

Underlying Blue, Shocking Pink*

But where was I? I was in a static limbo, and on its transparent walls, I could see what was on the outside. All the fish which swallowed the hook were the holy monsters of the company. And I was the deconsecrated monster of loneliness. My entire perception of the world was a typical aberration of the psychoanalytic field. My crumbling thoughts made me see the world with deforming glasses, which were not useful against the optic disturbance I had had for years since I was born. That was a hotbed of disconcerting aberration, a misleading way of watching and interpreting the phenomena in the world and their intrinsic characteristics. Or maybe it was the other people who wanted me to believe that? I don't know right now if I should listen to those who gave me the sense that I didn't belong to their superior race, or to those who have supported my way of seeing myself and my approach to the outside world. My body was a heap of lies, a strange and unusual obstruction to the sight, aimed at disguising all the lies I was wearing under my clothes, which were discovered just like sick truths when I showed my documents during a possible hiring. It was a rare and almost unique situation because I had in me all the contradictions of my state, i.d. I was carrying inside me what was being poured out in the world and was at the same time in contrast with what was spotlessly and bureaucratically written on the paper. So, I was the insane fish the fisherman had to put back into the water once he had torn the hook out of its mouth. So, I was that mix of badly hidden estrogens my employer had to put back into the rash mass of unemployed people after he had torn all my dignity from me. And my accurately written CV was crushed and thrown into the nearest bin before I could distance myself from it and pretend that piece of paper, which at the same time represented and didn't represent me, had never been crushed. But instead my CV had been too strongly crushed, and in same way, I had been crushed by somebody whose hands were too strong. I was walking in a manly way, or so I thought, but I was seen as a little girl with no elegance or femininity, as something clumsy which had no right to show itself and apply to get a job. I had even tried to continue an online activity I liked very much, but it wasn't like that for the viral contacts I was trying to boost day by day (although my dysphoric brain made me believe my photos showed a young man's body).

Unrequested and definitely undesired messages arrived soon afterward, messages sent by respectable men who didn't want to show their precious family jewels in the real world, and who were respectable enough to show them to me in the virtual one! And then some photos showing their groin was sent to me, even when I had said explicitly that such a dialogue shouldn't have taken place, if we want to call it 'dialogue'. Dialogue isn't exactly the right word, since there was no dialogue (intended as an equal level of interaction and communication in a respectful way, as I would define it); there was only a question asked by the most hypocrite of them all, who didn't care at all about the answer I gave them as quickly as possible, in order to stop them from sending me the photos of their brave erections and secretions, which I had asked them not to send me via chat at all! I closed my virtual profile and decided I would carry on this kind of activity when I would become a man to whom no other man would ever think of sending so much disturbing virtual material. My Pink was so shocking and my Blue so underlying that I couldn't have any kind of interaction with men in the work environment. Every time I tried to add just a little bit of Blue which could make me appear as a Violet, as something stronger than a pale Pink, people pasted and sewed on me

* The following self-narrative account was translated into English by Elisabetta Varriale.

the strongest shocking Pink I had ever seen on myself. The Pink was pasted on my knackered face and kicked into my exhausted womb, which was bleeding every single month that mass of plasma and blood cells, reminding my mind that my body wasn't one of those manly and statuesque busts the best marble masters are able to shape brilliantly and bring to life just like they did with lifeless geometric solids.

But a job arrived soon afterward, one day when I answered an online announcement for the job, whose website doesn't come to my mind now. I sent my personal data and my CV. I was called shortly afterward by someone who asked for information about my age, where I was from and if I had a car to reach the workplace. Some days later I was working, and I had received terrible training from my area-manager, who was supposed to take responsibility for me but wasn't responsible at all. I received my training behind the stands where we were supposed to work, sitting inside a bar; what if there hadn't been a bar? Would I have had to stand for the whole time of the training? It is a question I often ask, but I don't sincerely care about the answer since I resigned because of many reasons I am going to explain to you right now. In the workplace I am glad to notice nobody really cares about what I am wearing, or, to be more precise, nobody cares about it, but everybody says it has a very manly style. I was glad because I felt I had found a place where my way of dressing was accepted (if I can ironically say this). I was in a good mood, and I was enthusiastic about starting work and doing the best I could! I worked with my area-manager for several days, and I understood what kind of person she was. The more I observed her behavior with the clients, and with us, the more my opinion of her got worse very quickly, with a speed which was incredible even in my eyes and feelings. In very little time I had lost any consideration for her which shouldn't have got lost because she was still my boss. A person like her, who was dishonest with clients and disrespectful to her colleagues, made me become immune to my failures. I didn't care if she told me no client would talk to me because of my naive and introverted way of talking to people, I didn't care if she told me I shouldn't have worn my flattening vest over my breasts because it was something disgusting and unnatural, I didn't care at all when she told me which bathroom I should have used, how to walk, smile and talk.

