional views of masculinity are changing because almost invariably films about men cross-dressing are about individuals forced by circumstances to do so and triumphing over these circumstances because they are men. If men's traditional roles are actually being reinforced by films in which they dress as women (*Tootsie*, *Mrs. Doubtfire*) this implies that there is no change so far as tolerance or acceptance of difference is concerned.

Only in the context of fantasy, of allegory or even of sheer playful inventiveness, does cross-dressing take on more substantial life. In overtly homosexual novels for example, transvestism is handled sensationally. But with less difficulty drag has always been an available theme for the novelist, both because of its readily identifiable characteristics and its accessibility as a social phenomenon. Many of these novels refer the homosexual transvestite as being a drag queen and discuss simple issues such as the veritable who's who of the social scene, drag shopping guides, interviews and make-up tips. *Drag diaries* gives an in depth study of some of the well known drag queens of America: Holly Woodlawn, Lady Bunner, Jem Jender, Joey Arias, etc.

Holly Woodlawn's presence on stage has been described by Peter Ackroyd as being on the boundaries of transvestism and transexualism, however Holly Woodlawn says that she is a 'drag queen'. It's just that in her time when she was doing drag ... it was serious drag. Drag was not a happy word. You looked real or you didn't. The word "real" she uses is that she looked like a woman.(Chermayeff, 1995, p.112-117).



Figure 15:

New York Drag Queens

Holly Woodlawn, Lady Bunny, Jem Jender, Joey Arias.

Photograph by: Jessie Frohman.

It is this pleasurable satisfaction in cross-dressing, its projection as a natural and spontaneous human activity that makes these performers so unusual and exciting to watch. They work with elan and wit and their cross-dressing is radically subversive, and powerful. Some American playwrights and directors use transvestism in order to elicit both its theatrical

and political symbolism. For example, John Vacarro's Theatre of the Ridiculous arranges quasi-surrealistic extravaganzas like 'Bluebeards Castle' in which extensive and bizarre cross-dressing becomes a way of deforming the ordinary theatrical illusion. La Grande Eugene, a French transvestite group animates a similar kind of spirit. The members of this troupe mime to music similar to the conventional manner of the drag queen. The group's central figure is Claude Dessy – Dreyfus known as "Erna von Scratch" - can make the audience laugh and in an instant terrify them. Francis Wyndham who wrote a book on Dreyfus states that, "these representations of a reconstituted world reverse and invert the most deeply rooted values and criteria".(Smith, 1994, Gay Times). This contemporary awareness of precisely these values within dramatic and comic transvestism which have been suppressed in history has now made it possible for transvestites and drag queens to become an integral part of many different kinds of performance. It has for example invaded the performance of Ballet, one American group founded in 1974, "Les Ballets Trokadero de Monte Carlo", has been described as a weapon of sexual politics but as one male dancer put it.. "we are not imitating women.. we are ballerinas". In this activity (Ballet) where sexual stereotypes have previously determined the nature of performance, the invasive power of transvestism or drag can become an instrument of change. By inverting or destroying the conventional sexual and public roles, while neither gratifying nor titillating the spectators with familiar humour, transvestitic performers can revolutionise the nature of the dramatic illusions. They cease to be female impersonators and become an image of artistic freedom.

Why else would transvestism become a pervasive presence in rock culture? The first example, is because an emblem of joyful disorder, e.g. rock legends such as Alice Cooper, Mick Jagger and David Bowie have all used drag as part of their act. It suggests a defiance of the established sexual order on a theatrically convincing scale, but it can also represent those infantile and fetishistic longings, which have become a noticeable part of contemporary culture. Autoeroticism, narcissism and the 'acting out' of private fantasies play a part in rock culture as they do in certain kinds of male transvestism. It may become an external rather than an internal event – a performance rather than an obsession. Its period as a fetish and a classifiable 'deviation' may be drawing to a close, at least in the West, and it may revert to its earlier role as a joyful and anarchic force. However no one can get up on the stage and just take on the role of a transvestite or a drag queen, it's a skilled act that involves many elements.

the first of these is the fact that the
the second is the fact that the
the third is the fact that the
the fourth is the fact that the
the fifth is the fact that the
the sixth is the fact that the
the seventh is the fact that the
the eighth is the fact that the
the ninth is the fact that the
the tenth is the fact that the

the eleventh is the fact that the
the twelfth is the fact that the
the thirteenth is the fact that the
the fourteenth is the fact that the
the fifteenth is the fact that the
the sixteenth is the fact that the
the seventeenth is the fact that the
the eighteenth is the fact that the
the nineteenth is the fact that the
the twentieth is the fact that the



Figure 16: David Bowie in his transvestite image. Photograph by: Timothy Keane.

