

James Barry (1795–1865), not apparently a lesbian, rose to become senior Inspector-General of the British Army Medical Department. As these examples and other instances suggest, care is needed in assessing the sexual orientation of such individuals, who should not be assumed to be homosexual or lesbian without further evidence.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries cross-dressers have taken their cue from popular entertainment, including vaudeville, pantomime, nightclub entertainers, and television "impressionists." At certain points particular types of transvestism may engage the public's attention—as the "mannish lesbian" of the 1920s—and the publicity thus engendered may be picked up by gay men and lesbians and incorporated into their sense of self-presentation. That is to say, some gay people take up cross-dressing because that is the way they assume "they are supposed to be."

At its best, transvestism is a form of ludic behavior that causes society to take a fresh look at gender conventions. In the 1980s, when a whole branch of inquiry known as "gender studies," has emerged, the role of transvestism has been evaluated in new perspectives that point to a more complex understanding of the phenomenon.

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## TRANSVESTISM, THEATRICAL

The androgynous **shaman** or **berdache** who, in primitive cultures, serves an important function as intermediary with the numinous, is considered by some scholars to be sublimated, in civilized societies, into the actor. The shape-changing powers of the shaman include sexual alternation as "celestial spouse," and it has been suggested that fear of this magic resides in the lingering prejudice against the "drag queen." The intermediate between shaman and drag queen was the performer: the German term *Schwuchtel* ("queen," "fairy") originally meant a player of comic dame roles, and the cultural historian Gisela Bleibtreu-Ehrenburg links it with the Latin *vetula*, a frivolous music maker. Among the Taosug people of the South Philippines of the Pacific, most musicians are *bantut* or homosexuals, expected to take the female role in courtship repartee; this association of performance and gender reversal implies a shamanistic origin, and confirms the close link between effeminate behavior and a special caste of performers.

*Historical Origins.* The origins of theatre in religious cults meant that women were barred from performance, a prohibition sustained by social sanctions against their public exhibition in general. Therefore, in Europe, before the seventeenth century, and in Asia, before the twentieth, female impersonation was the standard way to portray women on stage, and was considered far more normal than females playing females. The Greek theatre, devoted to the cross-dressing god **Dionysus**, was virtually transvestite by defi-

nition. Modern feminist theory argues that this usurpation of the female role by men was an act of suppression, which allowed a patriarchal society to transmit a false image of Woman. However, the Russian classicist Vyacheslav Ivanov, as far back as 1912, considered that the exclusion of the ecstatic maenad from the stage, by diminishing energy, enabled the necessary shift from rite to performance. (It has also been noted that, later, the entrance of women on the French stage under Henri IV and the English stage under Charles II signaled a descent in drama from the epic mode to the domestic or social mode.)

The Roman theatre accepted the convention, and scandal arose only when an emperor lost caste by becoming a performer. Suetonius tells us that Nero enacted the incestuous sister in the mime-drama *Macaris and Canace*, giving birth on stage to a baby that was then flung to the hounds; according to Aelius Lampridius, Heliogabalus played Venus in *The Judgment of Paris* with his naked body depilated.

In the Oriental theatre, the transvestite actor, as Roland Barthes has said, "does not copy woman but signifies her . . . Femininity is presented to be read, not to be seen." Most Southeast Asian dance and drama forms kept the sexes apart in performance, allowing a certain amount of cross-sexual casting; what was to be impersonated had as much to do with aesthetic distinctions between coarseness and refinement as with physical or social gender definitions, so that women often played elegant young princes and men played abusive old women. In Bali, the powerful witch Rangda was always impersonated by a man, because only a man's strength could present and contain her dangerous and religiously empowered magic. These categories have become somewhat blurred in our time, with the admission of women into hitherto closed spheres of activity. By the 1920s, women had taken over the Indonesian dance opera *Aria*, but audiences still prefer all males in the operatic

form *Anja*. Similarly, boys dance their own versions of the highly feminine seduction dances, inciting male audiences to caress them after the performance. In popular Javanese drama *ludruk*, the transvestite, who off the stage may be a male prostitute, is an important figure, related to the androgynous priesthood of the past. He classifies himself as a woman, presenting not a realistic but a stylized portrait.