I was I, like I am now. This same person one day asked me if I was wearing an orthopedic corset. After I had said I was wearing the vest, she told me I had to go to work with the proper bra for my body, proper for the female body that I had and was obliged to keep. That day I resigned. I didn't do it because of what she was saying with cruelty in her gaze about the bra: no, I resigned because I felt ashamed of the working situation I was in, which was always the same. Before my resignation I had kept using the bathroom I liked, dressing like a young businessman, with my satin trousers, a black or white shirt, sometimes with the tie and using a Pierre-Cardin pen to explain things clearly to clients; I had continued to be myself without being scared of her uneducated manners. I was mistaken for a boy by some people walking nearby, but as soon as I opened my mouth, I had magically turned into the girl to whom they could proceed to ask for information or thank for her kindness. My voice was too high, but my soul was strong enough and my consciousness good enough to open myself up to one of my colleagues, since I felt the need to tell her something about me. Her reaction was totally unexpected; I wrote to her during a break by using the app 'Note' on my smartphone, because I wanted to share it only with her. We held each other and smiled at each other for a long time; she congratulated me – as if I had passed a very important exam, as if I had graduated. I was happy. I was happy because I had the chance to be myself. Without any problems. With her, I could finally be myself. Even when I had to run to the supermarket to buy those things you

have to buy when you have a female body, which you must replace periodically with new ones, she helped me and one day she even offered to buy me these kinds of female things which are still quite embarrassing for me. Apart from some clients' smiles with whom I had a good relationship and who still went to the workplace every now and then, maybe this complicit relationship with my colleague after I had talked to her was the only good aspect of my working experience. In the meantime, I was, and still am, working as a dog sitter. I love animals and have a good relationship with dogs. Mazal's owner, who is also my neighbor, doesn't seem to understand my way of feeling and perceiving myself; but this is a step I want to face when I face the talk with my other neighbors about transitioning. Some of them have already understood, because they are my friends on Facebook, and I know they support me because they liked some of my photos where I explained something about my transition and that I had been forced to arrive at it in order to live this life fully without remaining trapped in a dimension of mere survival, from which there was no escape. On Facebook, looking for everything and nothing, I found an interesting work announcement: it was offering work in the Oriental Festival in the fair of Carrara Fiere, in Marina di Carrara. I sent my application, and I happily discovered during a call I had been chosen with other boys and girls for this job. What should I say? My experience was very positive both with the very strict and punctual enterprise, with the very honest owner and with my smart area-manager. There was only a disagreeable moment after I arrived at the place I had to reach on my first day because my area-manager had to assign us to the different stands of the fair; a boy (was he the only one? No, I was there too) had to make a comparison between the boys and the girls and he said that there were many girls and he was the only boy. I wanted to answer to him, but my restraining instincts worked well that morning, so I remained silent. It is true that at this point of my path I should express my real self and run the risk of losing a job, but it is also true that I cannot continue my path without a job. They are two sides of the same coin. My experience was positive as I said but even then my Pink came out. And the Blue was once again too underlying to represent myself as much as it should have done. I was once again the 'Miss' of the situation, the one to whom my male colleagues gave the privilege of taking a break before them, of going to the toilet before them, of choosing my working roles just before them. What politeness! And what giant sadness, poor me, I had to tolerate those clichés which underlined the fact I didn't belong to that gender I felt was mine since the times of my white childhood.

