

A Study of Gender, Part II: The Evolution of Human Gender

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When you make the two one ... and when you make the male and the female into a single one, so that the male is not male and the female not female ... then shall you enter [the kingdom].
(*Gospel of Thomas*, saying 22.)

Summary

This two-part article examines the esoteric aspects of gender. Part I explored the “cross-sectional” dimension of gender, including its expression in the human context and the legitimacy of applying the term to higher levels of reality. Part II explores the “longitudinal dimension” of human sex and gender. We are passing through a period of rapid change, marked by the empowerment of women and new perspectives on intersexuality, transsexuality and homosexuality. Gender and even sexual distinctions are becoming blurred, suggesting that humanity might be moving toward a state of individual—even reproductive—androgyny. But more likely, and ultimately more consequential, is the emergence of a Group Androgyne in which creative tension between gender polarities provides the impulse for a transformation in human consciousness.

Introduction

Part I of this article¹ showed that gender and sex, its lower correspondence or manifestation on the physical plane, are complex topics. Binary sexual categories have proved inadequate to describe the physical attributes, instincts and behaviors of all individuals. A small but significant fraction of infants are sexually ambiguous. Another small but significant fraction of children and adults reject the assignment made in infancy and seek ways to express their “true” sexual identity. A larger minority of adults accept their sexual identity but experience erotic attraction to members of their own sex.

Gender, pertaining to our emotional and higher natures, is even less well-defined. It is imperfectly correlated with biological sex, and the correlation has become progressively weaker. The approach adopted in Part I was to treat gender as a set of archetypal polarities. But it was stressed that each pair of opposites brackets a spectrum of possibilities. People exhibit the characteristics associated with their own sex to various degrees, and may also exhibit some characteristics of the opposite sex. In Jungian psychology gender crossover is explained by the *animus* and *anima*, believed to lie in the individual’s unconscious mind as well as in the collective unconscious.²

Part I noted that broad support exists within the esoteric community, as well as across multiple world religions, for the belief that Deity manifests in both feminine and masculine forms. In particular, increasing attention is being paid to the World Mother. Interestingly, esotericists seem more receptive to notions of divine gender than to suggestions that gender exists within the Planetary Hierarchy or in

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their own souls and monads. But an important key to identifying gender at those levels is ray influence: the odd-numbered rays have masculine characteristics, and the even-numbered rays feminine ones.

Part II has two main objectives. One is to examine the changes taking place around us. In the West we are witnessing rapid developments in sexual behavior, in our understanding of sex and gender, and in societal attitudes to both. The empowerment of women is changing western civilization. While full equality has yet to be attained, women have gained access to many traditionally male roles. Correspondingly, men have opportunities and approval to play traditionally female roles. Meanwhile, sex, marriage and childbearing have become less closely interrelated. Same-sex unions are gaining legal, social, and even religious acceptance. The intersex phenomenon and sexual dysphoria are more widely recognized, and gender reassignment therapies are becoming more accessible.

Part II will also confront issues of social desirability and morality—recognizing that the latter can be defined in different ways. The changes currently in process are winning applause from some quarters and strong disapproval from others. Some men fear an approaching matriarchy in which they will play no useful role. Some religious bodies do not recognize female clergy. Homosexuality is condemned in many Third World countries and by conservative groups in the developed countries. It is also condemned in influential esoteric writings, causing confusion and distress among many esotericists. Transsexuality is viewed in a variety of ways by all constituencies.

We must assume that the Intelligences who guide the human race are aware of the developments taking place. Do the Masters, to the extent that we can discern such matters, oppose those developments, regard them as tolerable within the framework of divine Purpose, or support them? Did the Masters actually set them in motion?

The second objective of Part II is to inquire where these trends may take us as we progress

into the Aquarian Age, toward emergence of the sixth subrace, and eventually to the sixth and seventh root races. Will the trends in sex and gender observed in recent decades continue, or might they even be reversed? Do the challenges to long-standing assumptions about men and women, and trends in sex and gender themselves, mean that humanity is entering a new phase of evolution; or do they amount to a reckless disregard for immutable laws of nature?

Does a new gender syndrome lie on the horizon? One possible scenario is the approach to some form of androgyny. Although traditionally assigned gender roles are becoming blurred, reproductive androgyny seems unlikely to occur on a global scale until the seventh root race, by which time we shall no longer have dense physical bodies. On a shorter timescale, androgyny could manifest on a group level and involve gender rather than sex. The concept of the Group Androgyne will be introduced in the final section.

As noted in Part I, the article is written primarily from a western, Judeo-Christian perspective. Occasionally it draws upon concepts from other religions and philosophies, but the article does not comment on the gender norms of other cultures. Authors with more extensive knowledge are encouraged to explore those important issues and to share their insights with the esoteric community.

Patterns in Gender

God, according to Chapter 1 of *Genesis*, “created man in his own image ... male and female created he them.”³ Then came the Fall; Eve sinned and persuaded Adam also to sin, whereupon God cursed them both. Adam was condemned to endless toil: “[C]ursed is the ground for thy sake In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.”⁴ Eve was doubly cursed: to endure labor pains and to be subordinate to her husband: “[I]n sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”⁵

Women’s subservient role was reinforced in Greco-Roman and early Christian texts. According to Aristotle: “the male is by nature

superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject.”⁶ The Apostle Paul wrote: “Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.”⁷ Women were denied a public voice: “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home.”⁸ Women were accorded lower status in Christianity than they were in the *Torah* or the *Qur’an*.

Until the last several decades, certain cultural assumptions went virtually unchallenged: sex is dichotomous, readily distinguishable and immutable; men and women have distinct roles; and men are superior to women. Challenges to these assumptions have now resulted in conflict within and among families, communities, religious denominations, ethnic groups, and nations. The esoteric community has not been immune to its own internal conflicts.

Women’s Roles in Society

History shows that women occasionally exercised great power and influence. Egyptian Pharaoh Hatshepsut; Deborah, Judge of pre-monarchic Israel; Celtic Queen Boudicca; Abbess Hildegard of Bingen; Queen Consort Eleanor of Aquitaine; mystic, soldier and martyr Joan of Arc; Empress Catherine the Great of Russia; and Queen Victoria of Great Britain formed a tiny sample of powerful women whose exploits were recorded. Many may have been forgotten—or their stories intentionally omitted from historical records.

More commonly women’s place in society was severely limited. Women were *property*: unmarried women of their fathers, married women of their husbands. God placed women in perspective when he told Moses: “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor’s.”⁹ Among the riches that attracted the Queen of Sheba to visit King Solomon were his “seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines.”¹⁰

As daughters of Eve, women were blamed for the Fall of *man*; they were eternally cursed—even when men in the ruling classes no longer toiled in sorrow and sweat. In the fourth century CE Christian writer Ambroasiaster declared: “Women must cover their heads because they are not the image of God. They must do this as a sign of their subjection to authority and because sin came into the world through them.” In his formulation of canon law the fourth-century Pauline commentator Ambrosiaster asserted that women did not have souls; twelfth-century Benedictine monk Gratian took a similar view.¹¹

Women were the cause of men’s inability to control their sexual appetites. The rule of the Knights Templar, which typified prevailing attitudes in the Middle Ages, warned: “The company of women is a perilous thing, for through them the ancient demon denied us the right to live in Paradise ... and we believe it is dangerous for any religious man to look too much at women’s faces.”¹² Rape victims still face severe punishment in some Middle Eastern and South Asian countries. Even in western courts a woman’s “provocative” clothing or “demeanor” may be introduced in a rapist’s defense. On the other hand, women were expected to satisfy men’s erotic needs, and consent was not considered necessary. A wife could not deny her husband access to her body; notions of marital rape were unknown until very recently.

Sex between feudal lords and their female serfs, between upper-class males and female servants, and between slave owners and their female property, was commonplace.¹³ In the case of slaves the practice provided not only outlets for the owner’s sex drive but also new assets. Famously, President Thomas Jefferson fathered six children by Sally Hemings, a slave in his household.¹⁴ The frequency of white-male/black-female relations led to the acquisition of European features in a substantial fraction of today’s African-American population.¹⁵

Parents valued sons. Sons would carry on the family name and might inherit its property; they could distinguish themselves in the military or a profession, learn a trade, or at least

work on the farm; they would probably retain the parents' religious affiliations and, where permissible, would vote the same way as the father. Daughters, by contrast, were mouths to feed. The hope was that they would "marry well," though prospects might demand sizable dowries; a dowry was required even if a daughter entered a nunnery. Spinster-daughters remained burdens on their parents and acquired utility only as help around the home or caregivers to aging parents.

Organized demands for higher social status for women, legal and voting rights, and access to leadership positions in society began early in the nineteenth century. The Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 marked the beginning of the women's rights movement in the United States. American social activist Elizabeth Cady Stanton presented her "Declaration of Sentiments," which included the following resolution:

That, being invested by the Creator with the same capabilities, and the same consciousness of responsibility for their exercise, it is demonstrably the right and duty of woman, equally with man, to promote every righteous cause, by every righteous means; and especially in regard to the great subjects of morals and religion ... and this being a self-evident truth, growing out of the divinely implanted principles of human nature.¹⁶

Iroquois female elders reportedly could vote as early as the seventeenth century and could depose male chiefs. Women enjoyed conditional suffrage in Sweden from 1718 until 1772. Unmarried white women who owned property could vote in New Jersey from 1776 to 1807. And from 1840 until 1852 women could vote in the Kingdom of Hawaii. But the first country to institute general suffrage was New Zealand in 1893. Women in the United States won the right to vote in 1920, France in 1944, Switzerland in 1971, and Saudi Arabia (only in municipal elections) in 2015. Women still cannot vote in the Vatican City.

Even when, and where, women were permitted to vote, the election of women to positions of authority was slow. No woman has yet been

elected president of the United States, and twenty-two states have never had a female governor. At the time of writing, fourteen women serve as elected heads of government, including Angela Merkel of Germany, Kersti Kaljulaid of Estonia, Michelle Bachelet of Chile, Khaleda Zia of Bangladesh, and Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan.¹⁷ Election to the highest position of government does not guarantee that a woman will serve with distinction; Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff was impeached in 2016, and President Park Geun-hye of South Korea in 2017.

Traditionally women were denied access to most occupations outside the home or away from the farm. Work was thought to impair a woman's childbearing potential. Change came in wartime, when military service created critical shortages of labor, and it accelerated when a man's wages proved inadequate to support a family. But women typically earn less than men performing the same work and many still complain of a "glass ceiling" thwarting promotion to positions of leadership.

Change was particularly slow in the professions. The Boston Female Medical College was founded in 1848, and the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1850. British esotericist Anna Kingsford (1846–1888) received her medical training in Paris. In 1869, Arabella Mansfield became the first female lawyer in the United States. But opportunities and successes were rare. Few positions in medicine or law were open to women, and few patients or clients consulted them. Major accounting firms did not hire women until the 1970s, and the proportion of women managers and partners remains small.¹⁸

Women traditionally were exempt or excluded from military service. The situation began to change in the two World Wars. In 1917, Colonel Maria Bochkareva was appointed head of the Russian Women's Battalion of Death. Opha May Johnson was inducted into the United States Marine Corps in 1918. Then-Princess Elizabeth and 640,000 of her fellow countrywomen served in WWII.¹⁹ But in every country access to, and promotion within, the military was mixed. Not until 2008 was a

woman, Ann Dunwoody, promoted to four-star general in the U.S. Army.

Even when women were admitted to the armed forces, until recently they were excluded from combat roles. The argument that women as a group are physically and/or emotionally unsuited for combat is weakened by the recognition that many *men* are unsuited for combat. Combat may expose a woman to danger, but she is much more likely to be raped than to die on the battlefield. At least twenty-five percent of U.S. military women have been sexually assaulted, and up to eighty percent have been harassed.²⁰

Religious institutions traditionally excluded women from the clergy.²¹ Interestingly, that discrimination cannot be attributed to a discernable need for masculine characteristics. The ministry, perhaps more than any other profession, demands feminine characteristics like empathy and compassion, rather than masculine ones like aggression and confrontation. Exclusion from the Christian ministry may have persuaded many women with sacerdotal ambitions to turn to witchcraft.

The Society of Friends (Quakers) never discriminated against women in religious or other matters; but they have no formal ministry. The first official Christian clergywoman is believed to have been Antoinette Brown Blackwell, ordained in the Congregationalist Church in 1853.²² As early as 1761 John Wesley licensed Sarah Crosby to preach; but Anna Oliver was denied ordination as a Methodist minister in 1880, despite her appeal to Wesley's initiative and to women's natural gifts as pastors. Barbara Harris was consecrated bishop in the Episcopal Church in 1989, in the face of obscene messages and death threats. Women bishops were not permitted to serve in the Church of England until 2015. The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches still refuse to ordain female clergy and declare that the matter is closed.²³

Regina Jonas was ordained privately in 1935 to become the world's first known female rabbi. And in 1976, Michal Mendelsohn became the first presiding female rabbi in a North

American congregation. In 1999, Ghazala Anwar served as a female imam, or *imama*, leading mixed-gender prayer in New York City; other imamas serve in Denmark.²⁴ More generally, Orthodox Judaism and Islam remain opposed to female clergy.

A majority of influential esoteric teachers of the last 150 years have been female: Anna Kingsford, Helena Blavatsky, Harriette Curtis, Helena Roerich, Dion Fortune, Alice Bailey, Katherine Tingley, and more. Roerich, an outspoken feminist, blamed many of the world's problems on the subjugation of women and the resulting imbalance between the genders: "Could the terrors and crimes of today be possible if both Origins [the masculine and the feminine aspects of Deity] had been balanced?"²⁵ And "According to the Sacred Teaching, the fall of humanity began from the time of the abasement of the Feminine Principle."²⁶

Blurring of Gender Roles

While much more remains to be done, great strides have been made toward equality of respect, opportunity and expectations. Women are winning the right and opportunity to play roles traditionally assigned to men and are amply demonstrating their capabilities. Women now outperform men in college, work in the International Space Station, perform brain surgery, pass judgment in courts of law, become heads of state, celebrate the Eucharist, and either serve as amanuenses for the Masters or teach on their own authority. Some women have assumed special responsibilities; Bailey reported: "Certain initiates of the Third Initiation have taken feminine bodies,—one in India will in due time do much toward the emancipation of the women of India."²⁷

The "women's movement" involved, among much else, the acknowledgement by women themselves and by society that they had, or could acquire, masculine as well as feminine characteristics. Gender polarities are found within all of us, not just between sexes; women could be "active" as well as "passive," ambitious as well as nurturing, rational as well as intuitive.

