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Teams and Stereotypes

Another Problem with Gatekeepers

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When I was up before the local Gender Dysphoria Team, I was told that I was too old for the operation, and that in any event I did not pass the psychological tests for womanhood.

They did not bother to see whether or not I was in fact "too old". My second team did: they simply required a thorough physical check-up including examination by a cardiologist. I was in great shape, so the circus could proceed."

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Rejection by the local team caused me much unnecessary expense and heartbreak. I could better have used the money for the electrolysis without which nothing is possible. One can be a woman of a kind without the operation. One cannot survive with a beard.

Age is not the only stereotype beloved by the first team. Some years ago a friend simply sailed through their rigorous procedures. She was short, delicate and pretty and was welcomed with open arms. Later, another candidate with not quite so much natural endowment succeeded in overcoming the team by sheer confidence and effrontery - even though, she carded much of her male ego with her.

It is well known that medical teams take their jobs very seriously, but that they are perceived as requiring a stereotyped response from candidates: "They hold my life in their hands, and I'm not about to throw it away. If they want me to bark I'll bark" Medical arrogance has been noted at many stages of the ordeal all over the world. Perhaps the God-complex is nowhere better exercised than when the practitioner is playing god. You are the only remaining

S.R.S. practitioner in this city, and you have seemed like a decent sort, so I am being honest with you; I cannot guarantee that I should have done so if you had held my life in your hands. There is too much fear.

What a basis for a doctor - patient relationship!

Teams obviously live in fear of making a mistake, not realising that they are not in the best position to judge on Gender Dysphoria. Who, then, is? The candidate. Yes, mistakes have been made, and I am sure that they will continue to be made, because the most rigorous testing in the world must to a certain extent be stereotypical. But the candidates are usually idiosyncratic, to say the least. They may be feminine, or not. But they have only one thing in common: the perception of themselves in an alternate gender role.

How come the mistakes, then? Briefly, the candidate really is not certain what she is letting herself in for, although she thinks she is: From my personal experience I think it would help a great deal for her to undergo some surgical procedures beforehand rather less drastic than S.R.S., to get a feel of what is really happening. Beyond that, anyone who is so lacking in imagination as to be unable to comprehend what the loss of a penis might mean, may perhaps be entitled to lose it. The whole point of the exercise is, however, not to become a eunuch but a female, psychologically and physiologically. As everyone now knows; the former is seen to be the most important.

And who is to delve into the psyche in sufficient depth to make certain? Not the gender dysphoria teams, with their fancy tests and simple criteria. I am surely a prime example of this. When I first came to the team I was not even certain that that was what I should be doing; I was coming with many questions, not, like my confident friend, with final answers. This was counted against me along with my apparently failing the psychological tests.

Tests? I wonder whether it is possible for a team to understand that a lifetime of indoctrination as a male makes it difficult to think as a female, if indeed there is such a thing. I think that the team does not fully appreciate the fact that gender dysphoria is not an urge to express femininity per se, as much as it is a terrible conflict with what one is and what one has been forced to become. To bridge the gap the requirement of fulltime living as a woman is a wise precaution, but it is not infallible because of the possibility of delusion. All of one's life, one has dreamed of being a woman, but one has built up a certain fantasy about it. The reality can be different. For a man who enjoys the male sex role the reality can be shockingly different. For one who doesn't it can still be quite a shock. It can be even worse if one does not "pass" perfectly.

The psychological tests can fail just for the reason mentioned: one has not (yet) acquired a feminine perspective, only a non-masculine

one. But further: in these days the whole phenomenon of gender is being called into question. On what is gender based? Invariably on stereotypes of every kind. Some of these are now being broken down - but not all. I believe deeply that transsexuals can tell us more about gender than any battery of psychological tests or experiments. The very existence of transsexuals defies the radical feminist ideology that the only difference between the sexes is the plumbing. We know we are different, although we cannot say just why. Nor it seems, can anyone else. I have asked feminist transsexuals: "If you feel so strongly against the concept of gender, then how did you ever know there was a problem in the first instance?" I have yet to receive an intelligible answer.

There is something very different in a woman's psyche, and in my opinion that difference reflects itself in various stereotyped behaviours, not the other way about. There is a real feminine mystique, and no one can discover it from the outside. Transsexuals are the only exceptions. Gender Dysphoria Teams are not.

How, then, is a team leader to proceed? Through intuition - and that is born, not made. My team leader had lots of it, so he was able to make an accurate evaluation of me, particularly after he had seen the quite extraordinary change in my personality when I was liberated from the mask of masculinity; you yourself had a hint of it yesterday. He saw it only because he was open to see it, and because I knew that. I don't think I would have felt as uninhibited with the local team. I felt that they did not trust me, and the favour was returned. It is known that teams try to make things difficult for candidates, to test their mettle. It is a stupid policy and in its zealotry is likely to overlook the very thing it is seeking: soul.

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