*China.* As early as A.D. 661, Chinese actors were segregated into exclusively male or female companies. Ch'en Wei-sung's love poems to a boy actor in the seventeenth century are well known. The *tan* or female impersonator of Chinese opera, instituted ostensibly for moral reasons in the reign of Chi'en Lung (1735–1796), received a seven- to ten-year training and had to be an exceptionally graceful dancer, adept at manipulating his long sleeves. The *emploi* is sub-divided into *ching i* or *cheng tan* (virtuous woman); *hua tan* (seductive woman); *lao tan* (old woman), the most realistic; and *wu tan* (military woman). The great Mei Lan-fang (He Ming, 1894–1961), voted the most popular actor in China in 1924, combined virtuous and seductive elements in his portrayals; although he married and fathered a family, in his youth Mei had been the lover of powerful warlords. The clapper operas featuring *tan* had been, from their inception by Wei Ch'ang-cheng in the 1780s, considered by some a danger to public morals; but the first serious ban was imposed in 1963, instigated in part by Mao Tse-tung's wife Chiang Ching. When the Cultural Revolution ended, the *tan* returned, but no more were to be trained. A curious footnote is the liaison between the French diplomat Bernard Boursicot and the opera dancer Shi Pei Pu, in 1964, which produced a child; in 1983, it was discovered that the dancer was a male spy and the diplomat had been truly hoodwinked in their darkened bedroom. As *M. Butterfly* (1988), this incident was wrought into a successful Broadway play.

*Japan.* In Japanese No drama, although all the actors are male, sexual differences are not stressed, the same voice being used whether the role is masculine or feminine. In Kabuki, however, the *onnagata* (female impersonator) or *oyama* (literally, chief courtesan) is an extremely important line of business, with its sharply defined conventions. Originally, Kabuki was played by female prostitutes who often burlesqued men, particularly foreigners; in 1629 women were banned from the stage for reasons of morality. They were soon replaced by boys between eleven and fifteen (*wakashu*) who dressed like courtesans and were particularly beloved for their bangs; they acted out homosexual love affairs or methods of purchasing prostitutes. The increase in sexual relations between the boys and their admirers led to a new ban in 1652, and mature men with shaven foreheads had to take over the female roles. Although this brought about a more refined art, it did not alter the ambience: in the 1680–90s, 80 to 90 percent of the *onnagata* sprang from the ranks of catamites at the *iroko* or sex-boy teahouses. Despite the formalized grace and abstract femininity of the *onnagata*, an inherent characteristic of Kabuki has remained, as Donald Shively points out, “the peculiar eroticism with its homosexual overtones.”

The *Ayamegusa* of Yoshizawa Ayame (1673–1729), the standard handbook, insisted that female impersonators behave as women in daily life, and blush if their wives are mentioned. Even a modern, married actor, Tomoemon, has declared, “One must *be* the woman, or else it is merely disguise.” This helped maintain the homosexual tradition; boys in training often had relations with one another, while the actors, although lowest on the social scale, were much in demand as lovers (Minanojo, in particular, was the pederasts’ *beau idéal*). Women sought to imitate the ideal of femininity they incarnated, and the beauties depicted in classical woodcuts are often *onnagata*. A dra-

matic genre known as *hengemaro* or the costume-change piece was created around 1697 to showcase their skills and perhaps nourish the clothing-fetishism that is a feature of Japanese culture. Lewdness in love scenes intensified between 1800 and 1840. With the Westernization of Japan, *onnagata* played in Ibsen and other modern dramas, but after World War II actors stopped being exclusive and played both male and female roles in Kabuki, the great exception being Nakamura Utaemon VI (b. 1917). Bando Tamasaburo (b. 1950) is one of the great cultural heroes of modern Japan; well-known as a homosexual who has had affairs with his leading men, he has extended his repertory to Lady Macbeth and Desdemona.

