

"Men, have fear of your Lord, who created you from a single soul. From that soul He created its mate, and through them He bestrewed the earth with countless men and women."

THE KORAN. "Women"
(Dawood 1985:366)

21...MALE AND FEMALE, CREATED HE THEM...

CHAPTER CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION	249
MORTAL BODIES	250
PRE-EXISTENT GENDER	251
ONTOGENY RECAPITULATES PHYLOGENY	252
GENERATION OF GENDER	253
GENDER ASSIGNMENT?	254
MORTAL GENDER PROBLEMS	255
POST-MORTAL & POST-RESURRECTION IMPLICATIONS	256
ETERNAL PROCREATION	257
CONCLUSION	259

INTRODUCTION:

When considering the vast range of information available about the nature of the mortal phase of our existence, it is difficult, at least at first glance, to identify any particular aspect of it that we would say somehow epitomizes it.^{1} SMD describes mortality as a, more often "the", time to work out one's salvation, which is true. However, we suspect that that statement is actually repeated to us during each phase of our existence because that is the purpose of the complex, lengthy metamorphosis we are working our way through. We expect to hear that same statement made to us after we leave this world and go to spirit prison or paradise, and we imagine that we heard it repeatedly in the PE. So that purpose, working out one's salvation, is not unique to mortality. We must find something else, then, to point to as being the most characteristic test or purpose.

Stop here for a moment. We're obviously making an assumption that has not been specifically stated, so let's hear it now. The assumption is that since there are three different testing phases for our spirits, each must therefore be somehow different from each other, else, there would be no reason to have three. Were there one supervening purpose that was equally emphasized and tested in each phase, then simply prolonging one of the three would allow sufficient time and opportunity for the full test to be administered. We are assuming, then, that there are unique tests and unique characteristics of each of the three phases that differentiate each from the others. We also note that there are obviously many similarities between these three phases as well, because the POS is the thread on which they are all strung. Indeed, it may be that there are more similarities than dissimilarities, because the underlying purpose of testing, application of the priesthood, etc. is omnipresent. But, once more, there must be something particular to each phase that apparently can only be achieved in some manner in that phase. We say 'apparently' because we obviously don't 'know' this to be true, but we see no other reason to be subjected to three separate phases, particularly in light of the Parsimony Principle which would argue against an exuberant proliferation of phases just to have more phases. That is why we are trying to dig out something about mortality that differentiates it from the other two testing phases.

¹ One obviously may question whether or not it is meaningful to try to find the major test of mortality. We personally find it to be a meaningful question because such information reflects significantly on the nature of our experiences here and the tests we confront. It is comforting to understand that some of the greatest difficulties we face were intentionally formulated to create pain, uncertainty and challenges. That doesn't make them easier, but it provides a perspective that is helpful when wrestling with the problems.

MORTAL BODIES:

We believe that one of the keys to the answer to this question involves the fact that during mortality we are provided "physical" bodies which "clothe" our spirit bodies.^{2} We suggest this because a "physical body" is ours only during the mortal phase of the metamorphosis. There is no evidence, that we are aware of, to indicate that we had some sort of body, other than our spirit body, in the PE, nor is there any evidence to suggest that we will have another non-spirit body, during post-mortality. That is one of the major functions of death, to strip us of our mortal body.

On this basis, then, whatever the hallmark of mortality is, we believe it involves the mortal body. There are also modifications in our spirit and in the degree of knowledge and information we have which are obviously characteristics of mortality as well, ones which differ systematically from those of PE and PM. But these factors must be constrained by the requirements and conditions of the peculiar test of mortality, namely that of handling mortal bodies.

The second key that we believe is crucial to the hallmark of mortality is the fact that only during mortality are we allowed to procreate. Procreation, as far as revealed to us, is not practiced in the PE or PM. The only other items of mortality that might be construed as being unique to it might be the temple ordinances. However, they are not experienced by all mortals, so we discount them as hallmarks of mortality.^{3} We obviously assume that the hallmark of mortality must be one that all mortals are confronted with.

Our conclusion, then, is that the cardinal purpose of this particular phase is to test our ability to handle our mortal bodies by having us participate in sexuality and concomitant family relationships.^{4} One might accuse me of being over-simplistic, because there are so many other tests inflicted on us, many of them being profoundly difficult and nearly as significant. We would have to plead guilty to such a charge. But in spite of this reduction of the human condition to an equation with only three major variables, we nonetheless believe that sexuality and familyhood are the sentinel tests of mortality, the foundation of

2

3 Indeed, I take a totally different view of the temple ordinances, as is documented in 16. PRE-MORTAL BIRTH ORDINANCES. SMD seems to impute a uniquely mortal status to them, but I believe that what we see here during mortality is one of two things. It is either merely the mortal segment of a longer endowment that spans all testing phases, or it is actually the second iteration of an endowment that is applied to our spirits in all three testing phases.