In any discussion of drag, the question of collusion between performer and audience has come up over and over again, at every point in the history of drag and in every context. By this I mean, does the audience know? How does it use its knowledge to determine a performance. For example if an audience watching a skilful conjuring act performed by what appears to be a woman knows that the artist is a man in drag, then there is a double take on how convincing is the, 1) impersonation, and 2) the magic. The two skills must be assimilated at the same time and therefore feed off each other. If on the other hand the audience does not know the magician is really a man, then the concentration is on the act and the gender of the performer is irrelevant. (I use the word magic and magician for a man in women's clothes as these words for me personify a drag queen or a transvestite.) I will now look at a few drag queens in film and theatre.

The drag queen can tell the audience where to look or he can leave it. Be it to recognise that he is in disguise by flaunting something of his masculinity or by just being himself and

showing off everything in a womanly order. I have made a distinction – the distinction is between what I called ‘real disguise’ and ‘fake disguise’ since disguise itself constitutes a deception, a falsity.

“Real disguise” in this case is not a drag queen. It is when an actor playing a woman is taken by the audience and the other actors as a real woman. This would be in theatre or film. This does not mean that the audience and the players are unaware of the actor’s real gender. It means that this knowledge is irrelevant to the nature of the drama being played out or to the effect of the actor’s work. This I shall argue is how the boy actors of the English Renaissance Theatre were accepted by their audiences. For example, when Danny La Rue (who is a transvestite), played Dolly Levi in “Hello Dolly” he was assuming real disguise in the context of the musical, and the fact that he is a man has no relevance to the drama.

“Fake Disguise” happens when there is no attempt by the performer to pretend he is anything other than a man playing a woman. Danny La Rue or a drag queen – Ru Paul even uses an unequivocally male name. He gives the audience direct clues with self-referential male terms, (jokes on the wearing of high heels,) or sometimes he deliberately assumes a masculine voice and attitude for a moment to remove any lingering doubts. An example was when he launched ‘Mac’ cosmetics in Brown Thomas, Dublin.



Figure 17: Danny La Rue:
The last glamorous gasp
of British music hall.

Photograph by: Colin Bournier.



Figure 18: Dame Edna Everage
A terrifying termagant.

Photograph by: Colin Bournier

With a high profile performer such as Dame Edna Everage (Barry Humphries) such devices are not necessary. She requires no explanation and the duality is intrinsic to her (or his) spooky presence. This is what I refer to as being the mystery factor, meaning that the audience would know that she is a man in drag without her telling us so.

Dame Edna Everage, the most widely known of the characters created by Australian actor & writer (Barry Humphries) would most emphatically describe herself as glamorous, but that abundance of confidence is an important aspect of her self-deluding character. Dame Edna has become a television celebrity and her greatest success was in the 1980's utilising a variety of formats in an attempt to recreate the tension of the stage shows. She remains effective as she verbally abuses individuals in the audience, to the delight of those ignored, who, nevertheless, shiver in terrified anticipation that they too might become a victim. She is a termagant who manipulates her audience into a position of submission by the sheer terror she instils in them from the moment she appears.

It is clear from Barry Humphries autobiography "More Please" that his characterisation of Dame Edna is in part based upon his mother, a woman who appears to have been remote and snobbish, a woman whom he rebelled against and revenged upon. Because of his frustrating relationship with his mother this had a large influence on his personal life to the extent of his inability to cope successfully with close relationships which in turn has driven him throughout his life to seek attention by playing up and performing. In John Lahris's extended essay Dame Edna and the "Rise of Western Civilisation" he intimates that Barry Humphries can only really be himself when he is on stage in front of an audience who have paid money to give to him their undivided attention and adoration. That Dame Edna's sometimes manic performances can over-run by as much as an hour indicates a need that borders on desperate, or does it? In my opinion it is not. The enjoyment of a responsive audience allows and prolongs an act. Dame Edna is an example, a breathtakingly vain and an egoist of daunting proportions and a paragon who is on a mission to spread a little love and laughter around the world.

