



Desexing Children: The Acceptable Abuse

“We’ve decided not to share Storm’s sex for now — a tribute to freedom and choice in place of limitation, a stand up to what the world could become in Storm’s lifetime (a more progressive place? ...).” So wrote parents David Stocker and Kathy Witterick after the birth of their third child, who they really did name “Storm.” This isn’t the first story about parents who don’t want their children to be influenced by others’ sex-role expectations. In 2009, a Swedish couple, citing the feminist philosophy stating that “gender is a social construction,” refused to reveal the sex of their 2 ½-year-old child “Pop” (I have it on good authority, from Snap and Crackle, that it’s a boy).



Witterick says her inspiration came from “X: A Fabulous Child’s Story,” a fictional account of a character who hides his biological sex from others. Well, we can only be thankful that she didn’t read a story about Carthaginian infant sacrifice.

But rejection of tradition is nothing new for Canadians Stocker and Witterick. Stocker “teaches” at Toronto’s City View Alternative, which is labeled a school and whose lessons, writes the *Toronto Star*, “are framed by social-justice issues around class, race and gender.” You won’t find the couple’s two older sons — Jazz, 5; and Kio, 2 — there, however. They are being enriched through “unschooling,” a model in which the child drives the agenda (yeah, we Westerners will show those Chinese a thing or two). Stocker and Witterick also took their children on a trip through the mountains of Mexico to speak to the revolutionary group the Zapatistas and more recently spent two weeks in Cuba, staying with local families and learning about the “revolution.” Clearly, Stocker and Witterick may eschew pink and blue, but they have no problem with red.

Yet they still fail. If you really treasure “freedom and choice in place of limitation” and want children to make their own decisions, you must go further. For example, why is this couple placing their children in a species straitjacket when, like the Texas wolf girl, they may later conclude that they’re really an animal in a human body? Why are the boys having man’s norms foisted upon them? Why put clothing on them? (This could, after all, send the message that the body is something of which to be ashamed.) Why teach the boys language? And, more specifically, why should we place them in a cultural straitjacket and chose that tongue for them? I mean, Jazz and Kio may be Tagalog or Urdu speakers at heart.

For the benefit of the unschooled, I’ll state my point bluntly: You are placing limitations on your child whether you like it or not. You do this when you teach or model language, manners and customs — and a thousand other things. Enculturation happens.

Yet, curiously, the gender-agenda types don’t notice this when it occurs with species and many other norms — only sex norms. But, then, is it really the wider society that has the hang-up? Or is it them? The problem here is one of narrow-mindedness. For a long time now, the default assumption has been



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on May 30, 2011

that enculturation with sex norms creates boundaries that can stifle the creativity of both sexes. In fact, moderns have so closed their minds on this notion that another, quite obvious possibility never even occurs to them: that man long ago recognized each sex's characteristic strengths and weakness and sought to cultivate the former and tame the latter. And this was accomplished through a process of training in manhood and womanhood that we now, pejoratively, call "sex stereotyping."

"But what about anomalies?" some will ask. What about a so-called "transgender" child who "feels" he's actually a member of the opposite sex trapped in the wrong body? Might he not be hurt by having to don a sex "straitjacket? While I've made my beliefs on this well known in the past, here I'll simply say it's irrelevant. Even if you believe that such feelings are always inborn (and it takes a pretty closed mind to insist that such urges are *never, ever* a result of purely psychological factors), it is silly to think we could, or should, arrange society based on exceptions. Should we cite wolf-girl types and warn against giving children an anthropomorphic upbringing? The exception, as the legal principle *exceptio probat regulam in casibus non exceptis* tells us, proves the rule's existence. And since what is true in *principle* may not always be so in the *particular*, the exception's existence is neither surprising nor refutatory. For example, consider the principle stating that only boats, and not autos, should be licensed to sail the seas because only boats are seaworthy. Is it discredited if I find a leaky schooner or a James Bond car?

Also note that something's status as "inborn" has no bearing on the morality of the matter. After all, the same social scientists who tell us that "gender" might be influenced by intrauterine development also say that sociopaths are born and not made. If such people had innate homicidal instincts, however, would that give them license to commit murder?

This is no small matter. And the particulars — whether the "God doesn't make mistakes" argument is used to rubber-stamp homosexuality, "transgenderism" or something else — aren't important. What is important, and immeasurably destructive, is the principle involved: the idea that if a feeling is inborn, the behavior it prescribes is okay. This eliminates the concept of morality and replaces it with biological determinism.

The idea of "letting kids decide for themselves" is based on a flawed assumption, the notion that man's default is to tend toward good unless some corrupting agency enters the equation. But history, which tells us of a world in which human sacrifice, cannibalism, and slavery were once common, teaches just the opposite: Man tends toward sin unless a civilizing agency is introduced. And given that there are a million paths a child can walk — most of which are quite dark — it's folly to assume that a babe, denied proper guard rails, will stumble upon a yellow brick road.

As for Witterick's two older babes, sons Jazz and Kio, they're treading a rainbow road. They *both* just happened to choose for themselves (quite coincidentally, I'm sure) an appearance that causes others to take them for girls. Nevertheless, Witterick is undaunted. She writes about her third child: "[I]n not telling the gender of my precious baby, I am saying to the world, 'Please can you just let Storm discover for him/herself what s (he) wants to be?!.'" Well, I'm sure John Walker Lindh's very progressive, Marin County parents let him decide much for himself as well. And he decided to become a Taliban.

Moral of the story: If people don't dispense with the puerile relativism and grow up themselves, they have no business raising up children.



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