4 Note that I am assuming here that the Lord intended that sexual relationships only be developed between opposite sexed adults who acquiesce to being marriage partners and to raising families, assuming that they are physiologically able to do so.

When considering unmarried people, it may appear that this generalization has exceptions. However, we do not believe that is so. We recognize that not all individuals will marry, and that some married people will be unable to have children. In spite of these irregularities in the pattern, all individuals must, nonetheless, deal with their own sexuality and the profoundly powerful, troubling challenges presented thereby.

this testing phase.

These variables are the things that primarily differentiate this phase from the one that preceded it and from the one that will follow it. The laws of heaven and principles of righteousness, as noted in Section I are operant in all phases and states, so they do not generally constrain the conditions of mortality. For example, honesty is required in all three phases. But sexuality, marriage and families are uniquely constituted in mortality. Let's look at some of the ramifications and implications of these three factors that pervade our mortal lives^{5}.

PRE-EXISTENT GENDER:

There isn't a scrap of information about the pre-existence in the LDS canon that even refers tangentially to gender^{6} while we were there. True, there are gender-specific pronouns in the scriptures about the PE, but they are probably there due to the mechanics of mortal languages and preconceptions about the PE.^{7} In fact, we suggest that the recent preoccupation of certain mortal groups with genderless language and unisex culture possibly represents a type of atavism. These penchants could actually be superficial expressions of a deeper, subconscious, innate sense of our neutral nature in the preexistence, a sort of longing for a happier, simpler -we think- time that didn't have such incredibly complex challenges we face now, ranging from deviant sexual behaviors through the fundamentally unsettling relationship of the sexes^{8}.

⁵ One might be tempted to argue that sexuality isn't an issue for the full duration of mortality by suggesting that pre-pubescent children appear to be unaware of it, unaffected by it. However, we would disagree with such a position. Sexual roles are taught to, and learned by, us from babyhood onward by the behaviors of our parents and caregivers. Those unconsciously acquired values and patterns then affect, profoundly, our self-image and gender identity and behaviors as we enter and move through puberty into biological, emotional and social maturity.

It is no accident that the experiment was set up this way by the Father. He set things up so that we would unconsciously accumulate a lot of baggage during our long childhood so that as adults we would then have something significant to deal internally with. In this regard, note that we as individuals learn a behavior that is generally a negative trait, within the first hour of our life. We need something. So we cry. Someone responds and cares for our need. This way we learn that crying earns a reward. Thereby, we quickly learn how to manipulate others around us.

Then we spend the rest of our lives trying to unlearn that poor behavior. This is not accidental.

⁶ That is not strictly accurate. There are implied references to males as in the Abraham Convocation.

⁷ However, we wonder whether those references may not be required as much by the semantics and syntax of human language as by intended reference to "maleness". By this we refer to the fact that human words in some languages have inherent gender, regardless of the actual gender of the item named. For example, in English sailing ships are grammatically feminine, although in reality they are inanimate so are neuter. So perhaps the references to gender in the PE are this type of gender. Heresy to most of you, I am sure.

Such gender issues probably pose a challenge to any translator who believes as I do here. If the translator believes that there are only neuters in the PE, then s/he must be troubled to be shackled in some languages with required gender, eg. English. Perhaps languages with neuter pronouns, eg. German, could capture this fact, but then, there would probably be considerable chagrin expressed by those who don't hold this view, who believe that we are male and female up there. But more below.

⁸ This comment probably grates severely on SMD nerves because it is wholly unattested. Also note a most disturbing byproduct of this perception. If this conception of our pre-existent nature is true, then the suggestions we hear that unisex is a concept originated by Satan would be false. Most unsatisfactory for some.

We believe that sexuality, marriage and family-related^{9} issues were not part of the experimental maze of that phase. When we were ready to come down, we were ejected from the PE^{10}, and embedded in a mortal body and then allowed to solo. Down here, gender+related baggage is what it's all about.

ONTOGENY RECAPITULATES PHYLOGENY:

Given this perception that sexuality isn't/wasn't part of the PE experience, while it is during mortality, we suggest a parallel between the three phases of our metamorphosis and the three general stages of life on earth: childhood, adolescence, and adulthood^{11}.

In mortal childhood, there is only a rudimentary awareness of gender, although sexual identity, roles and behaviors are being subtly and profoundly shaped in various ways. In this respect, i.e. unresponsive to gender and related issues, the PE is comparable to a childhood of our spirits, the first phase of the metamorphosis.

Adolescence is the time during mortality that we discover that we ARE people, that we have agency and minds and can figure things out for ourselves. It is also the time when our biological clocks tick into puberty. Physiological, intellectual and emotional changes of profoundly significant sorts take place. This is the point in mortality when gender and behaviors related thereto become distressingly powerful, and intrude upon our awareness. It is the stage where we are first forced to exercise our agency in selecting how we will handle gender and sexuality. The patterns and values and thoughts learned in childhood express themselves at this point. Our adolescent stage is analogous to the mortal phase of the metamorphosis because mortality IS the point where we are forced to wrestle with gender issues.