Women's empowerment could never have been achieved without male support. Most men appreciate the basic justice of gender equality and value the contribution women are making to society; the fifty percent of a nation's previously underutilized human resources are now being put to use. Men also are relieved that they no longer bear the whole burden of decision-making and economic support of the family.

On the other hand, some men resent women's encroachment on their turf. They resist the hiring and promotion of women, or exploit their vulnerabilities. We have recently learned the extent to which powerful men in the media, sports, politics, and elsewhere were able to harass women—and in some cases young men—for decades and intimidate them into silence. The high level of harassment in the armed forces has already been noted.

Do men have a meaningful future? Women, it would seem, can do everything that men can do—while retaining their monopoly over the birthing process. In the past men wielded power and influence in society, but they also protected women and provided for their families. Now they must compete for power, may rely for protection on women soldiers and police officers, and may no longer be the primary breadwinners. In 1999, Susan Faludi looked back over the previous several decades and concluded “a domestic apocalypse was under way. American manhood was under siege.”²⁸ She observed “a troubling rise in male distress signals ... anxiety and depressive disorders, suicides and attempted suicides, physical illnesses ... and a mortality gap that was putting the average man in his grave seven years before the average woman.”²⁹ Men are not organized for mutual help; nor are social institutions providing needed help, the way they encouraged and mentored women in their quest for equality.

On a relatively small scale, men are playing roles traditionally assigned to women, and—in contrast to those Faludi studied—seem able to do so without sacrificing their male self-concept. Society can only benefit from their involvement. When former marines or con-

struction workers become nurses or grade school teachers, they bring with them unique experiences as well as the desire to serve in radically new capacities. Encouraging men to be present in maternity delivery rooms was an important step toward enhancing bonding between fathers and their children; traditional exclusion sent a message that children were the mother's possessions and the father should not interfere. Fathers are now more involved than ever before in child rearing. Perhaps, men are responding to opportunities to reestablish karmic balance.

The blend of gender characteristics each of us expresses is a major ingredient in what we term “personality.” Flexibility in the range of accessible characteristics can only enhance the richness of the personality life.

Patterns in Sex and Sexual Relationships

Sexual activity expresses the Fourth Ray procreative union of polar opposites. Yet the erotic instinct is focused in the sacral chakra, which “at this time” is governed by Ray VII.³⁰ Alice Bailey explained that the latter ray “swings now into activity and pours through this particular centre.” “It was necessary,” she added, “for the sex life to be controlled by this type of energy in order to bring about the needed changes, and hence also one of the great results of the influence of the incoming Seventh Ray has been the increase in the mental interest in sex.”³¹

At its most basic level sexual behavior mirrors patterns in the animal kingdom. But human beings have the capacity to integrate it with the emotional, mental, and even spiritual natures. The context in which intercourse activity takes place varies enormously. It may be insensitive, degrading, exploitive and/or violent; it may be casual and promiscuous; it may be forced on a non-consensual partner or a child. Abuses of the sexual function have occurred throughout history; indeed we understand that it even preceded the present Earth chain: “The sexual misery of this planet finds its origin in the moon failure.”³²

On the other hand sexual activity may be a unique expression of mutual love between two people who have committed their lives to each other. “Making love” in the true sense of the word is not a single act but a rich repertory of actions that delight the physical, emotional, mental and higher natures. Even the animal kingdom is noted for its elaborate mating rituals. It is not our place to speculate on—still less legislate—what form the intimacy between partners in a loving relationship might or should take. Love is transformative, raising intimacy, as well as the two people, to new levels.

Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius (121–180 CE) declared: “The sexual embrace can only be compared with music and with prayer.”³³ Esoteric teacher Torkom Saraydarian (1917–1997) commented: “Love is not just related to the sexual organs, it is attraction on all levels. You can make love by looking at each other. You can make love through feeling. You can make love when you think on the same level, or if you are dedicated to the same great cause.”³⁴ Dion Fortune (1890–1946) set the bar high for successful marriage; our subtle bodies unfold as we progress spiritually, and satisfying sex can only be achieved if one’s partner has reached a similar level of unfoldment:

The laws of mating, as understood by esoteric philosophy, embrace much more than mere physical union, recognizing as they do the seven planes according to their several conditions. Esoteric philosophy teaches, therefore, that unless a man mate each of his bodies which has arrived at a functionable state, his union will be incomplete, and he will still be in a state of sex-hunger, seeking his mate.³⁵

Indian guru Rajneesh (1931–1990), also known as Osho, commented that sex “need not remain just biological: bring some spirituality to it. While making love, meditate too. While making love, be prayerful. Love should not be just a physical act; pour your soul into it.”³⁶ Many esoteric teachers have spoken of directing the creative impulse from the sacral to the higher chakras.

Tantra is often presented as a way to spiritualize sexual activity. In its purest form the ancient Yogic practices of Tantra sought to transform every aspect of life in the service of spiritual self-realization. It did not disdain the body and sexuality but saw them as valid and sacred. Sadly, however, the practices were abused. Sixteenth-century Tibetan scholar Dakpo Tashi Namgyal commented: “In Tibet it [Tantra with a sexual partner] was discouraged and in any case no celibate monk was allowed to practice it.”³⁷ In some cases the meditative disciplines were ignored, and Tantra became an excuse for unbridled sensuality. As one writer explained:

Tantra failed for two reasons. One was an inner reason—that meditation was not made the central point. And second, tantra had no special methodology for the perverted and the repressed, so that first their repressions and perversions are settled and they become normal. [Tantra became] just an exploitation of sex.³⁸

Interest in Tantra continues today, and again we find a multiplicity of underlying motives, philosophies and practices. Misuse is not uncommon. On the other hand, the path of Kalachakra Tantra, with origins in Tibetan Buddhism and taught by the Dalai Lama, is one of the most advanced esoteric disciplines currently available.³⁹

While some individuals and groups seek to spiritualize sex, others argue that spiritual growth can only be achieved through abstinence. The world religions struggled to decide whether marriage or celibacy was the preferable state. Judaism, Islam, and Native American religions attached great importance to parenthood. Buddhism and Christianity—particularly Gnostic Christianity—attached comparable importance to celibacy. Both Buddhism and Christianity imposed celibacy on monks and nuns, and the Church of Rome even requires its secular clergy to be celibate.

Instead of allowing love to “enable and beautify” sexuality and integrate it into the higher nature, celibacy’s proponents insisted that the

sexual impulse must be suppressed or “sublimated”—even if extreme measures were necessary to do so. Some priests of the Roman goddess Cybele castrated themselves in frenzied religious rituals. Certain Christian ascetics performed self-castration to overcome the “concupiscence of the flesh.”⁴⁰

Esoteric teachings have often echoed a preference for celibacy. For example, Helena Blavatsky grudgingly condoned marriage because the alternative might be worse: “[S]ave in a few exceptional cases of practical Occultism, marriage is the only remedy against immorality.”⁴¹

Sex, the Family, and Procreation

The great majority of people throughout history has been, and probably will be, heterosexual. So long as humanity retains its sexual mode of reproduction, they bear responsibility for perpetuating the species and providing physical forms in which souls can incarnate.

Marriage evolved to provide a socially sanctioned framework for heterosexual relationships. Marriage imposed certain responsibilities on husbands and gave wives status relative to concubines and slaves. Adam and Eve were portrayed in an exclusive relationship—if only by circumstances—and many religious traditions enshrined the notion of permanent, monogamous marriage in their moral canons. Yet the early Jewish patriarchs and kings were polygamous, Islam and Mormonism tolerated polygamy until quite recently, and some cultures permit polyandry. The meaning of “traditional marriage” or “biblical marriage” depends on which tradition one studies, and which books of the Bible one considers relevant.

Institutional Christianity sanctioned marriage because few people could meet the demands of celibacy. Nineteen hundred years before Blavatsky, Paul warned the Corinthians: “It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”⁴² Despite his negative attitude toward sex and marriage, Paul no doubt recognized that children were needed to swell the ranks of the faithful.

The stereotypical marriage involves sexual intercourse on a more-or-less regular basis. But we do not know whether this has ever been universally true. Marriage fulfills a variety of needs and aspirations. In times past, as today, some people probably married for companionship, protection, or other reasons. They may have been unable to have sex, engaged in it infrequently, or chose to forgo it altogether.

In the aristocracy marriages traditionally were arranged for dynastic purposes, and weddings were occasions for elaborate celebrations and pageantry. Among ordinary people, a wedding might be celebrated according to local custom, though many couples opted for common-law marriage. Western Christianity did not declare marriage to be a sacrament until the twelfth century, and the Protestant reformers denied its sacramental status.⁴³ Church weddings did not become the norm in most European countries until after the Reformation.

As noted, parents were eager to get their daughters “married off,” and young women accepted the sense of urgency. Brides might be in their teens, or younger. By contrast, their husbands, who were expected to be in a position to support the family, might be significantly older. Few objections would be raised if he had acquired previous sexual experience; marriage was a sign that he planned to “settle down.” Romantic love was rarely considered necessary at any social level. The courtly love of Troubadour tradition was mostly extramarital; it fantasized about, but more often stopped short of, sexual contact because of the risk and consequences of discovery.

Large families were common, but until the late nineteenth century many children died from malnutrition, disease, or accidents—often work-related. Maternal mortality rates also were high, and life expectancy for both men and women was relatively short. Advances in health care over the last 100 years have drastically reduced maternity and infant mortality rates; and at least in the West children are no longer forced to work in unsafe environments. People are living longer, and attitudes toward marriage, sex and childbearing have changed dramatically.

Among esoteric teachers, Helena Blavatsky married but left her husband almost immediately to follow a path of celibacy. Anna Kingsford remained nominally married but developed a professional and spiritual relationship with Edward Maitland. Annie Besant left her husband, after having two children, and allegedly formed a relationship with George Bernard Shaw. Alice Bailey bore three children by her first husband before marrying Foster Bailey. Charles Leadbeater never married. Dion Fortune married occultist Thomas Evans, known as “Merlin,” but he left her after two years for another woman. Katherine Tingley married three times. MacGregor Mathers married but had no children. Arthur Waite, Rudolf Steiner, and Geoffrey Hodson were widowed and remarried. Rare among esotericists, Harriette and Homer Curtis and Helena and Nicholas Roerich enjoyed happy, life-long marriages; the Roerichs had two children who participated in their work. Bailey commented that “many of the Masters are married and have raised families.”⁴⁴

Marriage used to give a couple legal, social, and/or religious permission to engage in sexual activity. Children typically began to arrive within one or two years, and the marriage was expected to last “until death do us part.” That neat pattern is now the exception rather than the rule. Multiple marriages have become commonplace, and having children is optional. The availability of contraceptives has given people new freedom to engage in sexual activity with minimal risk of pregnancy. Certain religious institutions, like the Church of Rome, still struggle with the concept of family planning and the means taken to achieve it. Although the ban on contraception remains in force, the great majority of Roman Catholic women reject it.⁴⁵

Will the trends in sex and gender observed in recent decades continue, or might they be reversed? Do the challenges to long standing assumptions about men and women, and trends in sex and gender themselves, mean that humanity is entering a new phase of evolution; or do they amount to a reckless disregard for the immutable laws of nature?

Sexual activity may begin in an individual’s early teens. Social and religious prohibitions against sex outside marriage have lost their dissuasive power. Much sexual activity now takes place between persons who are neither married nor in lasting relationships. But despite what the mass media might suggest, singles have less sex than married people. For example, in the age group 18–24 years, only 2 percent of single men reported sexual activity more than four times per week, compared with 21 percent of married men.⁴⁶

Marriage may no longer be a woman’s primary ambition. Education and career considerations may take priority, and these in turn allow her to delay marriage, or perhaps never to marry. Even for women who plan to marry, financial and emotional independence is considered important before, during, and—if things do not work out—after marriage. Women’s education is a first, and important, step toward gender equality in societies that remain heavily patriarchal. In addition to helping women become more independent, education enables them to participate in family planning and to obtain contraceptive aids that may be available.

Many men and women decide to live together “without benefit of clergy” (or legal equivalent). Cohabitation has increased ninefold over the last fifty years and is now a popular alternative or prelude to marriage. More than one-half of marriages are now preceded by a period of cohabitation.⁴⁷ In general, however, prolonged cohabitation is less stable than marriage.

Marriage itself has become “as long as love shall last,” rather than “what God has joined together, let no man put asunder.”⁴⁸ Divorce no longer carries the social stigma it once did, and religious proscriptions against remarriage are

widely ignored. Yet divorce rates vary widely by country: from an estimated 3 percent in Chile, to 21 percent in Saudi Arabia, 42 percent in the United Kingdom, and 71 percent in Portugal.⁴⁹ Interestingly, marital commitment has suffered from “women’s liberation.” Since 1990, the number of wives admitting infidelity has increased by forty percent, while the rate among husbands remained the same.⁵⁰

Although teen pregnancy is an urgent problem, on average men and women in the developed world are waiting longer before starting families.⁵¹ Many couples choose never to have children; others experience difficulty in having, or are unable to have, children. Postponement of childbearing bypasses the time of men’s maximum libido. In addition to the normal decline with age, libido can be reduced by anxiety, stress, depression, medical conditions, and prescription medications.⁵² The frequency of intercourse may remain relatively high for couples in their early twenties, but it seems to be declining among married couples as a whole; a study in Japan reported that nearly one-half of married couples had not had sex during the previous month.⁵³ Assertions that we are a sex-obsessed society may need to be more specific about the segments of society under consideration.

More importantly, postponement bypasses women’s time of maximum fertility. Extended life expectancy and improved health may prolong sexual activity into old age,⁵⁴ but by then a woman is past menopause. Conception rates are falling in every part of the world. According to United Nations data the global *total fertility rate* (TFR)—live births per woman—has declined from 4.96 in 1950–1955 to an estimated 2.52 in 2010–2015. For the most recent period the TFR ranged from a high of 7.40 in Niger, to 1.88 in the United States, to a low of 1.11 in Taiwan.⁵⁵ The *net reproduction rate* (NRR)—*daughters* per woman—is approximately one-half of the TFR. The NRR was found to be less than 1.0, the level of sustainability, in ninety-four of the 229 nations surveyed.⁵⁶ In much of the developed world populations are decreasing or are sustained only by immigration.

