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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

More on "Gender Identity"

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In "The Origin of 'Gender Identity'" I wrote: "As Haig (2004, p. 93) notes, 'gender identity' first appeared in 1963, in papers given by the UCLA psychiatrists Robert Stoller and Ralph Greenson at the 23rd International Psycho-Analytic Congress in Stockholm" (Byrne, 2023). I should have followed Haig's less committal formulation and written "was introduced" instead of "first appeared." Janssen's Sherlockean-grade detective work (Janssen, 2023) has revealed that "gender identity" is in papers by Money published in 1963 and also in the title of his paper in the 1960 Program of the Sixty-Eighth Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association ("The gender identity of hermaphrodites, with additional reference to effeminate boys, transvestitcs, and paraplegics").

In fact, "was introduced" may be too committal. Janssen unearthed the 1963 Stockholm conference program, in which the title of Stoller's invited paper is "A contribution to the study of sexual identity" (Zetzel, 1964, p. 472). "Sexual identity" becomes "gender identity" in the title of the published paper (Stoller, 1964a). Greenson is in the program as a "discussant," with no paper title. The conjecture that Stoller and Greenson added "gender identity" when preparing their Stockholm papers for publication is consistent with a memo Stoller wrote to the "Gender Identity Research Clinic" at UCLA in September 1963, after the Stockholm conference. In that memo "Stoller asked group members to define a series of approximately forty terms, including 'gender identity'" (Bryant, 2007, p. 74). That does not fit with Stoller and Greenson defining the phrase to their satisfaction a little over a month earlier.

To briefly comment on the five Money papers cited by Janssen: Money (1963a) mostly uses "gender role and identity," but once Money writes "gender identity and role," and there is a single occurrence of "masculine gender identity." In Money (1963b), "gender role and identity" is again preferred, but "gender identity" occurs a number of times, seemingly as a stylistic variant of the former phrase. In Money (1963c), "gender identity" does not occur, but "gender role and identity" does, along with "gender role and psychosexual identity" and "gender role and erotic identity," which Money appears to treat as equivalent. In Money (1963d), the phrase of choice is again "gender role and identity," with a single expansion to "gender role and gender identity." Money (1963e) only uses "gender role and identity."

Money's terminology was in flux: as Janssen points out, in a 1961 paper with Green, Money uses "gender orientation" instead of "gender identity" (Green & Money, 1961, p. 160, fn. 163). Janssen also drew my attention to Green and Money (1962), in which "gender role," "psychosexual identity," and "gender role and identity" each occur once. "Gender" makes an appearance in that paper ("consistent with their gender" [p. 159]); this could mean either "gender role/identity" or "sex." Later in the 1960s, Money settled on the pair "gender role" and "gender identity," which he viewed as labeling "two sides of the same coin" (Money, 1985, p. 282). "Gender identity is the private experience of gender role, and gender role is the public expression of gender identity" (Money, 1965, p. 240; see Janssen, 2023, fn. 2).

As I noted in my original Letter, Money (1985, p. 282) credited Evelyn Hooker with "gender identity." In three other places, Money mentions that he learned of the phrase from Hooker but does not say she coined it (Money, 1994, 1995, 1998). Money's memory was at fault: he dates his encounter with "gender identity" to "the middle 1960s" (Money, 1994, p. 166; 1998, p. 120) and "early in the 1960s" (Money, 1995, p. 23; quoted in Haig, 2023). Hooker was a member of the "Gender Identity Group" which started at UCLA in the late 1950s (the name might have been added later), along with Robert Stoller (and surely also Greenson) (McWhirter & Mattison, 1984, p. xiv); it is a safe assumption that Hooker was present early on (see also Haig, 2023). Hooker is listed with her UCLA affiliation in the 1960 APA program as the chairman of (and a speaker in) the symposium with Money. Although Money did not invent "gender identity," he gets a

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consolation prize for being one of the first to use it in print. If we count the 1960 APA program, he may well have been the first.[1]

What is more important than the origin of "gender identity" is the meaning that Stoller and Greenson attached to it, "one's sense of being a member of a particular sex" (Greenson, 1964, p. 217). Presumably their 1964 papers were the source of Kohlberg's (1966) influential definition of gender identity (in children) as the "cognitive self-categorization as 'boy' or 'girl'" (p. 88). That fruitful definition should have been enough, with related useful terminology—e.g., "gender consistency" and "gender stability" (Slaby & Frey, 1975)—being added as needed. However, Green's (1974) book *Sexual Identity Conflict in Children and Adults* begins by saying that gender identity (a.k.a. sexual identity) has "three components: (1) an individual's basic conviction of being male or female; (2) an individual's behavior which is culturally associated with males or females (masculinity or femininity); and (3) an individual's preference for male or female sexual partners" (p. xv). The first component is gender identity as originally defined by Stoller and Greenson and a few years later by Kohlberg. The second and third components—masculinity/femininity and sexual orientation—are quite separate phenomena which should not be lumped together with it.

"Gender identity" continued to receive multiple unhelpful definitions, prompting the psychologist Katz (1986) to write: "The concept of gender identity has been used widely in a variety of ways…This has been reflective of (and is perhaps contributive to) considerable theoretical confusion in this area" (p. 23). Green himself reverted to Stoller and Greenson's "gender identity" in 1992 (Zucker & Green, 1992, p. 108). And by the time of Owen Blakemore et al.'s (2008)—the authoritative textbook *Gender Development*—what is basically the Stoller/Greenson definition is the first in the glossary entry for "gender identity," although Kohlberg is the only citation (p. 401).

Unfortunately—as I observed in my Letter—Stoller and Greenson have now been consigned to the ash heap of history. Current definitions of "gender identity" are either circular, obscure, or both. To add to my earlier examples from WPATH, the sociologist Hines (2018) explains that gender identity is "each person's internal sense of being male, female, a combination of the two, or neither. It is a core part of who people know themselves to be" (p. 10). Apart from the unclarity of "internal sense," what is a "combination" of being male and being female supposed to mean? And do some people have a sense of being literally sexless, neither male nor female? These questions would be intelligible if Hines had certain disorders of sex development (DSDs) in mind (compare Stoller, 1964b), but it is quite clear that she did not.

A similar definition avoids Hines' sex-blending: gender identity is a person's "internal sense of being male, female, or somewhere on the gender spectrum" (Vance Jr. et al., 2014, p. 1185). This suggests that the two sexes occupy opposite poles of the "gender spectrum," but what that might be is not explained. This is the tip of an iceberg of such misbegotten definitions.

Finally, a historical coincidence. 1964, the year of Stoller and Greenson's papers, was also when US President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act (CRA). The two psychiatrists could not have imagined that their psycho-analytical jargon would collide, more than fifty years later, with one of the greatest pieces of civil rights legislation in US history. The Equality Act (EA) proposes replacing all occurrences of "sex" in the CRA with "sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity)." The EA passed the House of Representatives in 2021 and is stalled in the Senate (Equality Act, 2023, August 11).

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[1] Janssen (2023) also found one occurrence of "gender identity" in a 1961 paper by Money's Johns Hopkins colleagues John and Joan Hampson, and another in a paper from the same year by the psychiatrist Lawrence S. Kubie. Where Kubie got the phrase from (if anywhere) is a mystery.

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