⁹ However, we do believe that there was nonetheless some sort of structure in the PE society, one that enabled individuals to coordinate activities, sense organization, engage in purposeful plans, etc. However, these structures may be more like a kibbutz than a family, since there would be no genetic/natural kinship system to bond us into nuclear and extended families as on earth.

¹⁰ Since we take this position *vis-a-vis* the PE, we ought to indicate what we believe the cardinal tests of that phase were. Our simplistic view is that the major test of the PE, as already noted above, was to simply learn to exercise and control free agency. It must have been a shocking thing to wake up as an agent with freedoms previously unknown, saddled with the responsibility to exercise this agency safely, meaning safely to both ourselves as well as surrounding society. And it must have been difficult. Remember your first experience throwing darts at a dart board when you were 5 or 6. The darts probably landed on the wall as often as they hit the target, and bull's eyes were accidental. That type of experience suggests how we exercised agency, though as mortals it doesn't seem so difficult. But it was.

For mortals, the challenge in using agency is in choosing the "right" choice from a set, not the mechanical process of detecting the options, the consequences of each, evaluating them and assigning value and then selecting one. The latter is what we believe was being learned in the PE. The War Decision was the major test of this type and an additional dimension of that decision becomes apparent when viewing it from this perspective. Not only was the nature of the choice important, the fact that we could even make choices was a monumental accomplishment for us who had not had to pilot our agency into such muddy waters before.

¹¹ The famous -though now generally discredited- dictum of embryology, "Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny." (as in Romer's *THE VERTEBRATE BODY*, p.119), which describes, in a limited sense, the developmental sequence mortal bodies go through, is analogous, also in a limited way, to the developmental sequence of the metamorphosis itself.

Finally, in mortal adulthood, we reap the results of our childhood and adolescent behaviors. The intensity of the developmental changes we experienced in adolescence dissipates and our interest turns to quieter, more philosophical matters. We compare this phase to post-mortality where we will live lives based on the choices and experiences of the PE and mortality. We believe, then, that the three phases of the metamorphosis are basically larger dimensioned analogues of the three general stages of mortal life^{12}.

GENERATION OF GENDER:

To return to the issue of gender reference in SMD, the first explicit reference is found in Genesis and Abraham where it is noted that God (Gods to the Hebrews) created male and female:

**"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."
Genesis 1:27.**

This tidy, inverted phrase, "...in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them", is ambiguous two ways.^{13}

In one meaning, probably the SMD version, this scripture means that mortal male and female bodies were created at that point in time, because -another unstated assumption- there were already male and female spirits in the PE who needed corresponding bodies during the mortal test. Female spirits would come down and fit into female ones, and males into male ones.

There is the perplexing phrase that He created "them" in "his own image": how can one gender be created into two genders? does that mean that He is both genders? Kids ask those questions, but as adults we steer clear of it for various reasons: first, we are

¹² This is a grossly over-simplified statement, but we like the sense the comparison creates. Our mortal lives mirror the large-scale experience of the metamorphosis.

¹³ This dual gender problem is not a problem for some other religions which formally recognize this fact about their gods. The Ancient Egyptians had several gods who were dual gendered, for example, Hapi, the androgynous god of the Nile.

Similarly, the Buddhists believe in such a dual-gendered god.

"...the chief deity personifies in himself the female as well as the male principle of nature, and hence is called the Father-Mother -depicted...in appropriate symbolic colors...as the Divine Father and the Divine Mother in union (i.e. in divine at-one-ment)." (Evans-Wentz 1960:106)

(Note the peculiar syllabification, occasionally referenced in LDS settings as well, of the word atonement to capture this aspect of the doctrine.)

Woodroffe, writing Tantric beliefs states a comparable concept:

"In the Navratnesvara it is said: 'That Devi, who is existence, consciousness, and bliss, should not be thought of as a female or as a male, or as pure Brahman. In reality, however, She is neither male nor neuter (that is to say, the She is not bound to any particular form)'." (Woodroffe 1981:v)

The Buddhist/Hindu conception of this supreme being is nearly incomprehensible to Christians who have never encountered it before. However, it is an appealing concept, once one gets used to not thinking of God as being a particular gender.

often insecure^{14} in our own sexual identity (a rather interesting fact in light of this discussion), and second, we don't wish to have a bisexual father, third, we don't have a clear picture of just what the issues are, and fourth, we don't have a set of answers that will put this deeply disturbing question to rest.^{15} So we temporize and avoid meeting the matter frontally, thereby setting up in the next generation a sneaking suspicion, based on our vague, evasive responses, that there is something bad about that question, or that there is something wrong with us to even ask it, or something else equally unfortunate.