In 1914, a railway magnate founded the Takarazuka Revue Company outside Osaka to attract tourists; soon four troupes, made up entirely of unmarried girls, were performing in repertoire and touring the Pacific. Fifty girls are accepted annually after examinations in diction, singing, Japanese and western dancing, and then subjected to rigorous training; if they marry, they must leave the troupe. Their shows include both Western musicals and traditional folk plays, and their audiences are over 70 percent female; the *otokoyaku* or male impersonator is the star and idol of schoolgirls, who avidly read the fan magazines. The Takarazuka’s popularity gave rise to the all-female Shochiku Revue, which resembles a lavish Las Vegas lounge act. Although the Takarazuka prides itself on its purity, in 1988 two of its graduates were involved in a failed love-suicide pact.

*Transvestism in the West.* Men dressing as women, particularly obstreperous women, was a tradition of saturnalia, Feasts of Fools, and medieval New Year’s celebrations, and came to be used in political protest, allowing them to abnegate masculine responsibility and invest themselves with feminine instinct. Cross-dressing is a common accompaniment of carnival time, when norms are turned upside down; men giving birth was en-

acted at some Hindu festivals, and even Arlecchino in the late *commedia dell'arte* was shown birthing and breast feeding his infant.

But **Christianity**, from its inception, could not countenance such letting-off steam (John Chrysostom condemned cross-dressing in his Easter sermon of A.D. 399), and Western civilization has remained distrustful. By the nineteenth century most large European and American cities had enacted laws making cross-dressing a misdemeanor.

*Early English Theatre.* Gender confusion drama was brought to England from Italy. One of the earliest and most intriguing examples was John Lyly's *Galathea* (1585), in which two girls disguised as boys fall in love with one another, and Venus promises to transform one into a male, to implement their romance. This was complicated by the fact that both girls were played by boys. Just as the Catholic church attacked unruly carnivals and **mardi gras** celebrations, **Protestant** clerics and Puritans censured the "sodomitical" custom of the boy-player on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage. William Prynne in *Histriomastix* (1633) condemned the practice as "an inducement to sodomy." Boy companies dominated the English theatre until 1580; tradition has it that Portia was created by James Bryston, Lady Macbeth by Robert Goffe, Rosalind by Joseph Taylor, Juliet by Richard Robinson, Ophelia by Ned Alleyn, and Desdemona by Nathaniel Field, who was coached by Ben Jonson. Edward Kynaston (1640?-1706) was the last of the line, playing well into the Restoration when Pepys noted in his diary (1659): "Kynaston as Olympia made the loveliest lady that I ever saw in my life." At the same time in France, Louis XIV had no qualms about appearing in court masques as a bacchante (1651) and the goddess Ceres (1661).

The tradition of the boy actor had arisen in schools, and enjoyed a resurgence in the nineteenth century. The Hasty Pudding Club at Harvard (founded

1844), the Princeton Triangle Club, and the Mask and Wig in Philadelphia still thrive, even though the gender assumptions that inform them no longer obtain. Cambridge had organized an all-male dramatic society in 1855, Oxford in 1879; when Cambridge's Footlights company tried to insert women into its comic revues, a storm of protest forced them to revert to their original practice.

*Comedy.* Women were members of *commedia dell'arte* troupes from the 16th century, but the comic characters occasionally donned petticoats to the delight of audiences, and this travesty aspect (already present in Aristophanes) grew more important as actresses gained popularity. If beauty and sex appeal were to be projected from the stage by a real woman, the post-menopausal woman could as easily be played by a comic actor; parts like Mme. Pernelle in Molière's *Tartuffe* and the nanny Yeremeevna in Fonvizin's *The Minor* were conceived as male roles, and Nestroy's mid-nineteenth-century farces contain several of these "dame" parts. The theatre historians Mander and Mitchenson have even suggested that "to **camp**" derives from Lord Campley, who disguises himself as a lady's maid in Richard Steele's *The Funeral* (1701). The comic dame had become a fixture of English pantomime by the Regency period, and the great music-hall comedian Dan Leno was responsible for the dame elbowing out Clown as the chief comic performer in panto, opening the way for George Robey, George Graves and others to flourish. Some performers like George Lacy and Rex Jamieson ("Mrs. Shufflewick," 1928-1984) played nothing but dames. A similar tradition was upheld in American popular plays by Neil Burgess (1846-1910) as Widow Bedotte, Gilbert Saroni (d. 1910) as the Giddy Gusher, the Russell Brothers as clumsy Irish maids in vaudeville, George K. Fortescue (1846?-1914) as a flirtatious fat girl in several burlesques, and George W. Monroe (d. 1932) as an Irish biddy in a number of musical comedies. In France, Offenbach's

operetta *Mesdames de la Halle* (1858) created three roles of market-women to be sung by men.