Declining fertility and reproduction rates are good from the standpoint of world population. From the Biblical injunction to “multiply and fill the Earth,” emphasis has shifted to serious concerns about overpopulation. The United Nations anticipates that global population may level off at about 11 billion by 2100—or could even peak out at about 9 billion in 2050 and then decline.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, differential rates among regions of the world are affecting demographics. The white population—the fifth, “Nordic,” subrace of the fifth root race—is declining in numbers and declining even faster as a percentage of total population.⁵⁸ The increase in total global population is driven primarily by expansion in the fourth and earlier subraces.⁵⁹

Global population can only increase if incarnation becomes more frequent. Based on what we have been told, roughly one in eight human monads is currently in physical embodiment; if world population reaches 10 billion, the proportion will be one in six.⁶⁰

Homosexuality

According to an authoritative study: “An estimated 3.5% of adults in the United States identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. This implies that there are approximately nine million LGBT Americans, roughly equivalent to the population of New Jersey.”⁶¹ The numbers vary significantly by region, either because homosexual and bisexual people congregate in certain areas or because societal attitudes affect people’s willingness to disclose their orientation. A Gallup poll showed that more than 10 percent of the population in the District of Columbia identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual, versus only 1.7 percent in North Dakota.

Homosexual behavior was not uncommon in antiquity, but legal and societal attitudes varied widely. The *Code of the Assura*, compiled late in the second millennium BCE, prescribed castration for male homosexual acts committed in the armed forces: “If a man have intercourse with his brother-in-arms, they [the authorities] shall turn him into a eunuch.”⁶²

In other cultures such behavior was accepted, particularly between persons of different social

class. Slaves and servants provided opportunities for sexual activity of all kinds, without regard for consent. Roman society also tolerated a social system in which ambitious young men could “sleep their way to the top” by partnering with older, well-connected men.⁶³ Neither the older nor the younger man was expected to be exclusively homosexual; the former may have had, and the latter anticipated, a home life with a wife and children.

On a smaller scale Greek and Roman society acknowledged homosexual relationships among women. The most famous case in antiquity involved Sappho (c.630–c.570 BCE), a Greek lyric poetess from the island of Lesbos, known for her writings about love and women. Lesbos, off the coast of Asia Minor, acquired a reputation for being a hotbed of female same-sex activity. The second-century (CE) Lucian of Samasota commented on the “masculine-looking women in Lesbos who are not willing to suffer ‘it’ from men, but only consort with women.”⁶⁴

In late antiquity and the Middle Ages same-sex unions—male and female—sometimes were afforded legal and even liturgical recognition. Historian John Boswell pointed to a tenth-century Greek liturgical rite claiming precedents from the early church:

O Lord God, who made humankind in thine own image and likeness and gave it power over all flesh everlasting, and who now hast approved thy saints Philip and Bartholomew becoming partners, not bound together by nature but in the unity of the Holy Spirit and in the mode of faith, thou who didst consider thy saints and martyrs Serge and Bacchus worthy to be united, bless thy servants, N and N But grant them to love each other and to remain unhated and without scandal, all the days of their lives.⁶⁵

Not surprisingly, Boswell’s work was controversial, and critics argued that the unions in question were not sexual in nature. That may or may not be true; just as it is impossible to generalize about intimacy in traditional or same-sex marriages today, we cannot assume that medieval same-sex couples necessarily engaged in stereotypical sexual behavior, or

with what frequency. The later French ceremony of *Affrèment* gave two men legal and social rights similar to those of marriage.⁶⁶ Again, we do not know what, if any, sexual habits were involved.

More generally, homosexuality acquired a distinctly negative reputation. Most people assumed, as they do today, that sexual contact between homosexual men took a single form. King Henry VIII introduced the Buggery Act of 1533, making the act punishable by hanging; the law was modified in 1861 to remove the death penalty, but the act remained a crime.⁶⁷ A consensus of religious and secular belief developed that male homosexuality itself—erotic interest in other men, whether or not expressed in physical contact—was deviant, immoral, and threatening to society. Negative attitudes were based on a combination of personal distaste and associations with idolatry, heresy, and criminal behavior.⁶⁸ Popular stereotypes depicted a gay man as promiscuous, pederastic and effeminate, with a limp wrist and a lisp.

Homophobia was pervasive at all levels of business, education, the military, government, and the church. Hate crimes were sanctioned and even encouraged. In many jurisdictions police could raid a home where homosexual acts were believed to be taking place. Homosexuals were persecuted in Nazi Germany as part of its eugenics programs. Only the arts tolerated them; indeed, homosexual persons have contributed disproportionately to the arts.

The main outcome of negative attitudes was to force male homosexual behavior into venues like brothels, gay bars, and public restrooms. Yet despite intolerance in the larger society, such behavior was rife in certain institutions, including the armed forces and private boarding schools.⁶⁹ The term “fag” originally referred to a schoolboy assigned as a personal servant to an older boy; duties might range from running errands to serving as a sex slave. As in ancient Rome, the boys may have gone on to lead heterosexual lives after completing school.

Homosexuality was believed to be a lifestyle choice; people acquired homosexual instincts

deliberately or by the gross neglect of natural law. A recurring theme in Roman Catholicism was that homosexual behavior was a sin of *excess*. Based on a passage in *Romans*, gay men—the principal targets—were not satisfied with erotic activity with women but also lusted after other men.⁷⁰ Ironically, the celibate priesthood and religious orders offered sanctuaries for gay men seeking to avoid questions about why they never married.⁷¹ In consequence, the proportion of homosexuals may have been higher in the church than in the general population.

Female homosexuality was condemned, and the pejorative labels “dyke,” “butch” and “femme” took hold.⁷² But for the most part, lesbians attracted less attention, and they were not forced into places like restrooms. “Spinster companions” were familiar features of the social landscape. Two unmarried women could live together without arousing suspicion; rather society would pity them for “not being able to find husbands.”

Echoing the attitudes of her time, esoteric teacher Alice Bailey condemned “Sodomites and Lesbians.”⁷³ She spoke harshly of homosexuality, using terms like “mental perversion,” “distorted attitude of mind,”⁷⁴ “morbid,” “abnormal development,” “prurient curiosity”;⁷⁵ “unwholesome imagination,” “perverted” and “prostitution.”⁷⁶ Homosexuality was a major issue in “The Problem of Sex.”⁷⁷

Homosexuality, Bailey declared, could result from “A frustrated sex life or a state wherein an unmarried person has had no normal expression of a natural and universal process.” Such a person might, with a measure of assent, develop “homosexual habits or ... those perversions which warp the life of many intelligent people.”⁷⁸ (She did not specify the perversions in question.) Bailey laid much of the blame for homosexuality on a combination of repressive Christian moral doctrine and inherited disease:

The teaching of wrong sexual habits, the example of widespread prostitution (I use this word in connection with men as well as women), the growth of homosexuality ..., the narrow-minded Christian inheritance of a “guilt complex” where sex is concerned,

and the heritage of diseased and over- or under-sexed physical bodies, have brought the race to its present chaotic and unintelligent handling of the important problem [of sex].⁷⁹

Bailey embraced the notion that homosexuality was a matter of excess. Two possible causes were involvement in sex magic “plus a constant insatiable physical and sexual urge”; and imitative of the behavior of others, together with “a powerful physical or sex nature, and a prurient curiosity.”⁸⁰ But the major cause of homosexuality was karma associated with “ancient evil habits”:

Homosexuality is what you call a “left-over” from the sexual excesses of Lemurian times Egos who individualized and incarnated in that vast period of time are the ones who today demonstrate homosexual tendencies. In those days, so urgent was the sexual appetite, the normal processes of human intercourse did not satisfy the insatiable desire of the advanced man of the period. Soul force, flowing in through the processes of individualization, served to stimulate the lowest centers. Hence, forbidden methods were practiced. Those who thus practiced them are today, in great numbers, in incarnation, and the ancient habits are too strong for them.⁸¹

Theosophist John Vorstermans agreed that homosexuality might have karmic underpinnings but suggested an alternative purpose:

It is quite probable that people who are in a relationship are there because of past tendencies, experiences, or the result of karma.... This might be an opportunity for the Souls to learn and dissolve tendencies or unwind a past karmic cause, or it could be that they have chosen to come and work on challenging the social or religious issues of the time.⁸²

Rosicrucian Paschal Randolph offered yet another explanation for homosexuality:

An individual could desire to savor the perceived sexual advantages of the opposite sex without the willingness to accept the responsibilities associated with that opposite

gender. For example, a man in one lifetime may think women have a great advantage in their sexuality [but] does not wish to participate in other aspects of female life that he perceives as undesirable.... This same situation also applies to a woman who covets only certain aspects of a man's sexuality, but again, without its attendant responsibilities.⁸³

As early as 1905, psychologist Sigmund Freud attributed homosexuality to incomplete suppression of the Oedipus complex.⁸⁴ And by the middle of the twentieth century the health sciences began to view it as a physical or mental illness rather than a perversity.

The religious community did not respond immediately, and some denominations have still not done so. But in 1975, the Church of Rome issued an authoritative statement conceding that homosexuality was not always a sinful choice but might be an incurable disease:

A distinction is drawn ... between homosexuals whose tendency comes from a false education, from a lack of normal sexual development, from habit, from bad example, or from other similar causes ... and homosexuals who are definitively such because of some kind of innate instinct or a pathological constitution judged to be incurable.⁸⁵

In either case, homosexual acts remained “intrinsicly disordered.” And “according to the objective moral order, homosexual relations are ... condemned as a serious depravity and even presented as the sad consequence of rejecting God.”⁸⁶

Bailey suggested that “advanced souls” whose homosexuality was inherited from Lemurian excesses might be curable:

They are now far enough advanced upon the evolutionary path so that the cure lies ready at this time—if they choose to employ it. They can, with relative ease, transfer the sex impulse to the throat centre, and thus become creative in the higher sense, employing the energy sensed and circulating in right and constructive ways.⁸⁷

The possibility of a “cure” for homosexuality also underlies the so-called conversion, or reparative, therapies. These methodologies are encouraged by some fundamentalist groups in the belief that “faulty” sexual orientation can be corrected by religious practices (“pray the gay away”), psychoanalysis, aversion therapy, or even brain lobotomy. Some adults enroll in the programs by choice, but teenagers may be forced into them by anxious parents. Some churches insist on conversion therapy as a condition for retaining a minister who they discover is gay.

Conversion therapies are rejected almost universally by health science professionals. A branch of the World Health Organization stated that “services that purport to ‘cure’ people with non-heterosexual sexual orientations ... lack medical justification and represent a serious threat to the health and well-being of affected people.”⁸⁸ One study showed that the “success” rate, based on patient feedback, was on the order of three percent.⁸⁹ The great majority came away with no change in their sexual orientation but with a deepened sense of personal failure, shame and guilt: many expressed suicidal thoughts. In some jurisdictions conversion therapies are now prohibited by law.

Changing Attitudes toward Homosexuality

Important changes in attitudes toward homosexuality came from research in sexology. Alfred Kinsey and his coworkers discovered that a majority of people have both heterosexual and homosexual instincts to some degree. With respect to men, the first group to be studied: “Males do not represent two discrete populations, heterosexual and homosexual The living world is a continuum in each and every one of its aspects.”⁹⁰ Similar results emerged when women were studied later.

The outcome was the famous “Kinsey scale” (0 through 6) on which everybody could be located by appropriate testing. In place of a rigid demarcation, “heterosexual” meant that a person scored low on the scale, perhaps 0 or 1; “homosexual” meant that the person scored

high, perhaps 5 or 6. “Bisexual” persons scored somewhere in the middle of the scale.⁹¹ Homosexual instincts could no longer be projected out onto evil perverts, or even onto the chronically sick; some degree of homoeroticism might be pervasive throughout the population.

Sexual instincts do not necessarily translate into behavior. People anywhere on the heterosexual–homosexual spectrum could choose, or agree, to remain celibate or direct their instincts elsewhere. But could society justifiably insist that a person scoring high on the Kinsey scale has a greater responsibility to do so than someone scoring lower? Should that person be pressured into celibacy, or into an opposite-sex marriage that will almost certainly fail?

In 1973 the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from its official list of mental disorders, and the American Psychological Association quickly endorsed the action.⁹² The latter declared:

Homosexuality per se implies no impairment in judgment, stability, reliability, or general social and vocational capabilities; further, the American Psychological Association urges all mental health professionals to take the lead in removing the stigma of mental illness that has long been associated with homosexual orientations.⁹³

In 1972, the United Church of Christ became the first mainline Christian denomination in the United States to ordain openly gay clergy. And in 2004, Gene Robinson, an openly gay man, was consecrated Episcopal bishop of New Hampshire.⁹⁴ Since then, some other denominations have embraced gay and lesbian clergy, as well as providing for the blessing of same-sex couples. The Church of Rome, the Eastern Orthodox churches, and evangelical fundamentalist churches vigorously oppose both developments, arguing that that are contrary to scripture. Yet certain Roman Catholic leaders are now reaching out to the LGBT community in pastoral contexts that would have been unthinkable even a decade ago.⁹⁵ These various developments may be encouraging, but in a recurring pattern religious institu-

tions have responded to public opinion rather than leading it.

Efforts to decriminalize homosexual behavior have won broad international support. Ninety-nine member countries of the United Nations signed a 2008 General Assembly statement affirming the human rights of LGBT persons and/or a more specific 2011 statement by the U.N. Human Rights Council. Yet fifty-four nations—most from northern Africa and the Middle East—opposed the declarations, and a further forty-four, including the Russian Federation and China, abstained. In 2001 the Netherlands recognized same-sex marriage, and at the time of writing twenty-two other nations have done the same. In 2015, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in favor of marriage equality.⁹⁶

Homosexuality is now widely viewed in terms of same-sex unions or marriages, mutual love, care for their families, and participation in the lives of their communities. As with opposite-sex unions, we have no right to inquire into what forms their intimacy might take. Despite societal pressures, the stability of gay unions is at least comparable with that of straight couples.⁹⁷ Bullying of teenage gays and lesbians persists, but a whole generation of young people is growing up knowing that some of their peers are different from others, in much the same way as they see persons of other ethnicities, handicapped persons, or persons of different mental or physical abilities. Among much else, the legalization of gay marriage has given non-heterosexual young people new hope; since the Supreme Court ruling suicide attempts among gay, lesbian and bisexual adolescents in the U.S. have decreased by fourteen percent.⁹⁸

The observation that a number of animal species exhibit homosexual behavior is sometimes cited to refute assertions that the corresponding human behavior is a “sin against nature.”⁹⁹ Be that as it may, the argument that heterosexual marriage is the only permissible kind because it alone can produce offspring has lost its force. Many straight couples are unable to have children or simply do not plan to raise families; if nothing else they are helping curb

global population growth. Gay couples can adopt children or turn to surrogate mothers, and lesbian couples can have children through adoption or sperm donation. Setting aside issues of prejudice they may face, the children of same-sex couples can fare as well as those in “traditional” families. Indeed, heterosexual unions do not have a universally stellar record where child welfare is concerned.