Many critics say that Danny La Rue is a female impersonator and not a drag queen and in one article on Dame Edna said, "Dame Edna is not a drag act ... what Barry Humphries has so successfully contrived is an almost totally believable character who has such vitality that she has become a personality in her own right." In some respects "Dame Edna does not belong with men in frocks but with contemporary phenomenon such as Joan Collins". (Smith, 1993, p. 4). In the first quote by Roger Baker he firstly says that Dame Edna has contrived a believable character that she is a personality. Is this because she has been accepted not only in

the Gay Community but in the heterosexual one too? This does not mean she is not a drag queen. Many drag queens have their own personal character that they have contrived over the years. Actors and actresses have to contrive their own character over the years in certain soaps, they are not seen as impersonators. Barry Humphries, I argue is not a female impersonator, he is not impersonating anyone, and he created the character of the dame like any other drag queen.

So we have seen that cross-dressing has taken on roles for ritual, comic, serious, political and dramatic entertainment in the forms of novels, music videos, films and theatres. The outcome of my argument that drag queens and transvestites are as much a source of entertainment as any other actor still remains.

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year. It is a summary of the work done and the results obtained. It is a general statement of the work done and the results obtained. It is a general statement of the work done and the results obtained.

2. The second part of the report deals with the details of the work done during the year. It is a detailed statement of the work done and the results obtained. It is a detailed statement of the work done and the results obtained.

CONCLUSION

Drag has always been and I believe will always have a powerful presence on stage or in film. Many drag queens and transvestites use women's clothes to either assert their own homosexuality, to celebrate femininity, to escape the constraints of masculinity or just for performance, Ru Paul states; "Any performer who puts on an outfit to project an image is a drag. Everything you put on is to fit a preconceived notion of how you wanna be seen. It's all drag. Mine is just more glamorous".

(Smith, 1993, p. 3).

Drag queens and transvestites are both performers in their own right, the only small difference is that drag queens are public performers and transvestites are usually private performers. However we have seen in certain cultures that the transvestite is very much the central and powerful figure in rituals.

I have looked and analysed these two phenomena in a positive way, as I believe that a man or a woman should be allowed to dress in whatever way he/she wishes. I have argued that drag and transvestism have similarities and differences, but they both cross-dress as they both enjoy it, be it for a ritual or for entertainment or for comfort. It's a form of human expression that is breaking down barriers in terms of what we expect of our men. The qualities a man possesses has always been to protect, the strong side of the human race, however this cross-dressing gives a new meaning.

Even though, fashion is entering onto catwalks and men becoming a lot more pretty, i.e. idols such as Brad Pitt, etc., I do not think every man is necessarily going to have a skirt in his wardrobe in the next twenty years or so.

APPENDIX

Interview with Rory - "Panti" from Powderbubble (club Red Box on Harcourt Street, Dublin which happened once a month from 1997 – 1999) September 28th 1998.

Questions: Fiona Cribben

Answers: Rory O'Neill

Question: What in your opinion is Drag?

Answer: Well I guess there is more than one kind of drag, I have names for kinds of drag style. Clown drag, which is crazy stuff, then there is the real drag. Sometimes women dress in drag to excentuate the real features she has, that's real drag – that's different too. There are different attitudes that people have towards drag – misogynous is one of them. There are misogynous drag queens, but there are also the ones that are not. Some drag is anti-woman but because a man is dressed up as a woman it allows bitchiness and nasty comments and somehow that's funny to talk about. I think its unreal that a lot of drag mocks women but if you can argue that there are misogynous drag queens. The majority of drag queens do it for performance.

Question: Is the whole character of putting on the 'tits and the glitz' just a performance for you?