*The Circus*. In the circus cross-dressing was a means of enhancing the seeming danger of stunts: the Franconis in an equestrian version of *Madame Angot* were allegedly the first to do so in the Napoleonic period. The American equestrian Ella Zoyara (Omar Kingsley, 1840–1879) and the English trapezist Lulu (El Niño Farini, b. 1855) were celebrated Victorian examples. Kingsley's personal sexuality is questionable. There is no question about Emil Mario Vacano (1840–1892), Austria's most important and prolific writer on the circus, who had appeared as an equestrienne under the names Miss Corinna and Signora Sanguineta, and was the lover of Count Emmerich Stadion (1839–1900). The Texan aerialist Barbette (Vander Clyde, 1904–1973), who performed a species of striptease on trapeze, ending his act with a dewigging, became the toast of Paris, and was taken up by Jean Cocteau.

Such performers were said to be "in drag," a term from thieves' cant that compared the train of a gown to the drag or brake on a coach, and entered the theatrical parlance from homosexual slang around 1870. "Dragging up" provides the central plot device in Brandon Thomas' *Charley's Aunt* (1892), William Douglas Home's sex-change play *Aunt Edwina* (1959), and Simon Gray's *Wise Child* (1968). The German equivalents were Theodor Körner's *Vetter aus Bremen* and *Die Gouvernante* (both 1834). A comedy which created a scandal in New York in 1896 was *A Florida Enchantment* by Archibald Clavering Gunter, in which a magic seed turns a young woman (played by a woman) into a man and a man (played by a man) into a woman; what shocked was the woman's masculine amorous propensities displayed while under the influence of the seed.

*Female Transvestism*. For unlike female impersonation in the theatre,

women dressing as men had little sanction from ancient religion or folk traditions; it has usually been condemned as a wanton assumption of male prerogative. But when women first came on the Western stage, costuming them in men's garb was simply a means to show off their limbs and provide freedom of movement. This was certainly the case during the Restoration, when Pepys remarked of an actress in knee-breeches "she had the best legs that ever I saw, and I was well pleased by it." Between 1660 and 1700, eight or nine plays presented opportunities for women in men's clothes. Nell Gwyn, Moll Davis, and others took advantage of these "breeches roles," but few could, like Anne Bracegirdle, give a convincing portrayal of a male. Often the part travestied was that of a young rake—Sir Harry Wildair in *The Constant Couple* and Macheath in *The Beggar's Opera*—the pseudo-lesbian overtones of the plot's situation providing a minor thrill.

After the French Revolution, there was a passing fad for historic dramas about women who went to war as men, usually to aid their husbands or lovers. These dramas included Pixérécourt's *Charles le Téméraire, ou le Siège de Nancy* (1814), Duperche's *Jeanne Hachette, ou l'Héroïne de Beauvais* (1822) and a few about Joan of Arc; Mlle. Bourgeois who specialized in such roles was praised for her "masculine energy." The leading English "breeches" actresses of the early nineteenth century, Mme. Vestris and Mrs. Keeley were, on the other hand, noted for their delicacy, and made an impression less mannish than boyish. It was said of Vestris in her best part, in *Giovanni in London, or The Libertine Reclaimed* (1817), "that the number of male hearts she caused to ache, during her charming performance of the character . . . would far exceed all the female tender ones Byron boasts that Don Juan caused to break during the whole of his career."

The first "principal boys" in English pantomime were slender women,

but became more ample in flesh throughout the Victorian period, no real effort made to pretend they were men. Jennie Hill on the music halls and Jennie Lee as Jo in various adaptations of *Bleak House*, Vernet in Paris and Josephine Dora and Hansi Niese in Vienna, represented the proletarian waif, a pathetic or cocky adolescent, not a mature male. But the Viennese folk-singer Josefina Schmeer always wore men's clothes off-stage as well. *Peter Pan* (1904), incarnated from its premiere by a series of outstanding actresses including Pauline Chase, Maude Adams, and Mary Martin, benefitted in the National Theatre revival of 1981 from being played by a young man.

