

Insignificant and Inappropriate Surgery: Non-Normative Orchiectomy for Testicular Cancer in Historical Context, 1906-2018

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Description:

Within the context of orchiectomy for testicular cancer, these two contrasting narratives both show how masculinity is tied up in patient behavior.

Both narratives were written for public consumption: one for *GQ Style* as a “Letter from the Editor,” one on online testicular cancer support forums. The patients knew their words were being read by an audience, and felt it necessary to defend their choices in their respective cancer experiences.

Each of these patients, once aware of the necessity of the loss of the testicle, saw their masculinity and sense of self more in their behavior than in their body. Being a man was more about how they acted, rather than how they physically existed.

The two narratives demonstrate how performance of patient behavior – acceptable patient behavior – is associated with masculinity within the dynamic of surgery.

Stoicism or acquiescence? Self-advocacy or selfishness? Depending on your perspective, both patients embody different versions of masculinity in their experiences of losing a testicle to cancer.

Artwork:

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Selected Bibliography:

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