The second ambiguous meaning of that phrase, which still carries disturbing baggage, is considerably simpler, but it is not the received reading. It is that, when the Gods created male and female, they were, for the first time during our metamorphosis, finally differentiating between two sexes, finally creating two different vehicles into which previously genderless spirits were inserted.^{16} This reading probably grates across SMD nerves because we have never heard such preposterous thoughts before. But if you hold still and examine the idea dispassionately, you will discover that it really isn't as repugnant a thought as it may initially have appeared to be. In fact, this reading has considerably more explanatory power than the first bewildering, disturbing reading does. We'll elaborate.

¹⁴ I suspect that most of you who read this will deny feeling uncertainty. But you do. Your lack of conscious uncertainty is simply evidence of a generally successful accommodation of self to that uncertainty, a successful coping with a perplexing issue. Congratulations. You have passed that test.

Freud cashed in on this topic, didn't he. Sexuality was one of the foundation blocks of his theories of human psychology and related pathologies. We sympathize with him as should be evident from this discussion. We believe he was right on target.

¹⁵ Without doubt, this passage will be the most inflammatory in this book. To even suggest that the Father may not be precisely as we comprehend a male Father to be in mortality is to utter gross heresy. However, I am not being heretical. I simply recognize that there are uncertainties and ambiguities in this matter as will become apparent as you read this chapter.

For me, the strength of most readers' reactions to this section is evidence of the incredibly important role of sexuality during mortality. There are few things in mortality that can stimulate such disturbed and disturbing reactions in us as can allusions to and descriptions of gender-related problems, etc.

¹⁶ Some of you are probably unaware of how late during gestation a human body finally acquires unambiguous external genitalia. Products of a 24 week gestational period, which obviously will be genetically male or genetically female, can be preserved in a neonatal intensive care unit, and thereby go on to develop normally. The critical fact about those premature infants in this context is that they are indistinguishable from each other at that age as far as external genitalia go. Seeing such a child for the first time is a deeply troubling thing because of this indeterminacy. But it is nonetheless true. These infants all appear, externally, to be female - whether they are male or female.

Now just what this has to do with this discussion, I am not sure. Indeed, I'm not even sure this does relate, but due to the fact that we all exhibited this anatomical sexual ambiguity during the early part of our lives, one brings it in as an observation. (Ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny?) Implicit in this compulsion to bring this fact in here is the assumption that there is some sort of one-to-one correspondence between mortal and spirit bodies, admittedly a shaky assumption, as will be well shown elsewhere when we talk about noses and eyes and ears. By bringing this fact in, we raise the possibility that there may be some meaning to the fact that we do not acquire our own external gender until we are more than two-thirds of the way to birth, although this fact may simply be a by-product of the particular gestational algorithm developed for this world. The latter is suggested by the fact that during the earlier weeks of gestation, the mortal fetus resembles that of chickens, lizards, etc.

It is peculiar to note that maleness is only denoted genetically by the presence of a particular chromosome, that everyone is otherwise similar. This makes the female form the undifferentiated, less specialized version of body. This seems like a sort of contradiction, however, to what we know, so far, of the other phases of our metamorphosis where we only hear of males. The beings in the PE and PM are all referred to as males, without any reference to females. This would lead one to suspect that femaleness, then, would be the differentiated form, the one denoted by the extra chromosome. However, that isn't how it is here and we don't know what to make of that.

ADAM AND EVE AND PSEUDO-MORTALITY:

Let's turn to the right for a few steps now that we have gotten into the Garden Puzzle. What happened to Adam and Eve in the Garden? They were 'created' and they lived with all the animals, but somehow they couldn't have kids. In a similar vein, one asks, Could the animals procreate or was there just a fixed collection of animals, birds, etc. that hung around with them, without procreation? On one hand, it seems that Adam and Eve could have been different from the rest of the Garden, and the story even seems to imply that the garden needed nourishing and attention. That would suggest that the plants and things were growing somehow, which might be evidence that they were being seeded, etc. But on the other hand, the idea that they could procreate, while Adam and Eve could not, seems inconsistent. This probably would have been possible, but somehow it doesn't seem likely to us. We say this because He doesn't usually seem to mix such divergent things. Possible, but seems too inconsistent for Him. The metaconditions don't tolerate markedly inconsistent blends.

Anyway, the next question: if they really did have 'pseudo-mortal' bodies in the Garden, what happened to the bodies during the expulsion that made them **mortal** bodies? We don't know of course, but something gave them seed (and, in our version at least, the other animals as well). It is obvious that the God tweaked something to make the bodies mortal, but that explains nothing, at least not at the level we are talking, i.e. biochemical, etc. And there is in fact a biochemical explanation for what happened. We just won't hear the formula until after the Judgement and Resurrection.

We are perplexed to think that the creation story goes to such length to explain that mortal bodies were created, only to have full mortality -whatever that is- withheld from those bodies. How could these bodies be 'created' and then inhabited by spirits, but not be mortal? The process of being cast out of the Garden was a priesthood-mediated one, so keys were exercised to do something to the bodies, and mortality was inflicted on A & E.