Another aspect of male impersonation is the assumption of Shakespearean men's roles by actresses. It was long a practice to cast women as children and fairies. More ambitious was the usurpation of leading parts, with Kitty Clive alleged to be the first female Hamlet. The powerful American actress Charlotte Cushman (1816–1876) played Romeo to her sister's Juliet and later aspired to Cardinal Wolsey; her Romeo was viewed as "a living, breathing, animated, ardent human being," distinct from most ranting Montagus. Women have undertaken Falstaff and Shylock on occasion, but Hamlet has proven to be irresistible. The most distinguished female Dane was Sarah Bernhardt, who, according to Mounet-Sully, lacked only the buttons to her fly; but, according to Max Beerbohm, came off *très grande dame*. (Sarah had a penchant for male roles, also playing Lorenzaccio and L'Aiglon.) In our time, Dame Judith Anderson and Frances de la Tour have tried the experiment, but it has proven unacceptable to contemporary audiences.

*Glamour Drag*. A new development arose in nineteenth-century variety with the glamorous female impersonator and the "butch" male impersonator. The former might be a comedian who was dressed and made up to resemble a woman of taste, beauty, and chic. Glamour drag

had originated in the minstrel show, where the "wench" role was usually invested in a good-looking youth. The foremost "wenches" like Francis Leon (Patrick Francis Glassey, b. ca. 1840) and Eugene (D'Ameli, 1836–1870) maintained elaborate wardrobes and were regarded as models. The first white glamour drag performer appears to be Ernest Byne, who, as Ernest Boulton (b. 1848), had featured in a sensational trial for soliciting while dressed in women's clothing.

Male impersonation was first introduced on the American variety stage by the Englishwoman Annie Hindle (b. ca. 1847) and her imitator Ella Wesner (1841–1917), both lesbians, in the guise of "fast" young men, swaggering, cigar-smoking, and coarse. They performed in the English music-hall as well, but there a toned-down portrayal aimed at a more genteel audience was affected by Bessie Bonehill (d. 1902). With her mezzo-soprano voice, she blended the coarse-grained fast man with the principal boy into a type that could be admired for its lack of vulgarity. Her example was matched by the celebrated Vesta Tilley (Matilda Alice Powles, 1864–1952), whose soprano voice never really fooled any listener; her epicene young-men-about-town were ideal types for the 1890s, sexually ambiguous without being threatening. Even so, at the Royal Command Performance of 1912, Queen Mary turned her back on Tilley's act.

These minstrel and music-hall traditions lasted longest in black American vaudeville, where the performers' private lives often matched their impersonations. Female impersonators included Lawrence A. Chenault (b. 1877), who played "Golden Hair Nell," and Andrew Tribble (d. 1935), who created "Ophelia Snow." The best-known male impersonator in Harlem was Gladys Bentley, aka Gladys Ferguson and Bobbie Minton (1907–1960), alleged to have had an affair with Bessie Smith; later in life, she married and publicly repented her lesbian past.

*Musical Comedy.* Critics objected when glamour drag entered musical comedy, but succumbed to the success of Julian Eltinge (William Dalton, 1882–1941). The large-boned baritone usually selected vehicles that allowed him quick wardrobe as well as sex-changes; this “ambisexual comedian,” as Percy Hammond called him, wore costumes that rivaled those of female fashion-plates. Better liked by female than by male audiences, Eltinge worked at a butch image, regularly picking fights with insulters and announcing his coming marriage. But his sexual preferences remain a mystery, despite rumors of an affair with a sports writer.

Bert Savoy (Everett Mackenzie, 1888–1923) introduced an outrageous red-haired caricature, garish and brassy, gossiping about her absent girlfriend Margie and launching such catch-phrases as “You mussst come over” and “You don’t know the half of it, dearie.” His arch camping, performed with his effeminate partner Jay Brennan, influenced Mae West. Francis Renault (Anthony Oriema, d. 1956), billed as “The Slave of Fashion” and “Camofleur,” sang in a clear soprano and appeared in Broadway revue; Karyl Norman (George Podezzi, 1897–1947), “The Creole Fashion-plate,” switched from baritone to soprano voice, alternating sexes in his act.

