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A sex change won't do you good: Gender reassignment surgery fails to alter one's mindset

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A sex change won't do you good

Gender reassignment surgery fails to alter one's mindset

For those of you out of the loop, last month a University of Maine student accepted a Disney scholarship but ran into housing problems when "she" informed them that she was undergoing a sex-change operation. Disney said the student, known as Claire, couldn't room with a male or female in its housing facilities, but gave her the option to pay more money and to live alone. However, she couldn't afford this. In January, a local benefit concert raised over \$1,200 for Claire's room and board.

Does this mean the issue is over with now? Apparently not. There was an announcement on the Student Forum on FirstClass protesting Disney when they came to recruit more interns because it allows some gender Monday. Although the protest never happened, it does show that some people on campus think that Disney is guilty of discrimination. I must respectfully disagree with this notion.

Disney did not cancel Claire's internship. They said she needed to live alone. Disney has a policy against males and females living together in its housing facilities. Claire has brought a gray category into a rigid system, and wasn't happy with the result. This is what happens when people create artificial lifestyles and unleash them on an unprepared world.

Deon Q. Young, a columnist for queerlifeneews.com, says that transgenderism is "about dealing with the perception of one's self not matching one's body." Gay activists see it as challenging gender roles.

There's another way to look at it. Sociologists insist that gender roles are created by cultures. They are not biologically programmed. Transgendered

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FOR THE MAINE CAMPUS

folk envy customs and practices associated with the opposite gender and fool themselves into thinking that they belong to that group, despite rigid biological evidence that they do not. Saying that having feminine interests is enough to qualify as female does not fight gender roles, it reinforces them.

Gender reassignments are not done with a magic wand. They are an expensive form of

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genital mutilation that only gives the appearance of belonging to another gender and, according to Young, usually cost between \$30,000 and \$40,000. Other surgeries, ranging from body hair removal to sanding down facial bones, can add up to an obscene amount of money.

American Psychiatric Association currently lists Gender Identity Disorder as a

mental illness. Local Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender activist Matthew Small says that there is a debate within the transgender community over whether their lifestyle deserves to be listed. Some trans folk, Small says, support the listing because it allows some gender reassignment operations to be covered by insurance.

The American public has enough trouble with the high cost of health care without adding such an expensive and questionable medical procedure. Because of sex-change operations, resources which could have gone to fighting life-threatening diseases are used to give cosmetic changes to people who just don't feel comfortable with their bodies.

With transgenderism, if two years of therapy aren't enough to fix the problem, the incorrect notion is accepted, and the patient is pumped full of hormones and given plastic surgery. All other forms of psychological counseling try to correct the problem, not cement it.

Transgendered people are not monsters or perverts. They are confused beings and they need help accepting their gender, not hiding it behind wigs and make-up.

It's very easy to throw words like "ignorance" and "discrimination" around when someone questions your lifestyle. However, no good will ever come from giving validity to mistaken beliefs. We should all be glad that Claire was able to sort her housing troubles out with help from the UMaine community, but there's no need to vilify Disney for an unfortunate situation they didn't create.

Michael Hartwell is a senior journalism major.