Now the white wasn't the color I could use in a non-binary situation where I could save myself. That white was pink, it had the stains of blood, my soul was spilling every day, and I was mixing it with my weak and hurt little girl's tears. The Blue had such a distant shade I could only dream it, imagine it inside me the way you imagine a wonderful fantasy you cannot touch with your hands. The underlying condition of my Blue forced me to show all the evidence of the Pink I didn't want, which I had driven away, ruined, put in a corner of eternal punishment. And now that Pink was so streaked, I wasn't able to use it anymore. With clients my voice was once again too high and with too loud tones to sound like a boy's voice – or even just to sound like that warm and deep voice for which I had done a lot of exercise at home when I was alone, by singing or talking aloud almost as if there was an audience opposite me and I had to introduce myself to it. My clothes moved when I took the teas and the infusions with the trays which clients had chosen in order to pack and sell them, they concealed the shape of my breasts dismantled by my vest (of two or three sizes smaller in order to cover everything and disguise it well) – with no results of course. And my smile revealed those cheekbones which were too strange to be a 22-years old boy's cheekbones. I'm sure if some of

them had known about me they wouldn't have used the female pronouns to talk to me, but I am trying to understand why people don't use neutral gender in general during a conversation. It would be so simple! If the speaker A used the neutral gender, just like the speaker B, they could start using a certain pronoun instead of another during oral interaction after they had specified they belonged to a certain gender. I'm trying to do it, and, also during the Festival, I used a neutral gender in order not to hurt all the people who came close to my stand, I did this with them and for them – in case they were not alone. But I realize I'm doing something utopian and totally old-fashioned, no, something which has never been fashionable, but inappropriate. I'm just saying everything would be easier for everybody and nobody would ever be (not even innocently) hurt. One episode disturbed me very much during this experience, which was the reaction of a boy who saw me getting out of the men's toilet. I had used the women's toilet for four days because the toilets are shared by both the staff and the clients, and I was annoyed by the chance of being seen in men's toilet by clients, who had used female gender pronouns to talk to me. Why are there men's and women's toilets? Do they have male or female characteristics? I still haven't found out. During the last day, I decided to step forward, to do the task of all tasks, a courageous task for rabbits: I decided to enter the men's toilet publicly. It was something I had already been doing, but not on that occasion. I entered, and it was deserted; but when I was coming out, a boy came near me and pointed out that I had entered the wrong bathroom; fortunately, his girlfriend became a mediator between the two of us! It was disheartening – not really disheartening – but really sad! You know what? The wrong bathroom is the one that – because of too much piss you find on the floor- makes you risk falling and breaking your neck. Apart from this I'm convinced all bathrooms are okay for all men and women. And most of all, that was the 'rightest' toilet of them all, because it made me face the moron who made me widen much more, once again, my not big enough shoulders.

So, once I had ended my job at the festival and I returned to university and to my dog-sitting service for Mazal, I looked for other jobs in order to have a better future. There was a way actually, but I was afraid of the feedback, if we can call it that. I decided to create a Facebook profile as a man to continue that activity I had had to stop 2 years ago. While I was on Instagram feeling relaxed, I saw on my homepage an FTM boy's photo with a beard. Now: I was following the boy, and I knew he wasn't taking pills with testosterone hormones. Where was the trick? Well, the trick was an app which makes you take or load a photo you had already taken and choose the color, the kind and the size of the beard, from some ad hoc proposed sizes. I have this illumination and download the app. In a moment I have a hipster beard, and I open my online working profile. I let you imagine my level of fear at the thought of receiving even just one message from someone accusing me of being a dishonest girl. But no. To my great surprise, no. I became a male friend, a young businessman, a male student with a passion for network marketing. A boy. A young man. I became myself. The person I have always been. My only way was the blue one. A Blue nobody had seen; that's why I had become a sick and plain gray, not a warm, pearl or plum gray. Not a gray so gorgeous that made me overcome the dualism of black and white, no. It was a dead gray nobody wanted because nobody thought they could be the inhumane manufacturers of such an ugly shade of gray, which should have been closed in the deepest part of the memory where nobody could enter. A *damnatio memoriae* of social memory. A condemnation of memory, a right for others' conscience, a pain for myself. But now I was I. I am I, the Blue, my color, a pearl white which

finally accepted being colored by the Blue of the deepest night of all. I used my past to build a very strong trampoline today from which I can take a golden leap towards the future.

With these words I use to make love,
Love is the color of the heart,
light-blue is the color of these holy hours,
which make me reach the brightness of the light,
the brutal burning now turns into a pleasant warmth,
the tremble of a star which gives me a kiss full of its deep splendor:
it is the color of the strongest blue and most vivid light-blue shade,
it's the color of the white which finally accepts being painted honorably by the Night.

Marina di Massa, 22 November 2017 – 11:40 pm