

A HARLEY STREET specialist who has studied the problems of men who dress up as women for over 30 years, told Harry Warschauer:

"Every single female impersonator I have ever seen has been a sick person. There may be some who are normal, but I have never met one.

"How does this kind of mixup start? My case histories show that it begins early in childhood.

"The child comes into contact with other people in terms of needs. One of the most important of these needs is the need for approval.

"If the child does not get approval it may react in two ways. An aggressive child will react with tantrums and shows of temper. A non-aggressive child will react by trying to become someone else.

"The little boy will react by feeling that if he were a little girl he would get the approval of the adults, and so the seed is planted in his mind.

"Because the child's idea of women is purely external, they fasten on the difference in dress.

ESCAPE

"It is simply a matter of role-playing. The people who grow up from these children escape from the real problems of real life by trying to play a different role.

"But it remains a child's idea of the role — that they become women just by looking like women.

"As they grow up, their sex role and their actual sex function fail to become integrated.

"Real women look like women, act like women and actually function as women, and the same for men.

"Many of my patients get married and have children, but they still dress up. They perform a male function by fathering children, but still play at being women.

"This is what leads to the conflict in their minds."

OPERATIONS

The specialist went on: "Many of the drag artists I have seen in my practice go to extraordinary lengths to improve their appearance as women.

"They will ask for female-hormone treatment, for example.

"If a man is given female sex hormones it will give him a semblance of female breasts; fat distribution in the body will be altered to give a more female appearance, and the sex drive will be reduced.

"Others will ask for more radical operations — complete castration, even the creation of artificial female sexual organs.

"Others will ask for cosmetic surgery—for example, to alter their jaw line to make it more feminine.

"But for many years now I have refused to give or recommend such treatment.

"The reason is that all such treatment merely makes the conflicts worse."

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