We suppose the reason for having some sort of body in addition to the spirit is self-evident. A & E had to be in a position of having to make a wrong choice, and one of the wrong choices was to partake of the forbidden fruit. Would that have been possible for a spirit? We guess not. ^{17} So we don't have a problem understanding why an additional 'body' was needed. There had to be a medium different than the unadorned spirits through which actions could occur, decisions could be made, consequences could happen, etc. We just can't understand how God made the body out of mortal

¹⁷ (Were A & E 'eating' food in the Garden otherwise? Don't know and there are no suggestions, but it is an important issue at least doctrinally. We say this because 'death' was not found in the Garden until the mortal sin was committed and the expulsion effected. If we take that at face value, meaning death of any living thing, including plants, then A & E couldn't have been eating even plants because that would require death of the plants. If one questions the mortality of things in the Garden, s/he runs up against the issue of whether or not the fruit was 'real', whether or not it really had seeds, whether it represented something more than wax fruit. We don't know what the truth is, but we know we are confused about this stuff.)

stuff without it becoming mortal. Seems like sleight of hand. (Lots of that stuff in the story - must have been lots of stage hands pushing props around, whisking things on and off stage...not really.)

(If there is any evidence at all that suggests to us that there is some role for mortal matter in the spirit world, or heaven or whatever one calls eternity, this is it.)

GENDER ASSIGNMENT?:

For the sake of argument, we will assume that there is no intrinsic gender in premortality, a totally unsupported, undocumented assumption, and one that creates this dilemma. Given this premise, it is difficult to conjecture what the criteria would be that the Father would use to assign us to one or the other of the body types. One could argue that it is a random process, but that isn't consonant with the fundamental nature of the POS wherein all parts have meaning and inter-relationships. The Mechanic's Corollary. Given the fact that true neuterness in the PE results in this insoluble problem of how to determine which frame to put which spirit in, we will scrap this concept.^{18}

However, if one allows for some sort of latent or innate gender for the pre-existent spirit, a trait that was not expressed outwardly in premortality, then there is no dilemma in the gender assignment process. Each of us would just be shunted into the right-gendered body. This is a neat way to explain gender assignment. It would also be parallel to the three stage model of mortality discussed above. During childhood here on earth where we also have gender, we are basically unconcerned with the different equipment, as in the PE. But during mortality, we are made aware of gender and affected profoundly with it in all dimensions of our life, socially, mentally, physically, professionally, religiously, ethically, etc. ^{19}

A notational variant of this latter idea would be to posit intrinsic neuterness of spirits in the PE but to allow them to

¹⁸ However, we are not really persuaded it is wrong. We just haven't taken the time to work out the mechanics yet.

¹⁹ Let's raise another deeply disturbing question here. Elsewhere I have argued that the Black Priesthood was fully evident in the Pre-existence. (See 13 PRE-EXISTENCE: PRELUDE OR PRACTICUM?) By extension, one must wonder whether there was any sort of sin committed in the PE that involved or affected gender identity of spirits. If there was gender there, then one must keep this possibility open, though it's a shocking thought, since there was evil about even before Satan. And if there were such sins, then during mortality, there would be spirits who are living with the consequences of such sins, both the perpetrator and the victim. Could this be so?

There are those who argue that the sin of Adam and Eve was the discovery of sexuality. That concept has been roundly denounced by Elder McConkie. However, given the fact that he is the only general authority that I know of who has been required by the First Presidency to recant some of his public statements, and required to issue corrections to some of his speeches which were deemed to present inaccurate doctrine, I am not so sure that he is right. (I have a tape recording of his speech at BYU in the mid-1970's, along with his later published "corrected" version. The talk was about the seven deadly doctrinal sins. I unfortunately believe in 5 or 6 of them.)

Indeed, if sexuality is, as we suspect, THE cardinal test of mortality, then it would be entirely fitting that the sin of knowledge, which led to expulsion (and to the possibility of fulfilling the other commandment) should somehow encompass it. Even the Garden story with the development of awareness of nakedness and aprons of fig leaves lends some credence to this concept.

somehow begin to chose one or the other gender, based on experiences and learning that occurs during the PE. Then when mortal birth was imminent, we would tell the ordinance workers which one we wanted. Since it seems unlikely that we would be allowed such freedom, there would have to be a sort of mark in our spirits which would indicate which gender was appropriate, after which we would be inserted into the appropriate body type.

MORTAL GENDER PROBLEMS:

This discussion is perhaps the most disturbing of any in this text. It raises all sorts of complex, deeply emotional questions about mortal sexuality: what about bodies that are hermaphroditic because of a genetic error which are nonetheless filled by a real spirit? What about bisexuality, homosexuality, incest, bestiality, etc. etc.?^{20} These are troubling issues. But it is precisely the magnitude of our emotional responses to these issues that lends some credence to the claim here that sexuality is the major test of mortality. If these deviations created no response in us, then the topic would obviously be of less significance. One might argue that our responses are culturally conditioned, rather than being deep-seated spiritual responses, and we cannot rebut such an argument^{21}. This claim reverts to a statement of belief.

