

The Trans Paradox



LGBTQplus is a string of letters and ideas which ties together common struggles concerning sexuality and gender. The 'T' was added to the 'LGB' in 2015, but in truth transsexuals had been associated with the gay and lesbian movement since at least 1970 and probably before; I shared a house with two transsexuals in the early seventies, and they were much involved with the gay liberation hubbub of the time.

It is unsurprising that “gender non-conforming” people (in the modern parlance) should flock together in solidarity against the terrible social, police, and legal pressures of the time. However, it was well understood that the circumstances of transsexuals or transgender people, were entirely distinct and different from those of sexual orientation. Homosexuality was unconnected with the quaint Victorian belief that one

might be born in the 'wrong body'. I certainly don't remember the phrase "gender dysphoria" or the issues affecting sexual orientation being entangled or muddled up with transsexuality.

Today, fifty-odd-years on, it is unsurprising that the same or similar issues of solidarity between all "gender non-conforming" people should continue to be a live issue, particularly given the difficulties that transsexuals continue to have in housing and employment, despite the legal protections that they enjoy from discrimination. We are all familiar with the difference between having legal rights and the practical problems involved in enforcing them.

However, I find it truly astonishing that Stonewall and the extensive network of gay and lesbian organisations have in the last seven or eight years pivoted almost entirely from the advocacy of gay rights, to the promotion of transgender rights, including the insistence, that everyone must accept, *on pain of excommunication*, that "transwomen" are women and "transmen" are men.

In one sense this move is understandable given that the passage of marriage equality in 2014 (2020 in Northern Ireland), signalled the achievement, of full equality in law for homosexuals. We were victorious. Gay men and lesbians have finally achieved equal rights throughout Britain. This was no mean feat, but it placed our gay advocacy organisations in something of a quandary – what was left to do? They could have continued their work on education and the well-being of homosexual teenagers, and they could have ramped up their sorely needed international work.

They opted instead, to focus, not entirely, but largely, on the irate demands of transgender activists for the universal recognition of the subjective thoughts of trans individuals about their gender. *It is literally true: "I have changed sex and must now be considered a woman (or a man) irrespective of my biology"*. This, of course, is an unsustainable position, because our sexed bodies are not changeable, despite cosmetic interventions, no matter how intrusive or extensive.

Much hostility and bad blood is now being generated against anybody who insists that biology is binary; anybody who declares that the differences between men and women are rooted in their reproductive organs (as is the case between all male and female mammals), is now said to be “transphobic” and “hateful”. Simple disagreement with the idea that one can change sex is enough to be declared the creator of “unsafe spaces”, provoking suicide amongst trans people, and violent attacks upon them. Therefore, there must be no discussion of the issue. Whatever an individual says about the thoughts in their head, about whether they are male or female, regardless of their biology, must be believed.

This implicit support for ‘self-identification’ amongst many organisations has created a number of policy difficulties, particularly about women’s refuges, changing rooms, toilets, prisons, and competitive sports, which are well discussed elsewhere. So, I want to focus on a different aspect of the contemporary transgender issue. the paradoxical collision between sexual orientation – homosexuality – and modern transgender advocacy.

Why “paradoxical”? Well, given the historic solidarity between all “gender non-conforming” people in the past, the modern debate is destined to throw up severe conflicts between the transgender desire to demote, side-line, or dismiss, biological sex, and those of us concerned with *sexual orientation*. This is because homosexuality is rooted in biology. We are attracted to people of the same sex as ourselves. I am attracted to male bodies – initially this objectification is paramount – once an encounter or relationship ensues things may move beyond objectification – but it is the object, *the male body*, that sets the ball rolling so to speak, and if you’re lucky, keeps it on track.

Same-sex desire depends entirely upon the nature of the body desired. Some trans activists have suggested that this is not so – their idea is that one is attracted by the *gender presentation* rather than to the body of the person concerned. Most homosexuals

would have difficulty with this idea because, of course, we expect the body to coincide with the gender presentation. We expect a man to be biologically male, and would be gravely disappointed or dismayed if a desired person turned out to be anything other than physically male. The same goes for lesbians. They are attracted to women, not to biological males who are merely *presenting* as women.

This problem has become relevant in recent years with the emergence of “Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria” amongst pre-teen girls and teenagers. There has been an extraordinary spike amongst young girls seeking treatment to become boys in Britain, Western Europe and North America. This can involve the prescription of puberty blockers and double mastectomies for people under 18 – changes that are permanent and irreversible. I suspect (without any evidence), that a fair proportion of these girls are really rather muddled up lesbians attempting to square their confusion about desiring other girls or women by attempting to change into boys.

Whether my suspicions are borne out or not, it remains true that these young girls are embarked upon a course of action which can have disastrous consequences for them. As a result, the simple endorsement amongst therapists and medical professionals of the expressed desire of girls to become boys is now being challenged. Uncritically supporting the claims of young people that they are unaccountably in the ‘wrong’ body is gravely irresponsible.

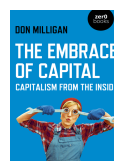
This phenomenon of Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria is helping to lay bare the collision between the ideology promoted by transgender activists, and homosexuality, which is rooted in same-sex desire for people who have the same biology as ourselves, the same reproductive organs, and all the related secondary physical characteristics. Therefore, homosexuality, and issues of sexual orientation, have no necessary connection with gender dysphoria and

the powerful psychological thoughts of transgender individuals that they are in the ‘wrong’ body.

Furthermore, suggestions that the subjective thoughts of individuals must take precedence over the physical bodies we are born with, carries with them an inherent attack upon the reality and meaning of homosexuality. Sexual orientation is inescapably rooted, or based upon the biology of the desired person, and cannot be wafted away by suggestions that gender is all in the mind – all in our imaginations.

It is undoubtedly true that there is no necessary conformity between femininity and masculinity and our bodies. Anybody can dress and behave how they like irrespective of the bodies they were born with. This was always the basis of the solidarity which existed between homosexuals and transgender people, engaged in what appeared to be a common battle against the imprisonment of everybody within traditional sexual and gender stereotypes. I well remember Carol Riddell, who in the early seventies in Lancaster, made the transition from Dave to Carol. She often used the surprising phrase, “the tyranny of gender”, to describe the awful imposition upon us all of the traditional stereotypes, associated with masculinity and femininity.

Carol was right then, and she’d be right now. We all want to escape from these stereotypes, but we don’t all want to escape from our bodies. Most of us rather like our bodies and those of the people we desire. Consequently, it is entirely inappropriate, and tyrannical, for transgender activists to insist, as they do, that gender is all in the mind. It isn’t. Same-sex desire is no doubt sparked in the mind, but homosexuality is powerfully and inescapably connected to the biological sex of the desired body. No amount of shouting, threats of excommunication, accusations of “transphobia”, and “hatred” is going to change that.



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