Attitudes are changing more slowly in the esoteric community. An anonymous writer associated with the School for Esoteric Studies commented: “[W]hile legal and psychiatric frameworks increasingly recognize homosexuality as a legitimate and healthy lifestyle choice, esoteric writings have not kept pace.”¹⁰⁰ One of the few comments to emerge from a modern Rosicrucian order simply cited founder Max Heindel’s teachings of a century or more ago upholding the sanctity of marriage with procreative intent.¹⁰¹ The Masonic orders almost universally exclude gays from membership. The Theosophical Society reportedly excludes gays and lesbians from its Esoteric Section.¹⁰²

Students of Alice Bailey are confronted by Bailey’s teachings, summarized earlier. Gay or lesbian students may experience great shame and guilt, while others believe that Bailey’s position on homosexuality was either misguided or is no longer relevant.

To take issue with authoritative teachings must be approached with caution and humility; Bailey is believed to have served as amanuensis for the Tibetan Master Djwhal Khul. The anonymous writer cited above affirmed the timeless content of the teachings but suggested that points of detail can be driven by current need.¹⁰³ Bailey herself had urged: “The disciple upon whom the Master can most confidently depend is the one who can—in periods of change—preserve that which is good and fundamental while breaking from the past and add to it that which is of immediate service in the present.”¹⁰⁴ A statement attributed directly to the Tibetan Master offered the following advice:

The books that I have written are sent out with no claim for their acceptance. They

may, or may not, be correct, true and useful. It is for you to ascertain their truth by right practice and by the exercise of the intuition.... [I]f the information given raises the aspiration and the will-to-serve from the plane of the emotions to that of the mind ... then they will have served their purpose. If the teaching conveyed calls forth a response from the illumined mind of the worker in the world, and brings a flashing forth of his intuition, then let that teaching be accepted. But not otherwise.¹⁰⁵

The case can be made that esotericism, by its very nature, must be organic. To view any particular body of teachings, no matter how authoritative, as infallible dogma would be to descend to a kind of fundamentalism or scriptural literalism.¹⁰⁶

Bailey’s teachings on homosexuality have become the topic of frequent discussion on social media, blogs, and the like. One faction insists that they reflect a view of homosexuality radically different from today’s.¹⁰⁷ References to prostitution imply that Bailey did not envision, or was not speaking of, committed same-sex unions. A statement by the School for Esoteric Studies noted: “Nowhere in [Bailey’s] quotations is there any recognition of homosexuality as a normal lifestyle or the choice of a same-sex partner as legitimate and in keeping with a spiritual practice.”¹⁰⁸ The statement rejected any assertion that homosexuality “reflects an excessive preoccupation with physical pleasure and sexual urges” or “is a perversion of basic polarities, the balancing of which is a key component of the electrical nature of the universe.”¹⁰⁹

Another faction adopts a more conciliatory position. Paschal Randolph affirmed that “homosexuals feel a loving attachment toward each other. We clearly acknowledge that two men or two women can create a very close relationship that is similar to many good marriages.” But he added: “It is physically impossible for homosexual acts to involve the male–female physical–electromagnetic exchange, and consequently, they are devoid of the physical constructive potentials that lead to Regeneration and Spiritualization.”¹¹⁰

Patrick Chouinard, former faculty member at the Morya Federation, agreed that homosexuality “may not be the ideal sexual orientation” but insisted that it still provides opportunities for spiritual growth. Gays and lesbians have gifts, notably sensitivity, that may provide important opportunities for service.¹¹¹ He added: “sex without love is the problem and sex with love is the solution.”¹¹² Chouinard drew attention to a passage in Bailey’s writing stating that the Masters “have trodden every step of the path of suffering, have undergone every experience, have surmounted every difficulty, and have won out. [... and now express] a love that triumphs over all.”¹¹³ By implication the Masters may have been gay or lesbian in previous lives, but they still reached their present spiritual stature.

Bailey’s assertion that homosexuality is chiefly of karmic origin can be reconciled with medical opinion that it is a genetic condition. It is not a choice made in the current incarnation. Yet the Solar Angel, who orchestrates the incarnational cycle prior to the Fourth Initiation, presumably allows the karma to manifest in that lifetime.¹¹⁴

Karma may predispose an individual of any orientation to an excessive preoccupation with sex. The individual would be urged to raise the sacral energy to the throat centre, or transmute “the process of physical reproduction and of physical creation into that of the creativeness of the artist in some field of creative expression.”¹¹⁵ A heterosexual disciple is not required to suppress the sex instinct; rather, he or she is encouraged to transform it within the framework of a loving relationship and a lifetime dedicated to service. Should not the same privilege be extended to a gay or lesbian disciple?

Whatever the moral standing of homosexuality, nobody can deny that gay and lesbian persons have suffered ostracism, discrimination, persecution, and frequent violence. Dorothy Riddle, chairperson of the School for Esoteric Studies, placed anti-LGBT bias in the context of separateness, which Bailey termed “the great heresy.”¹¹⁶ Referring to Bailey’s comments on hatred and on humanity’s responsi-

bility to bring about needed change, she declared:

Homosexuality challenges us to appreciate wholeness without having to posit the duality of gender.... To bring about right human relations, we must take active initiative and be willing to heal the challenging rift of homophobia. Change on this planet is not the Hierarchy’s job—it is ours. We, Humanity, are the “world savior.”¹¹⁷

“Progressives” in organized religion and the esoteric community are taking more positive attitudes toward homosexuality, at least in part, to keep pace with social realities. But it could be argued that homosexual behavior really is morally wrong and regressive in terms of the evolution of human consciousness. “Conservatives” insist that timeless moral truths are being sacrificed in the name of a false popularism. While supporting Bailey’s teachings, Australian esotericist Leoni Hodgson hoped for greater clarity, as more is learned about the human constitution:

Time will tell whether homosexuality is a natural sexual expression, or whether the teachers of wisdom over the ages are correct. When scientists can study the etheric body, and how our behaviors affect our energies, we will gain a clearer view. By fully embracing homosexuality as we are doing today, the sooner will it find its natural place within the fabric of humanity—whatever or wherever that may be.¹¹⁸

A final consideration is that attitudes toward homosexuality vary enormously from one part of the world to another; what might seem evolutionary in the West might seem dangerously involutory elsewhere. One study showed that 88 percent of Spanish people affirmed that homosexuality should be accepted, whereas 97 percent of people in Jordan and 98 percent in Nigeria said that it could not be tolerated.¹¹⁹

Intersex and Transgender

Intersex persons occupy intermediate positions on the male–female spectrum. Ambiguity in internal or external genitalia is observed at birth in about 0.1 percent of the population.¹²⁰

That number translates into 300,000 people in the United States. Percentages in other countries are probably comparable.

Chromosome or other abnormalities may manifest later in life. An individual may fail to develop, or develop inappropriate, secondary sexual characteristics or reproductive capability; a woman may never menstruate; a man may be incapable of generating sperm. Individuals whose stature, physical ability, facial features, and/or voice pitch are atypical of their predominant sex form part of a larger intersex population. Because many of these cases are never reported precise data are unknown, but estimates place the total number of intersex persons at somewhere between 1 percent and 5 percent of the population.

Roughly one-half of individuals diagnosed as intersex at birth are *hermaphrodites*.¹²¹ They have both ovarian and testicular tissue, which may be separate or may be combined in an *ovotestis*.¹²² In Greek mythology, Hermaphroditus was the son of Aphrodite and Hermes. According to the Roman poet Ovid, Hermaphroditus was a remarkably handsome young man. The water nymph Salmacis, saw him bathing, fell in love with him, and prayed to be united forever. The gods answered her prayer and merged their bodies into one.

In general an intersex person, like most other people, is the product of a single zygote, or fertilized ovum. But in the phenomenon of *chimerism*, the individual has cells from two different zygotes and dual blood types.¹²³ In rare cases the individual may be hermaphroditic. Chimerism, which tends to occur very early in the embryonic development, is thought to result from the absorption of cells from, or even the whole embryo of, a fraternal twin.

Throughout history, intersex persons typically were forced into one or other of the binary sexual categories. Adults discovered to be sexually ambiguous may have been burned as witches. Yet hermaphroditism was recognized in Roman law and again in the seventeenth-century *Institutes of the Lawes of England*.¹²⁴ Some Indian and Native American cultures recognized a “third sex,” or “two-spirit” persons, even according them special honors;

transsexual and homosexual persons were sometimes included. A few jurisdictions now permit children or adults to be registered in some way other than “male” or “female.” Awareness, acceptance, and legal recognition of intersex persons vary enormously among and within nations, even in the West.

For reasons of privacy, many intersex persons conceal their conditions and try to blend in as men or women; others feel comfortable enough to identify themselves as intersex or nonbinary. Depending on the severity of their condition, intersex persons may experience difficulty forming intimate relationships. Many are asexual; others are heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual but are limited in their ability to find partners.

Infants with ambiguous genitalia may undergo surgery soon after birth. Surgery may be necessary if the abnormality blocks an essential bodily function. But parents often request, or consent to, surgery under social pressure to bring a “boy” or “girl” home from the hospital. Older intersex persons may seek elective surgery and/or hormone therapy. Whether performed at birth or later, corrective therapies may not be possible or successful; they may also result in sexual dysphoria.¹²⁵

Transgender persons have changed, or wish to change, their position on the male–female spectrum. An estimated 0.3% of adults in the United States, or roughly one million people, identify themselves as transgender.¹²⁶ Other developed nations may have similar rates. Data for undeveloped countries are scarce and of questionable reliability; one report claimed that Pakistan has 10,400 transgender persons in a population of 274 million.¹²⁷ For reasons to be discussed, actual numbers may be much higher.

The most famous case of transsexuality in antiquity involved the Greek prophet Tiresias, who was transformed by the goddess Hera into a woman for seven years. During that time, reportedly she married and had children. Norse gods were capable of changing gender at will. For example Loki, frequently disguised himself as a woman; and in the form of a white

mare she gave birth to a foal after an encounter with the stallion Svaðilfari.

In the fourth century BCE a married Arabian woman reportedly developed male genitals spontaneously.¹²⁸ The Roman historian Cassius Dio reported that third-century CE Roman Emperor Elagabalus not only dressed as woman, adopted female mannerisms, and wore makeup, but “carried his lewdness to such a point that he asked the physicians to contrive a woman’s vagina in his body by means of an incision, promising them large sums for doing so.”¹²⁹ Elagabalus may have been the first individual to seek sex-reassignment surgery, as we know it today.

More primitive kinds of surgery—consensual or otherwise—to alter sexual anatomy were performed throughout history. Historians now dispute claims by Greek philosopher Hippocrates and Roman historian Marcus Justinus that the Amazon warriors of Thrace cut, or burned, off the right breast to enhance performance with the javelin or bow.¹³⁰ But the castration of males, as a punishment or to render them more useful or dependable, was a common practice. Castrated servants or slaves were used in various capacities by secular rulers as early as the twenty-first century BCE.¹³¹ Eunuchs are mentioned in *Isaiah* 56:4, *Matthew* 19:12, and elsewhere in the Bible. Famously, they served as harem guards in the Ottoman Empire until the nineteenth century.¹³²

Another typically nonconsensual practice was the castration of boys by parents or teachers to prevent voice change in puberty and prepare them for stage or church careers as alto or soprano vocalists. Castrati are believed to have sung in Constantinople as early as the fifth century, and they formed an essential part of the Sistine Chapel choir from the sixteenth century until Pope Pius X banned the practice in 1903.¹³³ Castrati also sang female roles in Baroque operas and dressed as their characters demanded. Otherwise, castrati dressed and behaved, to the extent possible, as men.¹³⁴

Throughout history certain men have worn female clothing, and women men’s clothing. Achilles’ mother dressed him in women’s clothing to hide him from Odysseus who want-

ed him to join the Trojan War. Joan of Arc wore male clothing to suit her combat role and also to protect herself from rape. When charges of heresy were insufficient to warrant the death penalty, she was sentenced in 1431 to be burned on the grounds of crossdressing.¹³⁵ Until the early twentieth century boys often wore dresses until they were “breeched”—an important rite of passage—at ages between three and eight.¹³⁶ Today many women wear male-type clothing because of their occupations, notably military deployments.

People may crossdress because it gives them pleasure or relieves inner tension.¹³⁷ Nineteenth-century French novelist Amandine-Aurore-Lucile Dupin preferred to wear men’s clothing and adopted the pseudonym and persona of “George Sand.” Crossdressing may be a fetish appealing to heterosexual men or women. Or it may provide a way for individuals with sexual dysphoria to experiment with a different identity before embarking on more permanent therapies. Fashion trends have made it easy for girls and women to dress as males; a woman with short hair, wearing army fatigues or bib overalls, attracts little attention.¹³⁸

By contrast, men in the West who dress as females challenge deeply ingrained cultural norms.¹³⁹ Despite disapproval a substantial fraction of the male population is believed to have crossdressed sometime in their lives.¹⁴⁰ Most of those who crossdress on a regular basis do so secretly;¹⁴¹ for them, motivation and rewards are entirely personal. A smaller, but more readily quantifiable, number of men and boys crossdress publicly and want to be treated and/or accepted as female. Their motivation and rewards include others’ reactions. The distinction between secret and public crossdressing supports the realization that sexual identity has two dimensions: how individuals see themselves (self-concept) and how they present themselves to the world.¹⁴²

Many persons with dysphoria simply dress, behave, and play roles corresponding to their sexual identity, concealing their anatomy as best they can. Others seek treatment to make a more complete transition. The first reported

sex-reassignment surgeries were performed in Europe as early as the 1930s.¹⁴³ Since then, plastic surgery and hormone therapies have developed in effectiveness, safety, and accessibility. Demand continues to increase. More than three thousand procedures were performed in the U.S. in 2016, up 19 percent from the year before.¹⁴⁴ Male-to-female surgery may be less complicated and require fewer procedures than female-to-male, but in neither case is erotic capability guaranteed. Nor, according to reliable reports to date, has a transgender woman ever given birth to a child,¹⁴⁵ though surgical technology is advancing so rapidly that this might soon be possible.