*Modern Male Impersonators.* With the radical changes in dress and manners that followed World War I, the male impersonator became a relic, although the tradition persisted in Ella Shields (“Burlington Bertie from Bow”) and Hettie King. Ironically, contemporary feminist theatre groups have revived the type for political reasons, as in Eve Merriam’s revue *The Club* (1976), Timberlake Wertenbaker’s *New Anatomies* (ICA Theatre, 1981), and German ensembles like Brühwarm. The economic necessity of wearing male dress was the motive force of Simone Benmussa’s *The Singular Life of Albert Nobbs*, whose heroine must live as

a waiter, both masculine and subservient, and of Manfred Karge’s *Man to Man* (1987), in which a widow adopts her husband’s identity to keep his job as a crane operator.

In a work like Caryl Churchill’s *Cloud Nine* (1979), sexual cross-casting is an important aspect of the play’s inquiry into gender roles. Lily Tomlin, in her one-woman show, has created a male lounge singer, Tommy Velour, plausible even to the hair on his chest.

*Postwar Revues.* During World War II, all-male drag revues were popular in the armed services and, in the postwar U.K., survived as *Soldiers in Skirts* and *Forces Showboats*. Despite the military titles, these were havens for homosexual transvestites, and, perhaps in reaction to wartime austerity, perhaps in nostalgia for a wartime stag atmosphere, the postwar period burgeoned with clubs and revues specializing in glamour drag. In fact it had been the rise of the nightclub in the 1920s which gave female impersonation its reputation as a primarily homosexual art-form.

In the United States, the Jewel Box revue, founded in Miami in 1938 by Danny Brown and Doc Brenner, enjoyed an eight-year run in the postwar period and launched a number of major talents before folding in 1973; its “male” m.c. was the black female cross-dresser Storme DeLarverie. Similar enterprises include Finocchio’s in San Francisco, Club 82 in New York, My-Oh-My in New Orleans and the Ha Ha Club in Hollywood, Florida; in Paris, Chez Madame Arthur and Le Carrousel; in West Berlin, Chez Nous and Chez Romy Haag; and in Havana, the MonMarte Club. In London, licensing laws forced professional drag into after-hours clubs and amateur drag into local pubs, just as local interference by the Catholic Church and witch-hunting town councils legislated many of the smaller American clubs out of existence. Club transvestites were often eager to be taken for women: a Parisian star, the Bardot clone Coccinelle (Jacques-Charles

Dufresnoy), pioneered with a sex-change operation and legal maneuvers to be accepted as a woman.

Many gay bars or pubs provided at least a token stage, and the female impersonator became almost exclusively what Esther Newton calls "performing homosexuals and homosexual performers," a relatively young, overt member of a distinct subculture. But the show-business ambience could often neutralize the sexuality for a mixed or heterosexual audience. One of the most successful means of "passing" with such a public is to give impressions of female super-stars, usually including such gay icons as Mae West, Bette Davis, Tallulah Bankhead, and Judy Garland. T. C. Jones (1920–1971), a veteran of the Jewel Box, was introduced to a general public in *New Faces of 1956* and toured his own revue.

Craig Russell (b. 1948) has been both the most widely known and the most versatile in this crowded trade, although Charles Pierce's impersonations make up in vitriol what they lack in accuracy. Many of these performers disdain the appellation "impersonator": Pierce and Lynn Carter (1925–1985) preferred to be known as "impressionists," Jim Bailey as a "singer-illusionist," Russell as a "character actor," and Jimmy James (James Johnson, b. 1961) insists that his heavily researched replication of Marilyn Monroe is a kind of possession. (More original and unnerving is the Dead Marilyn, created by former Cockette Peter Stack, aka Stakula.)

