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From: obedientfemme@aol.com (ObedientFemme)  
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What is a Man?

By Roberta Angela Dee

Have you ever looked at the definition for 'man' in any given dictionary? The following definition for 'man' is taken from the Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary:

Main Entry: [1] man

Pronunciation: 'man, in compounds "man or m&n

Function: noun

Inflected Form(s): plural men /'men, in compounds "men or m&n/

Etymology: Middle English, from Old English man, mon human being, male human; akin to Old High German man human being, Sanskrit manu

Date: before 12th century

1 a (1): an individual human; especially: an adult male human (2): a man belonging to a particular category (as by birth, residence, membership, or occupation); usually used in combination <councilman> (3): HUSBAND (4): LOVER

b: the human race: MANKIND c: a bipedal primate mammal (Homo sapiens) that is anatomically related to the great apes but distinguished especially by notable development of the brain with a resultant capacity for articulate speech and abstract reasoning, is usually considered to form a variable number of freely interbreeding races, and is the sole representative of a natural family

(Hominidae); broadly : any living or extinct member of this family d (1): one possessing in high degree the qualities considered distinctive of manhood (2):

obsolete: the quality or state of being manly: MANLINESS e: FELLOW, CHAP f: - used interjectionally to express intensity of feeling <man, what a game>

2a: INDIVIDUAL, PERSON b: the individual who can fulfill or who has been chosen to fulfill one's requirements <she's your man>

3a: a feudal tenant: VASSAL b: an adult male servant c: plural: the working

force as distinguished from the employer and usually the management  
 4a: one of the distinctive objects moved by each player in various board games  
 b: one of the players on a team  
 5: an alumnus of or student at a college or university  
 6: Christian Science: the compound idea of infinite Spirit: the spiritual image and likeness of God: the full representation of Mind  
 7: often capitalized : POLICE <when I heard the siren, I knew it was the Man -Amer. Speech>  
 8: often capitalized: the white establishment: white society <surprise that any black... should take on so about The Man - Peter Goldman>  
 9: one extremely fond of or devoted to something specified <strictly a vanilla ice cream man>  
 - man ♦ less /'man-l&s/ adjective  
 - man ♦ like /-'lɪk/ adjective  
 - as one man : with the agreement and consent of all: UNANIMOUSLY  
 - one's own man: free from interference or control: INDEPENDENT  
 - to a man: without exception

There's been a case on Court TV that clearly addresses our social and cultural definition of what it means to be a man.

Is sex in the mind or the body? That was the question in a Florida court as the custody battle between a transsexual man and his wife of 10 years got under way.

Michael Kantaras is the focus of this question. Mr. Kantaras who was born in 1959 as Margo Kantaras took male hormones and had his breasts, uterus, and ovaries removed to become a man. He leaves it to the court to decide whether sexual identity is a mental, or a physical construct.

"Sex is between your ears, not between your legs," testified Walter Bocking, an expert on transsexualism, on Michael Kantaras' behalf.

Kantaras' wife, Linda Kantaras, claims that because her husband was born as a woman, their 1989 marriage is void under a 1998 Florida law banning same-sex marriages. At stake here is custody of the couple's two children.

Linda Kantaras, 33, brought to the marriage a 1-month-old son, Matthew, whom Michael Kantaras adopted that year. Then, in 1992, Linda gave birth to a daughter, Irina, using sperm from Michael's brother, Thomas.

It was Michael Kantaras, however, who in 1998 filed in Pasco County, Florida, for divorce and custody of the couple's two children, now ages 9 and 12, after allegedly becoming involved with another woman.

The bench trial, the first of its kind in Florida, will provide Circuit Court Judge Gerard O'Brien the opportunity to set precedent on a number of issues, beginning with an age-old question: What makes a man a man?

Reference: [http://www.courttv.com/trials/kantaras/012202\\_ctv.html](http://www.courttv.com/trials/kantaras/012202_ctv.html)

I ask each of you to now consider the politics associated with gender. Also consider the economic associations. Think of the billions of dollars insurance companies have saved by not having to ensure what they deem to be "same-sex" marriages, and what they deem to be "cosmetic" surgeries for transsexual or transgendered men and women.

The religious right has aligned itself with Linda Kantaras. Should that surprise anyone?

After all, if Michael Kantaras wins, it will undermine all the sexual rhetoric these fundamentalists have been preaching for hundreds of years. It will mean that society will have emerged from the Dark Centuries, and accepted the fact that we need to access people not solely on the basis of their anatomy, but also on the basis of what lies in their hearts, minds and souls.

One reason that religious fundamentalists fight for prayer in schools is because it helps integrate their religious philosophy into the judicial and legislative systems. Following prayer in school, there would undoubtedly be a series of laws directed against gays, as well as laws directed against individuals who are either transgendered or transsexual. Cross dressers, who are pretty much tolerated by police, would probably be subjected to criminal penalties. If you think sexual and gender freedom is oppressed now, imagine a day when TG Forum or TG Woman would be deemed pornographic and outlawed.

This case is going to have an effect on everyone within the gender community. We had better start making decisions as to how we are labeled and how those labels are defined. If we do not, we run the risk of becoming an ambiguous and socially obscure community void of any meaningful civil rights. Or, as my West Indian grandmother would say, "It's time to shit or get off the pot."

For thousands of years, we have based gender on an individual's anatomy. Today, we know that gender is not defined by one's anatomy but by one's self-perception. Gender, in other words, is a byproduct of the mind, not the body. So, defining gender on the basis of anatomy is logically and scientifically wrong. The challenge is to make it legally wrong as well. The time is way past due for the law to catch up with the science.

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