Ancillary therapies can help a person adapt to and behave according to his or her new identity.¹⁴⁶ The main challenge is re-assimilation into society. Transsexual persons may be limited in the relationships they can form, may find career opportunities curtailed, encounter rejection by friends and institutions, and/or face a continual risk of violence. Nonetheless, satisfaction rates among persons who undergo surgery are generally high.¹⁴⁷

Public awareness of transsexuality in the West was minimal until high-profile cases received media coverage. Some segments of the population reacted with condemnation,¹⁴⁸ targeting transsexuals in much the same way as they had treated homosexuals—and in many cases confusing the two. But in a few short years, western society has become increasingly accepting, even electing transsexual persons to public office. Again, a whole generation of young people is growing up who have heard of transsexuality, perhaps know someone who has made that transition, and accept it as a possible outcome in the quest to discover who one really is.

Evolving patterns of sexuality and progress toward the equality of the sexes might point to a future state of androgyny. But physical androgyny is unlikely to be attained until the seventh root race. By that time we are unlikely to have dense physical bodies, and some other form of reproduction will be needed to provide forms for incarnating souls.

Argentina and Denmark led the way to giving legal recognition to transgender persons and including the costs of surgery in state-run healthcare programs. In 2014, the Supreme Court of India recognized transsexual persons,

and more sex-reassignment surgeries are performed there than anywhere else in the world.¹⁴⁹ India and Thailand have become medical-tourist destinations with that focus. In Iran, men may accept reassignment surgery to avoid severe penalties for homosexual behavior.

As noted in Part I, sexual dysphoria may begin before puberty or may be delayed into middle age. In the latter case it is unclear whether the condition was previously latent,

or whether a real change occurred in adulthood. Multiple studies have found that, among adults, sexual dysphoria affects substantially more men than women. Prior to adulthood the situation is ambiguous. One study identified dysphoria in roughly equal numbers of boys and girls,¹⁵⁰ while more recent studies suggested that parity exists only among adolescents and that younger boys are more likely to be affected than younger girls.¹⁵¹

Suggestions that children are incapable of enduring identification with the opposite sex are not supported by recent studies: “All this research combines to show that transgender identities in even very young children are surprisingly solid ... contradicting popular beliefs that such feelings are fleeting or that children are simply pretending to be the opposite gender.”¹⁵²

Some parents try to ensure that their children grow up in gender-neutral environments, providing clothes, toys, and activities that allow a child to adopt a sexual identity naturally.

Critics argue that such strategies confuse the child and encourage fetishes, homosexuality or transsexuality. Yet research does not support theories that child dysphoria results significantly or entirely from coaching. On the other hand, failure to acknowledge sexual dysphoria—like repression of homoerotic instincts—can cause great suffering. Adolescents in un-supportive families, or who suffer ostracism or bullying, face high rates of depression and suicide.¹⁵³

Awareness of intersexuality and sexual dysphoria, and the development of related therapies, are too new to have been discussed by the major esoteric teachers. Alice Bailey made a reference to hermaphroditism, which will be cited later in the article. If she knew of the earliest cases of sex-reassignment surgery, she did not mention them; following the perspectives of the time, Bailey may have lumped dysphoria together with homosexuality.

John Vorstermans' or even Paschal Randolph's explanation for homosexuality might also be applicable to transsexuality and intersexuality. Homosexual, transgender and intersex persons may be spending a life in which the soul is making a transition from a sequence of incarnations in one sex to a sequence in the other. The present lifetime may be an experiment, savoring the attributes of the other sex—like crossdressing—and preparing for unambiguous heterosexuality in the next life. Alternatively, incarnation as a homosexual or intersex person, or as a person who experiences and possibly seeks treatment for sexual dysphoria, may simply be an option the Solar Angel has at its disposal as it plans the soul's evolution in an increasingly diverse society.

Intersexuality is not a matter of choice and in itself raises no ethical questions. But choice is involved in elective intersex-corrective therapies, and parents face serious moral issues in demanding or authorizing surgery on intersex children. In the latter case an individual who has never given consent may suffer severe life-altering consequences. Sex-reassignment therapies also raise moral issues.

In the absence of explicit guidance, we can only proceed with wisdom and compassion.

Intersex-corrective or sex-reassignment therapies should be approached with great caution and after careful deliberation. The more advanced disciple should consider how the particular lifetime's purpose could best be served. Soul guidance is available for all who open themselves to higher impressions.

We can only speculate on how the Planetary Hierarchy views these various matters, but we may ask whether the Masters view elective intersex-corrective or sex-reassignment therapies differently or more harshly than in-vitro fertilization, fetal surgery, gene therapy, organ transplants, or brain-activated prosthetics. In multiple areas we are giving the mind and will authority over the dense physical form. Pending new authoritative teachings to the contrary, universal condemnation of all such therapies would be unwise.

Trends in Sex and Gender

Intersexuality has shown that sex is not binary but is a spectrum of possibilities extending from purely male to purely female. Transsexuality showed that one's position on the spectrum is not necessarily fixed. Homosexual persons demonstrated, and western society is becoming aware, that homoerotic attraction need not be disgusting, deviant, and threatening to society but can be expressed in loving family relationships that contribute in unique ways to the larger world.

Both sex and gender are more ambiguous and more fluid than was acknowledged even a few generations ago. Rapid changes are taking place in the ways people view their own—and others'—bodies, capabilities and potential. Once-clear distinctions have become blurred or at least less significant. Wherever people may lie on the male–female spectrum, or the Kinsey scale, they have gained the freedom to express a blend of gender characteristics, to any degree they choose or that supports their life-purpose. Or perhaps the soul exercises that choice for them.

Western women have demanded access to many roles traditionally assigned to, or reserved for, men; and on a smaller scale, men have demonstrated a readiness to play tradi-

tionally female roles. In opposite-sex marriages the man no longer necessarily plays the dominant/protective role, and the woman the receptive/submissive role. The only area of human interaction that remains sex-specific is reproduction. Among same-sex couples, one partner may assume a more masculine role and the other a more feminine role, but that kind of gender polarity does not seem to be universal; often the partners in a gay union seem equally male, and those in a lesbian union equally female. In homosexual, transgender and intersex persons a confluence of the male and female, the masculine and feminine, occurs within the same individual.

In response to these changes some people sense empowerment, new opportunities, liberation and joy; others feel pain and confusion. In their quest for equality women have suffered discrimination and harassment, while some men fear emasculation in a female-dominated world. Still others believe that the changes run contrary to timeless moral values and will have serious negative consequences for society and the race.

Western society has affirmed new openness toward homosexuality, but members of the religious and esoteric communities struggle to reconcile it with traditional moral norms. Intersexuality and transsexuality complicate the interpretation of scriptural passages like “male and female created he them.” Esotericists are confronted with the possibility that content, presented with considerable emphasis, in one of the primary sources of teachings might no longer be relevant. No authoritative esoteric teachings have yet provided guidance on transsexuality, though some major religious denominations have condemned it.

Human gender still correlates to a substantial degree with sex and may continue to do so for as long as sexual differentiation survives; but the correlation has weakened, primarily due to the empowerment of women. Asymmetry between women currently seeking traditionally male roles and men seeking female roles indicates that masculinity is the preferred gender. Yet a curious disconnect exists in this regard between gender and sex. Sexual dysphoria af-

fects more men than women (except possibly among adolescents), suggesting a preference for the female form. Today’s ideal may be the strong, effective woman.

Important questions are whether the correlation between sex and gender will weaken further and whether the preference for masculinity will continue. If femininity becomes more greatly valued in our culture, women may reclaim traditionally feminine characteristics, and men might become more willing to express them.

Evolutionary processes typically involve periods of rapid change separated by longer interludes of relative stability in which changes are absorbed and new norms established. A plateau in the evolution of sex and gender may begin before the end of the present century. It would permit wisdom to prevail and discordant attitudes to be reconciled. By then the Planetary Hierarchy may have revealed new teachings to clarify contentious issues.

Our primary goal here is to predict the evolutionary trajectory over the next 100 years or so—not an easy matter at a time of rapid change. But valuable insights can be sought in what we have been told of the long-term evolution of the human lifeway. Short-term outcomes have to be accommodated into, and ultimately reconciled with, long-term trends. Importantly, we should recall that “[w]ithin the vaster processes of the Plan ... as it includes the entire planetary evolution, there is, for the tiny unit, man, no free will.... He has no choice and no escape” from Logoic Purpose.¹⁵⁴ If humanity makes faulty judgments or takes unwise steps, karma will intervene to correct them. Rebellious humanity can delay the unfoldment of Divine Will, but ultimately nothing can oppose or impede it.

Evolution of Sex and Reproduction

Little is known of the first two root races of the present, fourth, round (or world period), except that proto-humanity did not yet have dense physical bodies but existed in a gaseous or liquid state.¹⁵⁵ During the third, Lemurian, root race, our bodies became increasing solid and we passed through successive stages of evolu-

tion, leading eventually to separation of the sexes. Helena Blavatsky explained:

From being previously asexual, Humanity became distinctly hermaphrodite or bisexual; and finally the man-bearing eggs began to give birth, gradually and almost imperceptibly in their evolutionary development, first, to Beings in which one sex predominated over the other, and, finally, to distinct men and women.¹⁵⁶

Procreation took corresponding forms, from “exudation of moisture or vital fluid, the drops of which coalescing formed an oviform ball,” to a more familiar oviparous mode, and finally to the mammalian mode we know today.¹⁵⁷ Separation of the sexes, in an environment in which consciousness was strongly focused on the physical nature, evidently was greeted with much enthusiasm and led to the Lemurian excesses Bailey mentioned.

The human lifewave passed its point of maximum densification in the fourth, Atlantean, root race and is now on its path of return. We understand that human *consciousness* is now uniformly at a fifth root-race level,¹⁵⁸ but some souls choose to incarnate in fourth, or even third, root-race bodies. Fifth, Aryan, root-race bodies range from the first (Indian) subrace to the fifth (Nordic) subrace. Advance members of the sixth subrace are now making their appearance, and many more will do so over the next several centuries. Eventually, the sixth subrace will give birth to the sixth *root race*. A seventh root race will bring the present round to an end.

Sexual reproduction has served humanity during the latter part of the third root race, the whole of the fourth root race, and the first five subraces of the fifth root race. As we move forward on the path of return our bodies will become more rarified, and changes in sexual patterns can be expected to occur. As noted, fertility rates—and possibly even the frequency of sexual activity—are already declining. Nevertheless, the basic processes of insemination, pregnancy and childbearing are likely to continue through the sixth root race. In the seventh root race reproduction may be replaced by alternative modes, which may or

may not resemble those of the early root races. Forms serve the needs of the indwelling spirit, and as consciousness expands, old forms are discarded and new ones take their place.

Even in the sixth root race, human bodies will be less dense than they are now. Our focus will be to shift from the dense physical to the etheric and mental levels. Also, the psychological context in which sexual reproduction takes place is likely to evolve, Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), founder of Anthroposophy, looked forward to a time when “the inner nature of the human being which transcends sex, and will ... enable and beautify the sexual and live in that element which is beyond it.”¹⁵⁹ Alice Bailey anticipated “a time when procreation will “be the result of thought impulses and not desire impulses.”¹⁶⁰

Bailey predicted that the institutions of marriage will continue “during the next one thousand years,” and “the basic motive—that of love between two people—will remain unchanged or more properly emphasized and selflessly expressed.”¹⁶¹ But she anticipated that the “attitude of parents towards their children will alter dramatically” and procreation “will be concerned primarily with the time, opportunity and correctness of producing the forms which incarnating souls will assume.”¹⁶² Elsewhere, she made the enigmatic comment:

A mysterious change in the attitude of men and women to the sex question, marriage and the work of procreation will result from the development of etheric vision, and the consequent recognition of the devas. This change will be based on the realization of the true nature of matter, or of the mother aspect, and of the effect of the Sun upon substance.¹⁶³

Unfortunately she added: “This cannot be enlarged upon here,” leaving us to ponder what role the devas might play in sex and marriage.¹⁶⁴

Blurring of lines between male and female, masculine and feminine, could suggest an approach—or return—to some kind of androgyny or hermaphroditism. Bailey pointed to “a distant racial and evolutionary achievement, when

the world cycle will have been run and the two separated halves [the male and the female] will again be merged in their essential unity.”¹⁶⁵

Bailey commented that individuals have been sprinkled throughout history “as a guarantee” of the future state of hermaphroditism. Such an individual, she explained, “truly combines within himself the two sexes, and is,—physiologically and mentally—entirely ‘self-satisfying, self-sustaining and self-propagating’.”¹⁶⁶ These forerunners combine “in themselves both aspects of the sex life.” The cases, she continued, are “of real interest to the medical profession and a subject of deep pity and commiseration to the humanitarian and the understanding psychologist.”¹⁶⁷ She identified the individuals as homosexuals, but her description applies more accurately to intersex persons. “Self-sustaining” and “self-propagating” are problematic, though the annals of medicine describe one case in which a live child was born to a chimeric mother who had not been inseminated.¹⁶⁸

Intersex persons provide the closest approximation we have at this time to a future state of androgyny. Transsexuality can be viewed as “serial androgyny”: the experience of both maleness and femaleness in a single incarnation. Since gays and lesbians have only recently emerged from the shadows, we do not know whether homosexuality is more prevalent now than in the past. In any event homosexuality does not provide a particularly clear example of androgyny.

Perhaps, with some justification, we can envision a larger group of forerunners than Bailey discussed. But there is no evidence of a near-term approach to physical androgyny on a racial scale. Instead, we may look for signs of a different kind of androgyny: at levels above the physical and beyond the individual.

Evolution of Gender

Not surprisingly the fifth root race has an inherent masculine quality since five is an odd number. That quality was amplified during the fifth subrace, and male dominance may have reached its peak therein. We now stand at the dawn of the sixth subrace. Major changes have

already occurred in our understanding of gender and in the ways it expresses itself in human affairs. There is every reason to believe that the changes will continue to play out over the next several decades, even centuries.

The rays cycle into and out of manifestation over periods of centuries, superimposing gender influences on those already associated with the races and subraces. Rays II, III, V, VI and VII are currently in manifestation. Ray VI is rapidly passing into pralaya, Ray VII is on the ascendancy, and we understand that Ray IV will begin manifesting in 2025. No change will occur in the gender balance: three masculine and two feminine. But the advent of Ray IV may have important implications because of its ability to create synthesis from pairs of opposites.