The mid-60s to 70s saw a resurgence of female impersonation as an article of theatrical faith. Danny La Rue's (Daniel Carroll, b. 1928) club in Hanover Square (1964–70) was a resort of fashion, and he became a major star of popular entertainment; despite a homosexual lifestyle well known within the show biz community, he still promotes an aggressively "normal" image. Drag mimes, lip-synching to tapes, became ubiquitous and reached an elegant apotheosis in Paris' La Grande Eugène. But the "radical drag

queens" Bloolips (founded in London in 1970) sent up this forced glamor and other clichés of variety entertainment to make wide-sweeping political statements about social misconceptions of gender.

"*Gender-fuck*" and *Glitter Rock*. More anarchic uses of "gender-fuck" resulted from the emergence of gay liberation from the West Coast hippy scene. The Cockettes and the Angels of Light of San Francisco were among the first to use campy pastiches of popular culture for radical ends; the Cycle Sluts and, later, the street-theatre group, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, parodied traditional drag by mixing the macho of beards, leather, and hairy chests with their spangles, false eyelashes, and net-stockings. Despite the flaunted faggotry of these groups, the outrageousness appealed to heterosexual rock musicians as a new means of assault; the extreme makeups and outfits were adopted by Alice Cooper, the New York Dolls, and Kiss, among others, a school which came to be known as "glitter rock" and "gender-bending." English society, with its own more delicate tradition, gave rise to David Bowie, who presented an androgynous allure. This approach reached a logical terminus in Boy George, whose early publicity touted him as asexual or tamely bisexual.

*Drama*. Although Goethe preferred to see a young man as Goldoni's *Locandiera* (The Mistress of the Inn), for fear lest a woman be as forward as the role demanded, female impersonation did not return to serious drama for a long time. The Russian actor Boris Glagolin (1878–1948) did attempt to play Joan of Arc in St. Petersburg. But in modern times cross-dressing became a serious aesthetic principle in the interpretation of classic texts with both the Lindsay Kemp company and the Glasgow Citizens Theatre. Kemp (b. 1940?), an original dancer and mime, won an international reputation with *Flowers*, an homage to Jean Genet and his versions of *Salome* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, amalgams of

camp sensibility with oneiric imagery. (One Kemp follower who went off on his own was Michael Matou [1947–1987], the Australian dancer and designer, who founded the Sideshow Burlesco in Sydney in 1979.) The Citizens Theatre, under the leadership of Giles Havergal, Robert David Macdonald and Philip Prowse, cast men as Cleopatra, Lady Macbeth, Marguerite Gautier (in *Camino Real*), and so forth, to stress the irreality of gender identification and the conventionality of the theatre form; they were the first to introduce a male Lady Bracknell, an innovation which has since become endemic. Less adventurous was the Royal Shakespeare Company's all-male *As You Like It*, since it cautiously avoided casting adolescents in the leading parts.

*Dame Comedy.* Before the war, dame comedy had been sophisticated by Douglas Byng (1893–1988), who performed in London supper clubs, cabarets and in revue. Comedy persisted in clowns like Pudgy Roberts who appeared in glamour drag revues, in the all-male Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo (founded 1974) and the Trockadero Gloxinia Ballet, and their operatic equivalent the Gran Scena Opera Co., founded by Ira Siff in 1982, with men singing the soprano roles. Formidable dames carry on: Barry Humphries as Dame Edna Everage and piano-entertainers Hinge & Brackett (George Logan and Patrick Fyffe). In the 1980s, "alternative drag performance" could be seen at clubs and pubs in Britain: standard glamour drag was trashed by such as Ivan the Terrible and The Joan Collins Fan Club (Julian Clary and his dog Fanny), who combined self-abuse with attacks on audience expectation.

Drag has also become a component of contemporary performance art, as in John Epperson's *Ballet of the Dolls* (La MaMa, New York, 1988), a confrontation of pulp fiction with the clichés of romantic ballet. This trend has its roots in the "Ridiculous Theatre" movements of the 1970s, which launched Charles Ludlam,

and the Andy Warhol Factory which housed Jackie Curtis and Holly Woodlawn. The 300-lb. underground film star Divine (Glen Milstead, d. 1988) was featured in a number of off-off-Broadway plays, most memorably as the prison matron in Tom Eyan's *Women Behind Bars*. A leading exponent is Ethyl (né Roy) Eichelberger (b. 1945), whose one-man *Tempest* and *Jocasta, or Boy-Crazy* are both in the minstrel-vaudeville tradition and the shamanistic current (he sports a tattoo to assert his masculinity whatever his attire). Gender confusion is also the main theme of Los Angeles comedian John Fleck (b. 1953) (*I Got the He-Be She-Be's*, 1986; *Psycho Opera*, 1987).