Answer: That's another intimate pew que There's the transvestite and transsexual, etc. The transvestite is trying to be closer to a woman when most of them are straight, whereas the transsexual believes they were born with the wrong sex organs. That's a whole other thing. The Ciara McKeon show asked me to go on her show as she was interviewing a load of transsexuals. Well, I said that's like having on doctor's and train-drivers - they are not the same thing. I think there is a fine line between transsexuals and drag queens. But there are a few so-called drag queens around Dublin, (I won't name them) that I feel they are transsexuals because they have long hair, and other female characteristics and when I

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

...the ... of ...

talk to them, it doesn't feel like I am talking man to man. It is hard to define drag queens like Declan who does "Shirley Temple Bar" is a stand up comedy and he happens to be using this twist – Schick. The drag queen that I do is cartoony, not misogynistic, its exaggerated women, if anything its sort of women worship. It's what you like about women that you emphasise or do it. It does not mean that I only like women with giant eyelashes, but, when you look like or are a man you have to exaggerate everything to get over a female thing, and to make everything bigger and brighter and if you don't make it bigger and brighter then you may as well have a real woman on stage.

Question: Who were your influences in creating Panti?

Answer: There were two kinds of influences – real women's interests, aunts, mothers, girlfriends, who I am aiming to be loved by and then there was real drag friends – when I was younger I picked up things for them. But I have this slightly cookie American aunt and if you saw her now, you would have to hard push to see the Panti in her, but when I was younger she was incredibly glamorous. She smoked like a trooper, she had a husky voice, she used to do radio voice-overs. She went off to London at the age of 20 and after her 8th proposal she accepted and got married to an American airforce guy, who was 25 years older than her, a very glamorous love affair. He had children that were her age, sort of neurotic; she was a bit crazy. She would visit around Christmas and have a smell of America off her. She was a cartoon queen; she would appear with presents and glamorous clothes. She was a bit of a Katherine Hepburn. I was also into movies - 40's and 50's women.

When I was in Japan I worked with an American drag queen I guess when you work together for a long time I got influences from her as well.

Question: Do you feel a great power on stage?

Answer: Well when anyone is on a stage and its going well it is a sort of a power trip, but there is a thing when you put on all the clothes and all it gives you is a licence to behave differently, because you can. I guess its like when a robber puts on a mask and robs a bank; he wouldn't do it without a mask.

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future. The author points out that the study of history is not only a means of satisfying a natural curiosity about the past, but also a means of developing a sense of responsibility for the future.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future. The author points out that the study of history is not only a means of satisfying a natural curiosity about the past, but also a means of developing a sense of responsibility for the future.

4. The fourth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future. The author points out that the study of history is not only a means of satisfying a natural curiosity about the past, but also a means of developing a sense of responsibility for the future.

5. The fifth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future. The author points out that the study of history is not only a means of satisfying a natural curiosity about the past, but also a means of developing a sense of responsibility for the future.

6. The sixth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future. The author points out that the study of history is not only a means of satisfying a natural curiosity about the past, but also a means of developing a sense of responsibility for the future.

7. The seventh part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future. The author points out that the study of history is not only a means of satisfying a natural curiosity about the past, but also a means of developing a sense of responsibility for the future.

8. The eighth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future. The author points out that the study of history is not only a means of satisfying a natural curiosity about the past, but also a means of developing a sense of responsibility for the future.

It's a real animation act. When you put on the boots and hair you are much bigger and because the make-up enhances your facial expressions, I guess its like putting on a suit of armour on people step out of your way. Or else there's the really annoying drunken punters who grab your bum hard and tits and even though their not yours its annoying. Once or twice people have tried to grab my wig. However if you were walking around in bad drag there would be 50 people pulling your hair, etc. If you are really done up well in drag people are afraid of you, they are weary but they want to talk to you. And if they do they will tell you things that they have never even told their best friend especially if it's a sexual subject. One of the last great taboos of men acting like women is that you can be queer in a big city and nobody cares, but dressing up allows you to become someone, something different, something you might have dreamt as a child of being.

Question: Do you think drag and transvestism are similar?

Answer: I think they are in some ways, I mean they are both cross-dressers, but usually transvestites are hetro and drag queens are homo. But they both enjoy dressing up in women's clothing. There is a big difference between transsexuals and these two, though from my personal experience they are not as outgoing, it's more of a secret I would say. Although Dame Edna is seen as a transvestite, I think he is very much like an old coolly drag queen.

Question: Do you think drag is becoming more accepted in society today?