Buddhist teacher Dorje Jinpa commented on the “realization of synthesis” and the “shift of emphasis from the individual to the group.” Evidence for the impulse of synthesis, he remarked, is provided “in the inherent unity of gender. This is working itself out as the uplifting of women to a place of equality with men.”¹⁶⁹

Nearly ninety years ago Helena Roerich predicted a greatly expanded role for women in society: “The approaching great epoch is closely connected with the ascendancy of woman. As in the best days of humanity, the future epoch will again offer woman her rightful place alongside her eternal fellow traveler and co-worker, man.”¹⁷⁰ Roerich insisted that “the full rights of women be strengthened.”¹⁷¹ She added: “Women’s movements ... should be understood not as an assertion of supremacy, but as the establishment of justice.”¹⁷²

During the early decades of their struggle women had little choice but to acquire and display masculine characteristics. Roerich foresaw a time when this imitative impulse would no longer be necessary:

[T]he majority of Western women—as with all beginners—start with imitation; whereas, it is in original self-expression that real beauty and harmony are found. Would we like to see man losing the beauty of man-

hood? ... But we hope that this first step will soon be outlived and that woman will deepen her knowledge of Mother-Nature and will find true, original ways of self-expression.¹⁷³

Women had to compete for recognition and authority not only with men but also with one another. Competitiveness has strong Piscean associations and can be expected to decline in strength as we move into the Aquarian Age, which emphasizes group rather than individual consciousness. Other masculine characteristics that have become exaggerated by both women and men may also find a new equilibrium.

We may be unaware how deeply ingrained inherited gender assumptions have become in the human psyche. Women need to embrace their new opportunities with confidence. Men need to reflect on their mutual relationships and their attitudes toward women. Power struggles often develop when men come together, but the human kingdom should have outgrown the need for an annual rutting contest. Any residual attitudes of superiority, paternalism, or disrespect for women must be curbed. Sex and gender should neither separate us nor force us into detrimental contact.

Ascendancy of the masculine Ray VII should reassure men that we are not headed toward a matriarchy. Jack Myers painted a bleak picture of male anxiety in “a new age of female dominance.” But he ended on the optimistic note: “We can ... rely on the genetic stability of women to guide us into the future, collaboratively and cooperatively with men, to achieve a more stable and healthier gender balance.”¹⁷⁴ Men and women can work together for the collective good, and collaboration can only strengthen as group consciousness takes hold.

An important precedent for group consciousness lies in the team approach to problem solving, which has been utilized in forward-thinking businesses and industries since the 1970s. The basic concept is that the potential of a group working collaboratively is greater than the sum of the individual contributions. Excellence is valued as a collective asset, and ownership of achievement, or failure, is shared. Each team member strives to accom-

plish the shared goals according to his or her talents. Leaders with special abilities may emerge to direct particular projects, but in ideal team organizations hierarchical structures are not allowed to become permanent.

A profound cultural change is taking place in western society. Maturation of the “women’s movement” is already producing a more balanced and feminine-affirming ethos. Women are finding that they can contribute, not in spite of being, but *because*, they are women. And men do not necessarily feel emasculated if women take leadership roles. Although men and women can both display a blend of masculine and feminine characteristics, the sexes may still have complementary abilities, insights and concerns. Equality does not necessarily mean *interchangeability*. Theosophist Katherine Tingley “encouraged the belief that even though man and woman shared an essential equality, they were also uniquely different and should play to their strengths.”¹⁷⁵

Roerich insisted that women’s empowerment would have far-reaching consequences: “One should not think that this will benefit only women; it will promote world equilibrium, and thus is necessary for harmonious evolution.”¹⁷⁶ Indeed she placed considerable responsibility for the future on women’s shoulders and linked that responsibility to the mission of the World Mother:

In the hands of woman lies the salvation of humanity and of our planet. Woman must realize her significance, the great mission of the Mother of the World; she should be prepared to take responsibility for the destiny of humanity. Mother, the life-giver, has every right to direct the destiny of her children.¹⁷⁷

Roerich predicted: “[W]ith the beginning of the Epoch of the Mother of the World woman ... will create in collaboration with man a new and better world.”¹⁷⁸ At the cosmic level the World Mother is taking over responsibility from the masculine aspect of Deity, and women should answer her call: “The Mother of the World appears as a symbol of the feminine Origin in the new epoch, and the masculine Origin voluntarily returns the treasure of the

World to the feminine [N]ow it is necessary to show the aspect of spiritual perfection of woman.”¹⁷⁹ Roerich also made the evocative comment that “woman flamingly uplifts man.”¹⁸⁰

Jinpa lent his support to the notion that women’s empowerment has Hierarchical support: “Many people, I suspect, would agree that the women’s movement is divinely inspired.”¹⁸¹ In the future women may play a leading role in the expansion of human consciousness. We have already noted the predominance of female esoteric teachers, women are playing increasingly important roles in higher education, and female clergy are making inroads in all but the most conservative religious institutions. The achievement of adeptship in female bodies, and the appearance of Masters in female bodies, seems inevitable in the decades and centuries ahead.

Feminine characteristics will likely be valued more highly in the sixth subrace, because six is an even number; they may be valued still more in the sixth root race, which is not only even-numbered but will be governed by Ray II, an even-numbered ray.¹⁸²

Gender lies on a continuum between sets of archetypal masculine and feminine polarities. The bracketing polarities are eternal, universal principles that will survive even when the physical world passes into pralaya. At some time in the future souls—and monads—will manifest gender in ways other than through male or female bodies. We saw in Part I that horizontal polarities to which we can reasonably attach the term “gender” exist at all levels short of the unmanifest Godhead.

The Group Androgyne

A scenario is unfolding in which men and women of all sexual orientations work together as equals to solve major issues of the time and take humanity to the next level of consciousness. Insights into the nature and significance of this scenario can be gained by appeal to alchemical symbolism.

Alchemy is the science and art of transformation, and central to its processes is the creative tension between pairs of opposites. The

opposites may be depicted as two chemical elements, but to the initiate they mean the elements’ higher correspondences. The “Great Work” may be the transmutation of base metals into gold, or production of the Philosopher’s Stone, which can perform both transmutation and healing; more importantly it is the transformation of the alchemist’s consciousness and the attainment of adeptship.

In the alchemical literature, resolution of the polarities is symbolized by the wedding and *conjunctio* of the King and Queen. The product of the *conjunctio* might be the birth of a child, or it might be creation of the adult Divine Androgyne. The *conjunctio*, to quote one writer, “creates something bigger and more powerful than the individual parts—the perfect integration of male and female energies—the hermaphrodite.”¹⁸³ Another writer explained:

In alchemy the Great Work is producing the perfect androgyne, or mankind restored to wholeness. The primordial Two-in-One represented the Great Work or the ultimate goal of alchemy: to achieve balance in oneness and triumph over the fragmental illusion of the world.... The part-man/part-woman also signified the end of restlessness because the alchemist has finally accomplished the Great Work.¹⁸⁴

In the present context the King and Queen represent the archetypal masculine and feminine principles on all levels, from the Divine to the human; the higher the level the more potent the creative tension. The masculine and feminine principles converge like laser beams on humanity, building to a climax of Light, Love and Life.

Just as partners in the procreative act do not annihilate each other but strengthen their mutual love and bring forth new life, the gender polarities are not annihilated but are transformed and give birth to “something bigger and more powerful than the individual parts.” The *conjunctio* represents “the perfect integration of male and female energies,” and its creation is a new humanity, a new world. We are reminded of Bailey’s remark about “the true ‘marriage in the Heavens’ of which mystical Christianity speaks and the result of this fusion

will be the manifestation of the fifth kingdom in nature, the kingdom of God.”¹⁸⁵

This alchemical transformation is not a single event, like the transmutation of a metal, but an unfolding evolutionary process. Dorje Jinpa commented:

The principles of alchemy are inherent in the process of evolution itself. Each major turn of the great evolutionary spiral is accompanied by the natural transmutation of the old, no longer needed forms, into those that correspond with the new evolutionary impulse.... Humanity is a part of world evolution, now stands at a major transition point between the old world and the new.¹⁸⁶

Moreover, the product of the conjunctio is not a child, or even the Divine Androgyne, but a *Group Androgyne*. The Group Androgyne can be conceptualized as a thoughtform of global dimensions, residing on the mental plane but drawing upon energies of the buddhic level and extending in influence down to the etheric subplanes. The Androgyne’s intent is to use the creative power of gender to effect a large-scale transformation of human consciousness: to propel humanity toward the Fifth Kingdom. The Group Androgyne will manifest in specific areas of human activity; at the same time, men and women will both draw upon and contribute to the Androgyne’s power.

Creation of the Group Androgyne clearly has the backing of the Masters and may well have been a Hierarchical initiative. It began with women’s empowerment and access to influential positions in society, standing side-by-side with their male counterparts. Development of the Androgyne may continue for centuries, but it can be expected to reach a measure of fruition after 2025, when the harmonizing effects of Ray IV start to be felt.

The Group Androgyne manifests in the most general way whenever men and women, playing complementary but equally valued roles, work together for the common good. More specifically, opportunities exist for large and small groups of men and women to come together purposely, with focused creative and transformative intent. The archetypal nuclear

family provides an apt prototype, particularly, when the parents’ procreative activity is concerned “with the time, opportunity and correctness of producing the forms which incarnating souls will assume.”

Yet in a host of other contexts familial connections are unnecessary, and might even be a hindrance. Groups of people from all backgrounds and walks of life can work collaboratively and creatively to address local, national and/or global issues—near- and long-term. Such groups will serve as manifestations or expressions of, or as cells within, the Group Androgyne. They certainly qualify, in Bailey’s words, as “focal points of energy in the human family through which certain energies can flow into the entire race of men.”¹⁸⁷

Cells in the Androgyne will work within the framework of the New Group of World Servers, contributing to the collective effort to establish right human relations and raise human consciousness. “In the coming new cycle the emphasis will be upon group work and activity, upon group initiation and group approach to the Center of Life.”¹⁸⁸ As with all service groups, participants in the gender-based groups must set aside all traces of glamour, jealousy, resentment, ambition and competitiveness. To appeal again to alchemical symbolism, the elements must be purified of all contaminants before they can be transmuted into gold.

The alchemical transformation will not consist of the replacement of one set of gender characteristics by another; it will involve the enrichment and revitalization of both. Collaboration between the sexes will be the keynote. Roerich urged: the “subtlety and refinement of women’s nature must be understood, so that they may achieve ... the desired balance.” “The era of the Mother of the World,” she added, “is not a return of the age of Amazons. A far greater, loftier, and more refined task is before us.”¹⁸⁹

The groups’ success will depend on establishing a harmonious balance between polarities like assertiveness and receptiveness, courage and gentleness, the paternal and the maternal, and the rational and the intuitive. The key ingredient will be the juxtaposition of masculine and feminine energies. Bearing in mind Roe-

rich's call to action, in the name of the World Mother, we can expect the feminine energies of compassion, cooperation, beauty, and so forth, to be conspicuous. To exploit the audible spectrum a choir needs soprano and alto sections as well as tenor and bass sections.¹⁹⁰ Given the weakening correlation between gender and sex, the polar energies can be expressed by either men or women and by persons of any sexual orientation, but the native masculinity and femininity of men and women will be particularly important.

Collaboration between men and women, and the sharing of insights and perspectives, will be especially helpful in such areas as economic justice, education, healthcare, hunger and malnutrition, the refugee crisis, human trafficking, world peace, and a sustainable environment. The sciences, including the health sciences, offer important opportunities. Roerich encouraged women to participate in scientific research, commenting that "the fundamental nature of things will attract women, and they will leave their mark in new discoveries."¹⁹¹ "I do not speak of all women," she added, "but of those exceptional ones who manifest the subtlest energy. Their abilities glorify the age of the Mother of the World, and relate closely to the realm of healing."¹⁹²

Groups could work to disseminate esoteric teachings and to urge their own members, and the larger population, forward on the paths of discipleship and initiation. An opportunity to balance the masculine and feminine lies in the parallel paths of occultism and mysticism. The western esoteric system was built upon ritual. Will-based, it evolved in a male-dominated society with a male God. By contrast the heart-based mystical path evolved in South Asia where both male and female deities were acknowledged.¹⁹³ Significantly, meditative practices gained mass popularity in the West at the same time as the empowerment of women. Looking to the future, the Group Androgyne may manifest in a convergence of the paths. We recall Bailey's comment that occult meditation—which already implies convergence—"puts a man into an attitude of equilibrium, neither utterly receptive and negative [that is,

passive], nor utterly positive, but at the point of balance."¹⁹⁴

The exploitation of gender polarity in occult ritual has a worthy precedent. While most Masonic orders restrict their rituals to men,¹⁹⁵ the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn admitted women and men on equal terms—while assigning them roles appropriate to their sex. The Order's leaders recognized the potency of a synthesis of male and female energies. The Golden Dawn and its derivative organizations have had a major impact on modern esotericism.

In some religious denominations women are performing rituals like the Eucharist. But their roles are imitative of traditional male roles; interchangeability has been stressed over complementarity. In the Anglican and Lutheran churches female clergy insist that they are "priests," rather than "priestesses." This may have been a necessary expedient, but Christianity is missing an opportunity to exploit the *differences* between women and men. "Women," Roerich commented, manifest "the highest degree of devotion. The greatest truths are revealed by her. Reality confirms this. Woman can ensure that new knowledge is properly applied."¹⁹⁶ We do not have to agree with Charles Leadbeater, that "this particular type of magic [the Eucharist] is not adapted to work through the feminine organism,"¹⁹⁷ to envision rituals in which priests and priestesses play distinct but complementary roles. Such was the practice in the ancient mystery schools and it has been preserved in modern nature religions. In mainstream western religion great progress has been made in theological studies of the masculine and the feminine aspects of God. Those efforts should now be accompanied by corresponding innovations in liturgy.

Conclusions

Sexual reproduction plays a major role in human kingdom—as it does in the animal kingdom—in facilitating the exchange of genes to accelerate the evolution of physical forms. Social arrangements of various kinds emerged to support reproductive activity, including the institution of marriage.

“Male/female,” “masculine/feminine,” and “heterosexual/homosexual” remain meaningful as abstract polarities, but real people lie on spectra bracketed by pairs of opposites. Gender is becoming uncoupled from sex, sexual activity from reproduction. We have earned new freedom in the selection of gender characteristics, enabling us to develop personalities and play roles that might hitherto have been denied to us. Reproduction is restricted to heterosexual unions, but men and women of all sexual orientations can contribute creatively when the energy of the sacral chakra is raised to the throat chakra.

Erosion of the correlation between sex and gender has been most conspicuous in women’s acquisition of archetypal masculine characteristics. Currently masculinity is the preferred gender, but this preference may change as we progress into the Aquarian Age, as the Fourth Ray begins to manifest, and as the sixth sub-race and root race make their appearance. Feminine characteristics seem destined to be more highly valued in the decades and centuries ahead.