POST-MORTAL & POST-RESURRECTION IMPLICATIONS:

One of the points at which this concept of pre-mortal gender and mortal gender assignment and testing becomes particularly explanatory is when one considers its implication in post-mortality and post-resurrection life. A major consequence of this particular theory is that it provides a systematic explanation for the doctrine that only individuals who achieve the Celestial kingdom

²⁰ A fairly recent form of sexual deviation that presents a curious twist because it actually alters physical gender, is sex-change surgery. In these procedures individuals, who have undergone allegedly extensive psychiatric evaluation over several years, who persist in their request that they be altered, do undergo such surgical procedures. The change can be in either direction. These individuals are screened psychiatrically to prevent the surgery from being used as another form of experimentation. Those who receive authorization for the procedure are convinced that they were given the wrong type of body, that they are actually emotionally the other gender. This claim, that they are really the other gender, is the reason for such stringent psychiatric screening and evaluation.

This allegation that the wrong gender was assigned is a curious one in light of this model, and raises various questions. It is difficult to guess what the eternal consequences to the individual's spirit are of undergoing this procedure, but there must be some effect. One also wonders whether the gender assignment process referred to elsewhere in this article can in fact misfire and implant a spirit in the "wrong-gendered" body. Initially one is inclined to deny this possibility, but after remembering hermaphroditic, etc. bodies, it becomes evident that the evidence is clear that some spirits are required to live ambiguous lives. (Given the SMD penchant for seeking meaning and reasons for everything we experience during mortality, it will be distressing to have to explain why such peculiar body assignments were made.)

In light of recent "scientific" claims that homosexuality may be, at least in some cases, traceable to genetics, we will eventually have to accommodate that form of deviation and its etiology into the POS.

²¹ Indeed, the strength of cultural conditioning in this regard is manifested today as we observe the development of children into teens and adulthood. It appears that there is an increasingly diminished sensitivity of these younger generations to these matters due to the fact that they are confronted continuously with permissive messages from the various media. So our argument is weakened by this evidence. But we nonetheless hold to this claim.

will be allowed to continue to procreate as part of their eternal progression^{22}.

In this theory, it is postulated that there is a reversion to, or persistence of, depending on one's point of view, premortal neuterness for any spirit that is unsuccessful in handling gender and its related relationships during mortality. The spirits who lose control of gender during mortality through experimentation and disobedience develop patterns in their spirit matter that make it impossible for the mortal gender assignment to remain in effect when the spirit is stripped of its mortal transducer. But those spirits who are properly continent and compassionate will be "physically" conditioned and modified in such a way that the gender conferred on them as their major test here will automatically remain in effect when they leave.

The retention, or loss, of gender in the next world, then, is an automatic consequence of our mortal performance. There is no need for someone to count up black marks and stars and to then make a decision. We will be intrinsically formed or shaped in such a way that post-mortal gender is organically and permanently determined without there being a separate judgment. In a sense, it is perhaps appropriate to imagine that the changes we make in our spirit are ones that somehow actually create gender in our spirit. Perhaps our mortal sexual characteristics are in some way templates that we are actually working to fit our spirit matter into through (dis-)obedience to the laws that govern these forces. So gender retention/loss in post-mortality will be a process governed by the operations of laws of heaven, whatever they are, on our spirit matter which will be in a particular state or condition based on how we lived^{23}. Again, a mechanical process, an automatic process controlled by our own choices across the metamorphosis.

The other automatic consequence of this theory, which is an example of explanatory power of good theories (even theories that are wrong!) is the way the doctrine of eternal procreation mentioned above is explained. Only celestial spirits, who are the ones who will retain gender, will be able to procreate. No one in any other kingdom will have the equipment, or perhaps even the interest in, the process of procreation.

ETERNAL PROCREATION:

Note that this notion of eternal procreation, which is glibly referred to in doctrinal discussions, is typically presented in a rather mystical manner, without any explanation from SMD. The

²² It is this type of unexpected explanatory power of theories that lends credibility to them. One expects that a theory will make predictions that are otherwise unattested.

²³ We ask what will be the value or significance of gender in post-mortality. We see how it works in the post-resurrection worlds, but what about post-mortality? It may be that the persistence of our gender there, in a dis-embodied state, will constitute another test for us. Continent persons will not be troubled by the condition, while incontinent ones will be frustrated thereby.

present theory at least offers an explanation that seems possible. However, it must be pointed out that there is a major unstated assumption being made by LDS: we assume that the procreation of new spirits is a process analogous to the creation of mortal bodies wherein two individuals are conjoined physically, each contributing a germ which combine to produce a new body. This assumption entails another: there must be two spiritual genders. Is that how spirits procreate? Mark Twain (LETTERS FROM THE EARTH) notwithstanding, there is nothing at all in SMD to suggest anything either way.