Answer: Yes I do, that's a bit general, but Ru Paul is launching make-up, that's a big step. People could look at that being misogynistic as if this make-up covers a black man's skin to make him look nearly white and a striking woman think of what it could do for a real woman. I'm surprised that not much fuss was kicked up about it. Films such as *Mrs Doubtfire* and *Tootsie* have all been accepted in many households, so yes, I guess it is been accepted, but this is mainly for comic purposes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Allen, J.J. - Inside the World of Cross-dressing.
"The Man in the Red Velvet Dress". A Birch Lane Press
Book. Carol Publishing Group 1996.
- Ackroyd, Peter - Dressing Up – The Obsession, New York;
Simon & Schuster 1979.
- Baker, Roger - Drag – A History of Female Impersonation in the
Performing Arts, New York University Press 1994.
- Benedict, Ruth - Patterns of Culture, New York: Houghton Mifflin 1989.
- Butler, Judith - Gender Trouble, New York, Routledge, 1990.
(p. 109 – 125).
- Chermayeff, Catherine Drag Diaries, An Umbra Editions Book 1995.(p. 20-25)
- Commondenominator, Lois Dragazine (editor) West Hollywood, CA
"published two or three times a year while we do
our nails". (Edition, 1990, 1991,1992).
- De Choisy, Abbe - The Transvestite Memoirs, (enlarged edition) London
Peter Owen Publishing, 1994 (translated and introduction
By RHF Scott). (p. 48,49,50).
- De Deckert, Michel Madame le Chevalier d'Eon, Paris, Perrin 1987.(p.78,79).
- Everage, Dame Edna My Georgous Life, London, MacMillan, 1989.
- Fleisher, Juliens The Drag Queens of New York, New York,
Berkley Publishing Group, 1996.(p. 24- 64)
- Freud, Sigmund - Sexual Aberrations 1905, Three essays on the Theory of
Sexuality, The New York Basic Books 1962.

the first of the series of
the first of the series of
the first of the series of

the first of the series of
the first of the series of

the first of the series of
the first of the series of

the first of the series of
the first of the series of

the first of the series of
the first of the series of

the first of the series of
the first of the series of

the first of the series of
the first of the series of

the first of the series of
the first of the series of

the first of the series of
the first of the series of

the first of the series of
the first of the series of

the first of the series of
the first of the series of

the first of the series of
the first of the series of

the first of the series of
the first of the series of

the first of the series of
the first of the series of

the first of the series of
the first of the series of

the first of the series of
the first of the series of

- **Garber, Majorie - Vested Interests: Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety.**
New York and London, Routledge, 1992.

- **Gaillardet, Francis Memoirs of the Chevalier d'Eon, London,**
Anthony Blond, 1970. (p. 26 – 32)

- **Guinness, Alec - Blessings in Disguise, London: Hamish Hamilton 1985**
(p. 199 –200.)

- **Hirshfield, Magnus The Erotic Drive to Cross Dress, New York,**
Prometheus Books 1991.
Sexual Anomalies : The Origins, Nature & Treatment of
Sexual disorders, New York, Emerson Books 1956.

- **Humphries, Barry My Gorgeous Life: London, MacMillan, 1989.**

- **Smith Richard - “Half a Rebel”**
Gay Times, January 1994.
- Gay Times, November 1993.

- **Stoller, Robert J. - Observing the Imagination, New Haven,**
Yale University Press, 1985.

- **The Oxford Dictionary**

- **The New American Bible Catholic Bible Publishers**
Wichita, Kansas, 1971 – 72 edition.(p. 121-122)

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 3, 1861.

2. The second part is a report from the Secretary of the Interior, dated January 10, 1861.

3. The third part is a report from the Secretary of the Treasury, dated January 10, 1861.

4. The fourth part is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated January 10, 1861.

5. The fifth part is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 10, 1861.

6. The sixth part is a report from the Secretary of the State, dated January 10, 1861.

7. The seventh part is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated January 10, 1861.

8. The eighth part is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 10, 1861.

9. The ninth part is a report from the Secretary of the State, dated January 10, 1861.

10. The tenth part is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated January 10, 1861.

11. The eleventh part is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 10, 1861.

12. The twelfth part is a report from the Secretary of the State, dated January 10, 1861.

13. The thirteenth part is a report from the Secretary of the War, dated January 10, 1861.

14. The fourteenth part is a report from the Secretary of the Navy, dated January 10, 1861.