*Breeches in Opera.* In early baroque opera, a favorite plot was the legend of Achilles disguising himself as a maiden on the island of Scyros to avoid involvement in the Trojan war; in this equivocal disguise he was wooed by the king and wooed the princess. The subject was treated seriously by thirty-two operas between 1663 and 1837, and comically by John Gay (*Achilles*, 1732) and Thomas Arne (*Achilles in Petticoats*, 1793), and survived as dramatic material as late as Robert Bridges' *Achilles in Scyros* (1890). Both as a legacy from eighteenth-century castrato singing and for reasons of vocal balance, breeches parts have persisted in opera, and it takes little time for an audience to adjust to sopranos impersonating libidinous youths like Cherubino and Octavian. Musical comedy has utilized the male-female disguise gimmick at least from Franz von Suppé's *Fatinitza* (1878), but without adding anything of distinction to it, at least not since Eltinge. Danny LaRue's appearance as Dolly Levi in a West End production of *Hello, Dolly!* coarsened an already coarse creation. *Sugar* by Jule Styne and Bob Merrill (1972) was simply an overblown remake of *Some Like It Hot*, just as *La Cage aux Folles* by Fierstein and Herman tarted up the French farce for the Broadway marketplace.

See also *Castrati*; *Dance*; *Music*, *Popular*; *Theatre and Drama*; *Transvestism* (*Cross-Dressing*); *Variety, Revue, and Cabaret Entertainment*.

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## TRAVEL AND EXPLORATION

In this context, the literature of travel and exploration refers to books written by Europeans or Americans about what came to be known as the "Third World"—Asia, Africa, the islands of the Pacific, and to a certain extent the Americas (as relating to Amerindians). It would not include work in the field of *anthropology*. This literature of travel and exploration (and conquest) begins around the time of Columbus and goes onward until the early twentieth century, when tourism began to make the whole world a replica of the West and nothing was left to be explored.

*Travel Literature*. During the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, it was possible to write about "sodomie" with some frankness. Accordingly, there are numerous candid references to homosexuality in the various writings of travelers which were collected in massive multivolume anthologies by Richard Haklyt, Samuel Purchas, and John Pinkerton. Purchas (the source of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan") even has a unique reference to the homosexuality of the Emperor Jahangir of India. Many other travel books during this period not collected by any later editor also contain data of this kind.

As the eighteenth century drew to a close, a slow tidal wave of puritanism and prudery rolled over the West, and by 1835 it had ceased to be safe to make open references to homosexuality in books intended for general use. Here and there in France and Germany, scholars during the nineteenth century were able to write articles or even books about homosexuality, or to mention it in passing, but in the English-speaking world there was an almost absolute taboo against mentioning such an "unspeakable" subject at all. Travelers therefore either simply did not mention what they saw in foreign lands with regard to homosexual behavior, or else they mentioned it in veiled phrases ("vice against nature," "abominable vice," "unnatural propensities," and similar expressions). This sort of nonsense went on until the veil was rudely lifted by Arminius Vambery and Sir Richard Burton in the late nineteenth century, Vambery being a Hungarian traveler who had visited the court of the pederastic Amir of Bukhara in Central Asia, and Burton being the notorious explorer of Asia and Africa who wrote a whole essay on *pederasty*, which provoked howls of "moral" outrage. But the Oscar Wilde trials in 1895 put the lid back on until after World War I, and even to a certain extent until after World War II.

Another problem was that the Asians and Africans themselves—and this is a problem faced also by anthropologists—realized that the Western travelers were hostile to homosexuality, and therefore kept it out of their sight as much as possible. The Japanese after the beginnings of modernization in the late nineteenth century are a case in point. One need only look back to the clandestine nature of homosexual society in the United States up until the 1960s to realize how easy it is to hide a flourishing homosexual subculture from the general public, much more so from passing tourists.

The present writer can attest that homosexuality, so widespread in Morocco,