At this point, let's pull in the issue of gender of spirit messengers. There is not a single reference in the Christian Bible to a female spirit appearing to a mortal. All of them are males according to the scriptures. What does this mean? It could mean that the messengers actually are all males. Or it could mean that they 'appear' as males. Or it could be that they are neuters, with an appearance of maleness. Or it could be that there is language interference again where grammatical gender confuses the real picture. These spirits generally appear in light beams, in the guise of old testament prophets, i.e. with long hair and robes. No three-piece suits and paisley ties here. There is not one doctrinal reference to a pre-mortal or post-mortal spirit being of feminine gender. None. No, not one. Even the references to a heavenly mother, so beloved by LDS, are not found in the official LDS canon.^{24} The only evidence of 'authenticity' of these claims is the fact that they occasionally appear in explications of general authorities who are assumed to "know" what's really going on. But those references might be more statements of hope than knowledge.

To return to the issue of there being no female messengers, one is led to ask why that is. Could it be that there are in fact females, but there is some reason that they are not sent or mentioned to us during mortality? One is hard pressed to come up with an answer either way.^{25}

²⁴ Even in the Book of Mormon and D & C and Pearl of GP, there are scarcely any references to feminine gender. The only ones I am aware of are to women, i.e. Joseph's mother, in post-mortality. Does that mean anything? We obviously believe it does.

At great risk, one can't resist wondering why it is that LDS plead with such passion for a mother in heaven. There may be no particular meaning to this compulsion outside of the need to believe that there are families there just like there are here. But one wonders whether this results from some Calvinistic repression that can't tolerate the ambiguous condition of Genesis, for which reason it attempts to create an acceptable description of the source of our spirits. The concept of genderless spirits is a disturbing one to us who are assigned to a gender and conditioned to regard that as the "normal" situation.

It is interesting to note that the Egyptians believed in a "lady of heaven, mistress of the gods" who was believed to be the "mother of the gods". (Budge 1969:328) Curiously, however, they don't have a heavenly mother of mankind. And Buddhists aren't troubled with having powers (westerners are tempted, incorrectly, to call them 'gods') that appear in various aspects, including either gender, depending on the circumstances, etc. Mother Kali appears as a nurturing, fecund female, or as a black, destructive individual with masculine behaviors. She is one manifestation of the prime mover, the other being a male-gendered entity that has two aspects as well.

²⁵ We are going to append a long footnote here to show you one line of reasoning that can be followed, when using a straightforward logical review of the characteristics of our mortal bodies, comparing them to spirits. We add this as a footnote to keep it out of the text. We do not really believe what this footnote suggests, but it raises some issues that will eventually be explained to us.

Let's move forward now into some of the other implications of the Genesis scripture about being created in His image. We normally, happily go our way, thinking to ourselves that He is our dad and that we have features like His. True, He is glorified, whatever that really means, but He looks like us or we look like Him

CONCLUSION:

It is suggested here that gender is not an important characteristic of premortal spirits, whether it is "physically" present in premortality or not. However, gender assignment with its ramifications is believed to be the cardinal difference between mortal and premortal testing. A major consequence of mortal testing will be the development of gender in spirits. Then, in

because this little scripture tells us so. So we believe. And this may, in fact, be true in spite of this brief discussion which dares raise the question.

But, once more, we have a sneaking suspicion that we might be being led down the primrose path again, at least to some degree. We wonder whether we may not really look like Him. We fear that He may, if He were revealed to us in his actual form, look like something we would all term a "monster". This is nasty heresy, and we obviously would personally be happier if the peculiar argument presented here were incorrect.

To start explaining how one might even begin to suggest that He doesn't look like us in His official glorified body, let's look at our own faces. Each of us has a nose, a mouth, two ears, two eyes, a tongue, etc. And these things are wired into our brains through the organic electrical network of nerves. And some of them are also attached through different networks of cellular wires to our lungs, etc.

Look at the lungs for a minute. What is their purpose? Their primary function is to allow the mixing of oxygen with our blood and the removal of carbon dioxide from that blood. At least that is the usual explanation of their purpose. In fact, there are some other rather interesting biochemical transformations that also occur in the lung involving prostaglandins, alpha-1 anti-trypsin enzyme, angiotensin, etc. But regardless of the level of detail we enter here regarding the biochemical function of the lungs, the point remains the same for this argument.

