

CRUMBLING A GENDER TRANSITION STORY

By Mariana Ramírez V.

“What was the point of being himself if he had to be alone?”

-Austin Chant, Peter Darling

“Being transgender is not just a medical transition. ... [It's about] discovering who you are, living your life authentically, loving yourself, and spreading that love towards other people and accepting one another.”

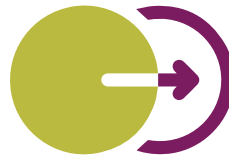
-Jazz Jennings



In this essay, we are going to analyze gender transition and transphobia, two situations that are sometimes part of the same process. At the same time, we will discuss how context plays an important role for this topic. This is a subject I find quite interesting, because its relevance has gone higher in the last couple of years, and I think it is important to have accurate information about it.

Let me start by defining some important concepts. Transgender people are individuals who feel that their gender identity is different from the gender associated with their assigned sex at birth. When a transgender person chooses to undergo a process to align with their desired gender, this is called gender transitioning (Lane, 2020). Transphobia is a term used to describe the intense hatred, fear, violence, and dislike towards trans or those who are thought to be trans people (Njoroge, 2021).

Now, I allow me to tell you the story of Rose. She was born a boy and she has lived in the United States all her life; both of her parents are Asian. At age thirteen, she felt like a girl but did not have the words to describe it; she did some googling and found out about transitioning. Then, she instantly clicked with the concept. When she realized this, she decided to tell her brother who was very supportive. Then, she came out to her parents, who were very confused but were willing to do some research to understand it. She went to the Pediatric and Adolescent Gender Clinic at Stanford's Hospital, where a full team of doctors helped the family through the process. There, the doctors noticed that Rose was very shy and tried to hide her body, so they decided to run some tests. They found out that she was suffering from an eating disorder.



The clinic helped the family with everything needed such as legal assistance, voice therapy, sexual health care, hormone therapy, and top surgery. Now, her parents understand and support Rose in her journey. Rose is now sixteen and she radiates confidence and security (Castillo, 2020).

After telling you about this happy-ending experience, I want to analyze some factors and how they led to this favorable result.

A 2020 survey show us that the United States is in the top 10 most supportive countries for transgender rights (Armbrecht, 2017). As we know, the United States is a first-world country, which is more developed in this topic and has more economic resources. We can compare it with Ucrania, for example, which is in the middle of the war and which main concern is to survive. At this point, we can assume that they cannot have the "luxury" right now to invest in this type of problem.

Also, Rose is a white person with Asian heritage. We know that white trans people have more privileges than trans people of color. Firstly, being black, for example, unfortunately leads to having a higher risk of experiencing several types of violence. Secondly, white trans people have a lot more representation and visibility in media, which falls into a repetitive pattern of excluding marginated people from cultural and entertainment products (Cange, 2015).

Transitioning is an expensive procedure, and Rose got the opportunity to receive assistance at a Standford Clinic, but I could not find the price they had to pay for the whole medical process.

Having by her side a diverse group of specialists and doctors, she says that she has been taking estrogen for six months. This means that if someone has Medical Insurance it would cost around \$1000 dollars per year (Richardson, 2020). If she decides to have a surgical procedure, the estimated price would be of around \$100,000 (Jackson, 2015). These numbers are shocking for me because they are clearly unaffordable for most of the world's population.

Regarding more about her context, Rose was born in 2004, and came out as a trans individual in 2017. During this year, gender transition was already well-known for some people and even some protests focused on LGBTQ+ rights happened in the US that same year. She is living in an era where, thankfully, people are being more empathetic, diverse, and understanding. Maybe if she had been born fifty years earlier, she would've never had the opportunity of consider getting the surgery or even coming out.

For me, Rose had one of the best trans journeys thanks to her situation. As you might know, transgender people still fight every day to get the justice and the rights they deserve. There are many discussions surrounding this, but we are creating a better world one day at a time. Rose shared her story on Stanford's Clinic web page, which I think is very useful because I was able to easily find this teenager's experience thanks to the big platform they used to share it. People can find good resources to get information and even to find someone to help them through their journey.

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