Intersexuality, transsexuality and homosexuality have been discussed at some length because of controversy within the esoteric community as well as in the larger society. In some parts of the world homosexual behavior is considered abhorrent. Arguments against and for the morality of same-sex unions have been presented to help readers make informed judgments—recognizing that “morality” has different meanings in different constituencies.

Evolving patterns of sexuality and progress toward equality of the sexes might point to a future state of androgyny. But physical androgyny is unlikely to be attained until the seventh root race. By that time we are unlikely to have dense physical bodies, and some other form of reproduction will be needed to provide forms for incarnating souls.

Alchemical symbolism offers powerful insights into the creative tension between the masculine and the feminine archetypes. Con-junctio between the King and Queen is not only self-transformative but can produce an androgyne—in this case the Group Androgyne.

The Group Androgyne, which is already gathering strength, can be envisioned as a global thoughtform built by men and women giving expression to the creative power of gender polarity and working together for the common good. Opportunities exist for groups of men and women to collaborate with focused intent to solve the outstanding problems of our time. Collectively, the groups can bring about a large-scale elevation of consciousness and propel humanity toward the Fifth Kingdom.

¹ John F. Nash, “A Study of Gender, Part I: Carl G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious* (New York: Moffat, Yard), 1917.

² *Genesis* 1:7. All biblical citations are from the King James Bible.

³ *Genesis* 3:17-19.

⁴ *Genesis* 3:16. Blame fell primarily on Eve, who ate the apple first. But God’s injunction to refrain from eating of the Tree of Knowledge was given to Adam (*Genesis* 2:17) before she was created. Eve can only have learned of the injunction from Adam!

⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, 350 BCE, book 1, §1254b, 13-14.

⁶ *I Corinthians* 11:8-9.

⁷ *Ibid.* 15:34-35.

⁸ *Exodus* 20:17.

⁹ *I Kings* 11:3.

¹⁰ See for example Nancy Tuana, *The Less Noble Sex: Scientific, Religious, and Philosophical Conceptions of Women’s Nature* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana Univ. Press, 1993), 56.

¹¹ Stephen Howarth, *The Knights Templar* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1982), 54. The rule urged knights, in particular, to “flee from women’s kisses.”

¹² The medieval European law *droit du seigneur* (“the lord’s right”), or *jus primae noctis* (“right of the first night”), gave a nobleman sexual access to every new bride in his jurisdiction, prior to the husband’s consummation of the marriage. But historians are unsure how often, if ever, the right was exercised. Sex between upper-class males and female servants continued into the 20th century. If the servant became pregnant she was usually dismissed, and if she carried the child to term she might be unemployable.

¹³ Jefferson and Sally Hemings,” Thomas Jefferson Foundation, January 2000.

- ¹⁵ DNA studies have shown that the average African-American person is 17 percent white. The percentage varies by region: highest where slaves were a small minority, lower where slaves heavily outnumbered white owners. Source: “How Black is Black America?” <http://blackdemographics.com/geography/african-american-dna/> (Last accessed Dec. 27, 2017).
- ¹⁶ Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions,” Convention to Discuss the Social, Civil, and Religious Condition and Rights of Woman,” Seneca Falls, New York, July 19-20, 1848.
- ¹⁷ Others serve as titular heads of state, including Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom and Queen Margrethe II of Denmark. Julie Payette and Patsy Reddy serve as Governors General of Canada and New Zealand, respectively.
- ¹⁸ Initially women were “hidden” in the tax departments of major accounting firms. Another ten years went by before women were allowed to interact with clients on audit or consulting teams. Breaking through the glass ceiling to senior positions was even more difficult. In 2015, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants found that just 19 percent of partners and principals in CPA firms were women. That number is still “a big improvement over the scant 1% of people at that level who were women in 1989.” Anne Fisher, “How Women Can Reach the Top in Accounting,” *Fortune*, Sept. 12, 2015.
- ¹⁹ The future queen served as a mechanic and ambulance driver, attaining the rank of Junior Commander.
- ²⁰ Barbara J. Meade, et al., “Mission Critical,” National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, March, 2013.
- ²¹ Christian churches customarily have based their exclusion of women on the grounds that Christ chose only men to be his disciples; they overlook the inconvenient fact that he only chose Jews!
- ²² The denomination did not recognize her ministry, and she became a Unitarian.
- ²³ Clandestine ordinations produced some Roman Catholic female priests and even a few bishops; in turn the bishops ordained new generations of women bishops and priests. But women clergy are not recognized by ecclesiastical authorities and they minister outside the official church framework.
- ²⁴ “Europe’s female Imams Challenge Muslim Patriarchy—and Fight Islamophobia,” *Christian Science Monitor*: <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2017/0719/Europe-s-female-imams-challenge-Muslim-patriarchy-and-fight-Islamophobia?cmpid=FB> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
- ²⁵ Helena I. Roerich, letter, March 1, 1929. http://www.agniyoga.org/ay_en/Letters-of-Helena-Roerich-I.php (Last accessed July 29, 2017).
- ²⁶ Helena I. Roerich, letter, Aug. 9, 1937. http://agniyoga.org/ay_en/Letters-of-Helena-Roerich-II.php (Last accessed Nov. 16, 2017).
- ²⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (New York: Lucis, 1925), 758.
- ²⁸ Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (New York: Perennial Books, 1999), 6.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I (New York: Lucis, 1936), 261.
- ³¹ Ibid., 261-262. Presumably the “needed changes” are related to the increasing mental interest.
- ³² Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 416. Bailey explained: “The Moon chain was a chain wherein a systemic failure was to be seen.... The progress of evolution on the moon was abruptly disturbed and arrested by the timely interference of the solar Logos.” Ibid.
- ³³ Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, 167 CE.
- ³⁴ Torkom Saraydarian, *Sex, Family, and the Woman in Society*, 2/e (Cave Creek, AZ: TSG Publishing Foundation, 1999), 13.
- ³⁵ Dion Fortune, *The Esoteric Philosophy of Love and Marriage* (London: W. Rider & Son, 1924), 47.
- ³⁶ Osho (Rajneesh), *Life’s Mysteries: An Introduction to the Teachings of Osho* (New Delhi, Penguin Books India, 1995), 50. Rajneesh was deported from the U.S. after some of his followers were charged with a biological attack during a local election campaign. Whether Rajneesh himself was implicated remains unclear.
- ³⁷ Dakpo Tashi Namgyal, *Mahamudra: The Moonlight—Quintessence of Mind and Meditation*, (trans; Lobsang P. Lhalungpa), 2/e (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications; 2006), 443.

38 “Tantra Failed for Two Reasons.” <https://omeditation.com/2010/03/16/tantra-failed-for-two-reasons-osho/> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).

39 The author is indebted to two reviewers for sharing their insights into Tantra.

40 According to ecclesiastical historian Eusebius of Caesarea, church father Origen of Alexandria (185–254) castrated himself.

41 Helena P. Blavatsy, *The Key to Theosophy* (London: Theosophical Publ. Co., 1889), 262.

42 *1 Corinthians 7:1-2*. Roman Catholicism is the only major Christian denomination that continues to insist on celibate clergy. Virtually all denominations with religious orders require celibacy for monks and nuns.

43 Interestingly, Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and segments of Anglicanism and Lutheranism regard matrimony as a sacrament, but do not attach similar status to the taking of monastic vows. Rome’s assertion that all sacraments were instituted by Christ receives little scriptural support in the case of matrimony.

44 Alice A. Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis, 1957), 699.

45 A study commissioned by Univision Communications found that 78 percent of women worldwide disagreed with the ban. A separate study by the Guttmacher Institute, published in April 2011, showed that 87 percent of American Catholic women of childbearing age currently used contraception and 98 percent had done so at some time during their lives. Source: <https://www.guttmacher.org/article/2012/02/guttmacher-statistic-catholic-womens-contraceptive-use> (Last accessed Dec. 30, 2017).

46 Source: International Society for Sexual Medicine, <http://www.issm.info/sexual-health-qa/what-is-the-normal-frequency-of-sex/> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017). For the first time in history, fewer than one-half of American women in that age bracket are now married.

47 Source: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. One study showed that only 27 percent of Americans disapproved of cohabitation before marriage.

48 The former appears frequently in modern wedding vows. The latter is from *Matthew 19:6*.

49 Divorce rate can be measured in multiple ways. These data refer to the ratio of divorces

to marriages in a given year. “Divorces and Crude Divorce Rates” (PDF), United Nations Statistical Division, 2011 (the most recent year for which comprehensive data are available). Another study showed that 70 percent of marriages in Belgium end in divorce.

50 Sources: Kinsey Institute, Indiana University; and General Social Survey, National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago. For a discussion of the trends and their social implications see Esther Perel, *State of Affairs: Rethinking Infidelity* (San Francisco: Harper, 2017).

51 Recent data show that the age at which the average American man first becomes a father has increased from 27 to 31.

52 Source: <http://www.healthline.com/health/mens-health/sex-drive#stereotypes2> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).

53 Source: <https://www.rt.com/news/377342-sexless-japanese-marriages-study/> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).

54 See for example Stacy T. Lindau, et al., “A Study of Sexuality and Health among Older Adults in the United States,” *New England Journal of Medicine* (August 23, 2007), 762–774.

55 “World Population Prospects,” United Nations Population Division Data, revision 2017.

56 Ibid.

57 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs estimates from 2015.

58 Census Bureau data from 2015 reported that 50.2 percent of babies born in the United States were of ethnicities other than “non-Hispanic white.” This statistic should be treated with caution because of difficulties in classifying the offspring of mixed-racial parents, but “minorities” in the U.S. are expected to become a majority before the mid-21st century.

59 Some expansion may be occurring in remnants of the fourth root race. The third root race is dying out.

60 Alice Bailey reported that there are 60 billion human monads: *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 579.

61 Gary J. Gates, “How Many People are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender?” The Williams Institute, April 1011. Notwithstanding the wording, the article’s title and use of the acronym “LGBT” suggests that transgender persons are included. Available

- data suggest that the transgender population is about 0.3 percent, or roughly one-tenth of the 3.5 percent.
- 62 Ancient History Sourcebook: “The code of the Assura,” c.1075 BCE, Fordham Univ. <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/1075assyriancode.asp> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
- 63 Roman law permitted such activity so long as the younger man was initially of lower social status.
- 64 Quoted in Bernadette J. Brooten, *Love Between Women: Early Christian Responses to Female Homoeroticism* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1996), 23.
- 65 Quoted in John Boswell, *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe* (New York, Vintage, 1995), 291. Philip and Bartholomew were two of Jesus’ disciples. Serge (or Sergius) and Bacchus were 4th-century Roman soldiers who died for their faith. Whether they were in fact same-sex couples is uncertain.
- 66 Allan A. Tulchin, “Same-Sex Couples Creating Households in Old Regime France: The Uses of the ‘Affrèment’,” *Journal of Modern History* (Sept. 2007), 613-647.
- 67 “Buggery” and “sodomy” normally are taken to be synonymous, but in British English the former is sometimes intended to include bestiality.
- 68 Philosopher William James and sociologist Edward Westermarck made those observations in 1908. See for example Gregory M. Herek, “Hating gays: an overview of scientific studies.” <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/assault/roots/overview.html> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
- 69 Winston Churchill famously declared that the traditions of the Royal Navy were “rum, sodomy, and the lash.”
- 70 “God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another” (*Romans* 1:26-27). The “excess theory” of homosexuality was promoted—along with the extreme moral evil of homosexual desires or behavior—at the Roman Catholic high school the author attended.
- 71 See the discussion in James Martin, *Building a Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community can enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion, and Sensitivity* (San Francisco: Harper, 2017), 59-66.
- 72 The stereotype “femme,” or “lipstick lesbian,” was attached to a homosexual woman considered to exaggerate her femininity—and particularly to the sexual partner of a “butch.” Some originally pejorative terms like “dyke” and “queer” have been embraced by segments of the LGBT community.
- 73 Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Healing* (New York: Lucis, 1953), 63.
- 74 Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 278.
- 75 Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 62-63.
- 76 Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology* (New York: Lucis, 1951), 235-236.
- 77 Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 268ff.
- 78 Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 562.
- 79 Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 235-236.
- 80 Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 63.
- 81 *Ibid.*, 62. Bailey also stated that syphilis had its origins in Lemurian sexual abuse: *Ibid.*, 58.
- 82 John Vorstermans, “What is the TS view on homosexuality?” *TheoSophia New Zealand* (Sept. 2015). At the time of writing, Vorstermans was National President of the New Zealand Theosophical Society.
- 83 Paschal B. Randolph, “The sacredness of sex: the one flesh union,” *Fraternitas Rosae Crucis*, 2011? <http://www.soul.org/teachings/sex> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
- 84 Herek, “Hating Gays: An Overview of Scientific Studies.”
- 85 *Persona Humana: Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics*, Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Dec. 29, 1975.
- 86 *Ibid.* *Romans* 1:24-27; *1 Corinthians* 6:10; and *1 Timothy* 1:10 were cited to support the contention that homosexual activity amounted to a rejection of God.
- 87 Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 62-63.
- 88 “Therapies to change sexual orientation lack medical justification and threaten health,” Pan American Health Organization, Washington, DC, May 2012.
- 89 Ariel Shidlo & Michael Schroeder, “Changing Sexual Orientation: a Consumers’ Report,” *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* (vol. 33, no. 3, 2002), 249-259.
- 90 Alfred Kinsey, et al., *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1948), 639, 656. The complementary work: *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*, was published in 1953.