The lungs pass layers of blood across a 90 square meter alveolar surface interfaced with "air" so oxygen goes into the blood and carbon dioxide comes out. Then the blood returns to the metabolically active tissues where oxygen is removed and carbon dioxide is collected for disposal. So CO₂ is exhaled and oxygen is absorbed. We repeat this process of breathing in and out 18 times a minute for 70 years. The reason that it is necessary is because the carbon/water based chemistry which is characteristic of the metabolism of this particular world, consumes oxygen and produces CO₂. All hormone and enzyme systems in the body, as well as other substrates, electrolytes, messengers, etc. require a supply of oxygen to function properly. Mortal life, on this planet at least, does not exist without it. (Granted, there are anaerobic pathogens, as well as an aberrant anaerobic metabolic pathway activated under certain pathological settings, but otherwise all eumetabolic processes are aerobic.)

The physical pathway which oxygen takes to get into the alveoli, or air sacs, is through the nose and/or mouth into the tracheo-bronchial tree. This is accomplished by having the diaphragm in the abdomen tense and flatten out, thereby dropping intra-thoracic pressure to create a pressure gradient that then allows atmospheric pressure to push air into the lungs. (It is pushed in, not sucked in.)

Now one asks, if we did not require oxygen, would the nose and mouth and diaphragm and lungs be needed by our body? I would say no, and invoke the Parsimony Principle. Everything in our body is mandatory and only mandatory things are included in our body, so there is nothing (other than a few things like the vermiform appendix, sinuses, etc.) that doesn't have a demonstrable purpose. And all of these purposes are related to the needs of keeping a mortal body alive for a spirit to live in for a few years.

And what about the eyes? What is their purpose? Answer: they are simply the sensors that collect an input stream of data that is passed along the optic chiasm into the brain where it is processed to create a "mental" image of the adjacent environment. This allows the mortal body to keep track of where it is going, allows it to aim at things around it, etc. But the eyes are only needed as input devices for the mortal brain. The spirit body doesn't need them. Eyes are specifically built to collect a certain segment of the electromagnetic spectrum of this mortal world, just as the ears are created to collect another set of frequencies from the same spectrum.

So our face, which consists of a variety of features, is basically a collection of tissue shapes and organs that contain specialized nerves and which serve specific biological functions for the mortal brain only. These features are crowded tightly onto the front of our skull and are arranged in a nice pattern. We each have a pair of lovely eyes. They look nice, balanced on each side of our nose, hooded by membranous lids that are fringed by little hairs, etc. But does our spirit need them? We think not. The spirit itself has unimagined capacities to collect data about the environment and does not depend on a pair of globes or ears to sample the electromagnetic spectrum.

So one then begins to wonder why spirits who appear to mortals in supernatural visitations are always provided with noses and eyes and ears. Do they really need them? And one wonders about this "in His image" scripture. Perhaps the major reason they appear like mortals is so that the mortal is not shocked by the appearance of a being that is markedly different than we are. We're wondering if what we see isn't really a sort of holographic image projected into our three-dimensional world, using a shape familiar -and an understandable language- to so that we will focus on the message, not the form. Marshall McLuhan said that the medium IS the message, and in this case, he's right again. If we saw something markedly different, all we would remember afterward would be a visitation with a monster and we would be upset. And equally importantly, no one else would believe us if we described such a creature and then tried to explain (IF we were capable of understanding the message!) that there was an important message being conveyed by it.

These same questions could be asked about all organ of a mortal body. Do resurrected beings need livers and spleens and stomachs and kidneys and hearts and pancreases, etc. etc. It doesn't seem logical that a 'perfected' being would need such organs because the sole function of those organs is to support life by allowing the metabolism of this world to proceed inside our bodies. Then one asks what it is that occupies the abdominal cavity of a perfected being? And how did Christ in his resurrected state eat mortal food? etc. We still do not understand either how the gender scriptures should be interpreted, nor do we understand whether the Lord and perfected beings have bodies that fully match mortal ones.

postmortality and post-resurrection life, the gender we developed during mortality will be present. That determines, then, who can and who cannot, procreate^{26} during eternity.

This theory does have explanatory power that pulls several disparate doctrinal points together and relates them in a way that makes some sort of sense. This may be incorrect, but it is nonetheless an intriguing concept. One of the fundamental effects of this model is to demonstrate once more that we are free agents here in mortality, and that we are completely in control of our destinies. There is no pre-destining for us. We make it on our own. This is not detracting from the Lord. It is simply one more possible proof of the Parsimony Principle wherein He sets up processes and systems to allow things to be done with minimal effort.^{27}

²⁶ The assumption here is that the successful spirits will be granted the appropriate keys of the priesthood for such procreation.

²⁷ A fascinating comment is from one of Grof's female patients who returned from her LSD-mediated experiences convinced of the male gender of God:

"This unified divine vision seemed to be what she had been craving and waiting for her whole life. She remained just one little step from a total fusion and oneness; just before she was able to merge with the divine light, she realized that the Godhead is always male, and she could not surrender and join completely."
(1977:61)

Surprising comment from a woman who apparently was something of a feminist. It is possible that her perception of gender was somehow colored by her childhood indoctrination about the gender of god figures, but given her current state-of-mind we have to leave open the possibility that she was actually reporting a fact. She certainly has good Christian company.