⁹¹ The scale was modified later to categorize asexual individuals as “x.”
⁹² Minutes, annual meeting of the Council of Representatives, American Psychological Association, 1974. Reproduced in *The American Psychologist* (vol. 30, 1975), 620–651.
⁹³ Ibid.
⁹⁴ Bishop Robinson wore a bulletproof vest during his consecration ceremony after receiving numerous death threats. A significant portion of the Episcopal Church seceded to join other denominations, including the conservative Anglican Church of North America.
⁹⁵ James Martin quoted a sensitive statement by the Bishop of St Petersburg, Florida, following the 2017 mass shooting at an Orlando nightclub. *Building a Bridge*, 63-64. Also, when Pope Francis was asked at a 2016 press conference how he would counsel a gay man, he famously answered: “If a person is gay and seeks out the Lord and is willing, who am I to judge that person?”
⁹⁶ United States Supreme Court, Obergefell vs. Hodges, June 26, 2015. Specifically, the court ruled that state-level bans on same-sex marriage are unconstitutional. Widespread opposition to the ruling persists, along with efforts to reverse it.
⁹⁷ Theresa E DiDonato, “Are Same-Sex or Heterosexual Relationships More Stable?” *Psychology Today*, (Oct. 11, 2017).
⁹⁸ Julia Raifman, “Same-Sex Marriage Legalization Linked to Reduction in Suicide Attempts among High School Students,” Johns Hopkins Univ., Bloomberg School of Public Health, Feb. 2017.
<https://www.jhsph.edu/news/news-releases/2017/same-sex-marriage-legalization-linked-to-reduction-in-suicide-attempts-among-high-school-students.html> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
⁹⁹ One could argue that animal homosexuality supports the “excess” theory of homosexuality; also that what might be natural in the animal kingdom is not necessarily natural in the higher, human kingdom.
¹⁰⁰ (A Student), “Homosexuality and Ageless Wisdom Teachings Questioning and Re-Interpreting.”
<http://www.esotericstudies.net/Topics/Homosexuality.Questioning.article.pdf> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).

¹⁰¹ Source: Rosicrucian Fellowship,
<http://www.rosicrucian.com/zineen/pamen054.htm> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
¹⁰² Source:
https://www.reddit.com/r/Theosophy/comments/3071xb/homosexuals_are_still_excluded_from_the_es_of_the/ (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
¹⁰³ (A Student), “Homosexuality and Ageless Wisdom Teachings.”
¹⁰⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. 1 (New York: Lucis, 1944), 681.
¹⁰⁵ “Extract from a Statement by the Tibetan,” included as a foreword in all the books Alice Bailey attributed to the Tibetan Master.
¹⁰⁶ See for example Patrick Chouinard, “The infallibility of DK Regarding Homosexuality,” *The Wisdom Journal* (February 28, 2013).
¹⁰⁷ Similarly, many Christians assert that Paul’s condemnation of homosexuality (*Romans* 1:26–27, *1 Corinthians* 6:9–10, *1 Timothy* 1:9–10) pertained to a Roman culture of promiscuity and pederasty.
¹⁰⁸ “Understanding Homosexuality,” School for Esoteric Studies.
<http://www.esotericstudies.net/Topic-homosexuality.html> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
¹⁰⁹ Ibid.
¹¹⁰ Paschal B. Randolph, “The Sacredness of Sex: the One Flesh Union,” *Fraternitas Rosae Crucis*, 2011? Capitalization in original.
<http://www.soul.org/teachings/sex> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
¹¹¹ Patrick Chouinard, (untitled), *The Wisdom Journal* (February 28, 2013).
¹¹² Ibid.
¹¹³ Alice A. Bailey, *Initiation, Human & Solar* (New York: Lucis, 1922), 24.
¹¹⁴ For a summary of trans-Himalayan teachings on the Solar Angel and its work see John F. Nash, “The Solar Angel,” *The Beacon* (March/April 2001), 7-14.
¹¹⁵ Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 289.
¹¹⁶ See for example Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. 1, 16.
¹¹⁷ Dorothy I. Riddle, “Homosexuality and ageless wisdom teachings bridging to right human relations.”
<http://www.esotericstudies.net/Topics/Homosexuality.Bridging.article.pdf> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
¹¹⁸ Leoni Hodgson, “Thoughts from Djwhal Khul on homosexuality,” Nov. 2017. Online:

- <http://www.brisbanegoodwill.com/esoteric-philosophy/thoughts-from-djwhal-khul-on-homosexuality/> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017). Hodgson's comment on the etheric body may be a reference to Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 559
- 119 "The Global Divide on Homosexuality," Pew Research Center.
<http://www.pewglobal.org/2013/06/04/the-global-divide-on-homosexuality/> (Last accessed Oct. 13, 2017). The vast differences cannot be attributed solely to religion. Spain is predominantly Christian, Jordan is predominantly Muslim, but Nigeria is almost equally split between Christians and Muslims.
- 120 "How common is intersex?" Intersex Society of North America.
<http://www.isna.org/faq/frequency> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
- 121 Hermaphroditism is common in the vegetable and animal kingdoms.
- 122 "Hermaphroditism," *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Online:
<https://www.britannica.com/science/hermaphroditism> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
- 123 B. A. Van Dijk, et al., "Blood Group Chimerism in Human Multiple Births is not Rare." *American Journal of Medical Genetics* (vol. 61, no. 3, 1996), 264–268.
- 124 The *Institutes* were a series of legal treatises written by Sir Edward Coke and published between 1628 and 1644. Widely recognized as part of the canon of common law, they have been cited in over 70 cases decided by the U. S. Supreme Court.
- 125 For example, a boy whose small penis was amputated and who is being raised as a girl, is a strong candidate for dysphoria.
- 126 Gates, "How Many People are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender?"
- 127 "Over 10,000 transgender people in Pakistan: Census," *The Indian Express*, Aug. 2017.
<http://indianexpress.com/article/pakistan/over-10000-transgender-people-in-pakistan-census-4814450/> (Last accessed Dec. 21, 2017).
- 128 Brooten, *Love Between Women*, 277-278.
- 129 Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, vol. 80, §16.
http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Tetxs/Cassius_Dio/80*.html#79-16 (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
- 130 In Greek mythology Amazons were said to be the daughters of Ares and Hamonia. Several historians of antiquity describe tribes of female warriors in various part of the Middle East and North Africa, and these were termed "Amazons." Little reliable information exists about their practices, but art from the period does not confirm the claims of mastectomy.
- 131 Kazuya Maekawa, "Animal and Human Castration in Sumer, Part II: Human Castration in the Ur III Period," (*Journal of the Research Institute for Humanistic Studies*, 1980), 1-56.
- 132 Allegedly the Coptic Orthodox Church in Ethiopia participated extensively in the slave trade of eunuchs to the Ottomans. See Henry G. Spooner, *The American Journal of Urology and Sexology* (vol. 15, 1919/2011), 522.
- 133 Recordings of the last known Sistine Chapel castrato, Alessandro Moreschi (1858–1922); have been preserved. Some men retain an alto or soprano vocal range naturally, and the timbre of their voices is noticeably different from women's.
- 134 Not all castrated boys succeeded in the church or on the stage but spent unfulfilled lives as mutilated human beings. Some of the successful castrati were reported to be great lovers, but this claim is disputed.
- 135 The law did not provide for the death penalty for a first offense of heresy. Joan became a French national heroine, but she was not canonized until 1920.
- 136 The present author's father was photographed wearing a dress when he was about four years old
- 137 Crossdressing, viewed as deviant or pathological behavior, used to be called *transvestism*
- 138 Crossdressers, in the present context, should be distinguished from actors who play opposite-sex roles, and from drag queens/kings who are more likely to be homosexual than sexual-dysphoric.
- 139 Social norms were not always so rigid. Men in the upper echelons of 17th- and 18th-century society paid great attention to clothing fashions, elaborate hair styling, and use of perfume. Today, the few approved displays of "femaleness" include shaving and the use of scented after-shave lotion and deodorant.
- 140 Estimates range from 5 percent to 50 percent.
- 141 Crossdressers may conceal the practice from their families and never venture outside the home. Or they may wear women's underwear under conventional male attire.
- 142 In one system of classification, the way individuals present themselves to the world is categorized as "gender expression." See "The

- Genderbread Person.”
<http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2015/03/the-genderbread-person-v3/#sthash.p5BFrQRg.dpbs> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
- 143 Two cases were reported in Germany in 1930 and '31. The story of one of the individuals, Lili Elbe, provided the theme of the motion picture *The Danish Girl* (2015). The first reported surgery in the United States was in 1966.
- 144 Of the total for 2016, 1759 were male-to-female procedures, and 1497 were female-to-male procedures Source: American Society of Plastic Surgeons, 2016. Because female-to-male transition normally requires multiple procedures, the relative number of patients may be skewed even more toward males-to-females
- 145 Transgender men have sometimes birthed children, indicating the incomplete removal of female reproductive organs.
- 146 Physical therapy may help transsexual persons acquire the stance, gait and gestures of their new identity. Voice therapy may help acquire the speech and even the singing voice of the new identity.
- 147 One study of male-to-female patients reported that 90 percent of respondents were “satisfied” or “very satisfied.” Jochen Hess, et al., “Satisfaction with male-to-female gender reassignment surgery,” (*Deutsches Ärzteblatt*, Nov. 2014).
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4261554/> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
- 148 The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, a national coalition of American evangelical leaders, affirmed that “those born with a physical disorder of sex development are created in the image of God and ... are acknowledged by Jesus in his words about ‘eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb.’” It also affirmed that “it is sinful to approve of homosexual immorality or transgenderism [sic] and that such approval constitutes an essential departure from Christian faithfulness and witness.” *The Nashville Statement*, articles 6, 10, August 2017.
- 149 Source: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-27031180> (Last accessed Aug. 30, 2017). India reportedly has about two million transgender people, out of a population of roughly one billion.
- 150 M. Landen et al., “Prevalence, incidence and sex ratio of transsexualism,” *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, (vol. 93, no. 4, 1996), 221–223.
- 151 Mohammed A Memon, et al., “Gender dysphoria,” June 2, 2017.
<http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/2200534-overview#a5> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
- 152 Kristina R. Olson, “Where sex and gender collide,” *Scientific American* (Sept. 2017), 45–49.
- 153 Forty-one percent of persons with sexual dysphoria had attempted suicide, compared with 1.6 percent of the general population. Jaime M. Grant et al., *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*. Washington: National Center for Transgender Equality and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2011.
- 154 Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. II (New York: Lucis, 1942), 29.
- 155 The rounds, root races, and subraces are discussed at length in the trans-Himalayan teachings. For a concise summary of the relevant teachings see John F. Nash, *The Soul and Its Destiny* (Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2004), 51–55, 70–77.
- 156 Helena P. Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. II (Los Angeles: Theosophical Univ. Press, 1888), 132. Capitalization in original.
- 157 Ibid. Blavatsky described the oviparous stage thus: “The emanations that came out of their bodies during the seasons of procreation were ovulatory; the small spheroidal nuclei developing into a large soft, egg-like vehicle, gradually hardened, when, after a period of gestation, it broke and the young human animal issued from it unaided, as the fowls do in our race” (166). Annie W. Besant and Charles W. Leadbeater painted a somewhat more detailed picture in *Man: Whence, How and Wither*, Adyar India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1913, 100–102. Fossilized remains of what appear to be egg-laying hominids have been discovered in Nazca, Peru. See for example: <https://www.gaia.com/video/update-4-smaller-bodies-revealed?fullplayer-feature> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
- 158 Mary Bailey, *A Learning Experience* (New York: Lucis, 1990), 593–594.
- 159 Rudolf Steiner, “Women, Sexuality and Society,” lecture, Hamburg, Germany, Nov. 17, 1906.

- 160 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 559.
- 161 Alice A. Bailey, *Education in the New Age* (New York: Lucis, 1954), 139.
- 162 Ibid., 139.
- 163 Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 475.
- 164 We know from Geoffrey Hodson's work of the role played by devas during pregnancy.
- 165 Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology*, vol. I, 277-278.
- 166 Ibid., 278.
- 167 Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 63-64.
- 168 The child had facial deformities, a learning disability, and behavioral problems; also, sex reversal occurred before the child was one year old. Lisa Strain, et al., "A Human Parthenogenetic Chimera," (*Nature*, 1995). https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lisa_Turnbull2/publication/15649461_A_human_parthenogenetic-chimera/links/00b7d526f777293ea7000000/A-human-parthenogenetic-chimera.pdf (Last accessed Nov. 17, 2017).
- 169 Dorje Jinpa, *A Synthesis of Alchemy: An Esoteric Enquiry into the Secrets of Hermetic Philosophy* (Talent, OR: Pentarba Public., 2/e, 2016), 106.
- 170 Roerich, letter, March 1, 1929.
- 171 Helena I. Roerich, *Supermundane* (New York: Agni Yoga Society, 1938), §38.
- 172 Ibid.
- 173 Roerich, letter, March 1, 1929.
- 174 Jack Myers, *The Future of Men: Masculinity in the Twenty-First Century* (San Francisco, Inkshares, 2016), 278.
- 175 "The Women of Lomaland: Women and Their Roles at the Point Loma Theosophical Community." http://www.csumhistory.org/snove001/?page_id=21. (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
- 176 Roerich, *Supermundane*, §38.
- 177 Roerich, letter, March 1, 1929.
- 178 Roerich, letter, Aug. 9, 1937.
- 179 Helena I. Roerich, *Leaves of Morya's Garden: Illumination*, vol. 2 (New York: Agni Yoga Society, 1925), §150.
- 180 Helena I. Roerich, *Fiery World*, vol. III (New York: Agni Yoga Society, 1935), §241
- 181 Jinpa, *A Synthesis of Alchemy*, 106.
- 182 Bailey, *Esoteric Healing*, 63-64.
- 183 Commentary on the *Rosarium Philosophorum*. <http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/exhibns/month/april2009.html> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
- 184 "Androgyny: The Alchemist's Great Work." <http://www.symbolisms.net/androgyny.html> (Last accessed Sept. 30, 2017).
- 185 Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. 1, 32. Bailey envisioned a "vertical" marriage among unequal partners, but the same comment can be applied to a marriage of equals.
- 186 Jinpa, *A Synthesis of Alchemy*, 106.
- 187 Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age*, vol. 1, 35. Emphasis removed.
- 188 Alice A. Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations* (New York: Lucis, 1960), 137.
- 189 Roerich, *Supermundane*, §458.
- 190 This analogy is interesting insofar as the soprano and alto sections have never been reserved exclusively for women. Also women may sing tenor lines, and a few sing bass lines. Female tenors and basses have been termed *contralto profundo* and *oktavistka*, respectively. Source: <https://www.contraltocorner.com/blog/female-tenor-and-female-bass-or-contralto-profondo-and-oktavistka> (Last accessed Dec. 31, 2017).
- 191 Roerich, *Supermundane*, §458.
- 192 Ibid.
- 193 This is not to say that contemplative practices were neglected in the West, and ritual practices in the East. But the emphasis in the respective esoteric traditions was as stated.
- 194 Alice A. Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation* (New York: Lucis, 1920), 10.
- 195 The exception is Co-Masonry, in which Annie Besant and other Theosophists were prominent members.
- 196 Roerich, *Supermundane*, §458.
- 197 Charles W. Leadbeater, *The Science of the Sacraments* (Berkeley, CA: Apocryphile Press, 1920/2000), 291, 349-350. Women priests now celebrate the Eucharist in the Anglican Communion and in major branches of the Lutheran World Federation.