

# Gender and Secularism

Proof versus Faith



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*Not belonging to an organized religion doesn't give you license to throw provable reality out the window.*

# **If Gender Identity Isn't a Religious Belief, Then It's Really, Really Stupid**

Over the years, I believe I've presented a very consistent message that gender identity is best understood as a religious belief. I even titled a collection of my thoughts on this topic as "Gender Identity Is a Religious Belief That I Don't Believe In", and this is also the main argument of my essay "How to Talk to Progressives about Gender Identity". But here's some personal behind-the-scenes insight: My wife really hates it when I say this.

It's not that she doesn't understand why I describe gender identity as a religious belief, but that's not the way believers in gender identity talk about it or (presumably) think about it, so she thinks it's wrong for me to call it that. And as I think more about it, I think she's probably right. It's probably not my place to dress up the beliefs of others to fill in the gaps in their logic. I call gender identity a religious belief because that's the only way it makes sense. But what if it's a belief that simply doesn't make sense? What if it's just really, really stupid?

## **How to Make Gender Identity Logically Coherent**

I've been trying to wage a one man intervention for all intelligent, well-meaning progressives: "Please, please stop making yourselves look like such idiots." Because gender identity, when presented as a secular belief, simply doesn't make sense.

I'm a guy, and what do guys do when they see a problem? They try to fix it. So I see gender identity, which is a stupid, irrational belief, and I see a way where it could actually make sense, so I try to fix it. I mean, I've been trying to be charitable, you know?

Gender identity presents the claim for some unseeable part of ourselves that is more *us* than even our physical bodies. It calls this something our “gender identity”, but it certainly sounds like the standard religious concept of a soul to me. So here is how you present gender identity as a logically coherent religious belief:

1. We each have a soul
2. Our souls have a gender
3. Sometimes the gender of our soul doesn't match the gender of our physical body, and when that happens, our soul's gender has priority over our body's.

And there you have it. With those three faith-based beliefs, you now have a logical *religious* explanation of gender identity. Obviously, none of those beliefs are provable, which is what makes them faith-based, and let me be clear that I personally don't believe in this (I believe #1 and #2. I don't believe #3.) But isn't it obvious that the above is essentially what gender identity is claiming? The only difference is gender identity makes no attempt to fill in its logical gaps with religion and instead tries to pass as a secular belief, but it can't do so credibly because, as a secular belief, gender identity is really, really stupid.

## **Reimagining the Scopes trial**

But beyond a vain attempt to be charitable, there's a second reason why I find it so tempting to view gender identity as a religious belief: It's because religion vs secularism is such a common conflict, and because with the topic of gender identity, the roles are reversed, which is quite fun.

Make no mistake, my belief about gender is secular: Our gender is our biological sex. No angels, no visions, no holy books or prophets, simply empirical evidence and reason, no faith required. Contrast that with gender identity, which only makes sense as a religious belief. The situation is a complete role reversal, and I find that amusing. It's like the Scopes trial in reverse. In Scopes, on the side of secularism, there was a teacher who wanted evolution to be taught in school, and on the side of religion, there was a state that wanted to forbid evolution from being taught. Now with gender identity you have conservatives, usually the

religious ones, fighting on the side of secularism (proof), and you have progressives, usually the secular ones, fighting on the side of religion (faith).

Except those who believe in gender identity don't usually present it as a religious belief, they claim it's secular, so to use the Scopes trial as an analogy, we have to reimagine it a little bit. Imagine if, instead of Scopes being a trial between a secular belief and a religious belief, imagine if it was a trial between a secular belief and a really, really stupid secular belief.

The opposing side in the Scopes trial was essentially a belief in creationism. So you could describe the Scopes trial as being the conflict between the belief that humans were the product of evolution vs the belief that humans were created by God. Secular vs Religious. But what if instead of declaring that humans were created by God, the opposing side declared that a galactic space platypus got drunk one night and vomited on the Earth and that's where humans came from?

Now your first reaction to that belief might be, "That's really stupid," and you would be right, but notice this: It's not religious! Your second reaction might be to ask what proof could justify such a belief, to which I would reply: Proof? Ha! This is an essay about gender identity! Where is the proof of that? If I can't demand proof that a biological man is a woman, then why do you get to demand proof that our species was created in the puke of a galactic space platypus? It's a postmodernist world, baby! Only reactionaries demand proof nowadays. You aren't a reactionary, are you?

Why should we believe that gender is different from biological sex? Because it is, that's why! Why should we believe that humanity was created by a vomiting galactic space platypus? Because it was, that's why! Proof? Ha! The only thing that matters is it isn't based on the Bible, right?

Much more on this stupidity, including the galactic space platypus, is to come. But first let's talk about faith.

## **Swim Trunks at a Bicycle Race**

Ultimately everyone has some faith-based beliefs. You could be an observant Muslim or an atheist zealot, either way somewhere in your belief system, faith will be present. It has to be there because some things in life simply cannot be proven: What is the meaning of life? What is good? What is evil? These can be defined to a point by reason, but ultimately you will come down to a set of foundational beliefs that underpin your reason but cannot be proven themselves. You believe them not because you can prove they're true, you believe them simply because you believe them. In other words, you have faith they are true, even though you can't prove they are true.

But some things actually *are* provable. Some things can be seen. Some things can be measured. This is the realm of provable reality, and whether or not something exists certainly falls within this realm. If there is a miniature teapot orbiting out in space, it should be possible to prove it is there (through telescopes, etc), and I am under no obligation to believe it's there until compelling proof of its existence is provided. The same goes for a galactic space platypus. Could one exist? Sure, I suppose, anything's possible. But until someone provides proof that one exists, then the default assumption should be that it does not.

So we have some things in life that are unprovable (right, wrong, etc), and we have some things that are provable (the boiling point of water, the existence of something, etc). Faith has to be present in the first category because you cannot prove an unprovable thing. But you can prove a provable thing, so faith isn't necessary. Now, you could certainly *choose* to believe based on faith instead of proof, and you can even believe some things based on faith *even though that belief is contradicted by the currently available proof*, but to do so is only appropriate in the right situation.

Imagine a man showing up to a competition in bare feet and a swimsuit. If this were a swim meet, his outfit would be appropriate, but if it were a bicycle race, it wouldn't. Some things are appropriate in one situation but not appropriate in another, and when it comes to faith in beliefs that contradict provable reality, this type of faith is perfectly appropriate within the religious sphere but absolutely inappropriate within the secular sphere and should be thrown out anytime it tries to sneak in. (As an example, the Scopes trial.)

Now, this essay is already going to be huge as it is, so I'm not going to go into a deep discussion about the difference between the religious sphere and the secular sphere. I will only say this: In order to have a functional secular sphere, it must be based on *reason*. Faith-based beliefs will have to be present when it comes to unprovable things like right/wrong (otherwise no laws could exist), but faith *cannot* be used as the basis for things that can be proven. In other words, within secularism, proof must *always* be given precedence over faith. If that isn't the case, then you don't have a secular sphere at all, you just have a religious sphere that's pretending to be secular, a "non-religious" theocracy, if you will. Is that the kind of society you want to live in?

An arrogant atheist at this point might interject that faith shouldn't be used to contradict proof in any case even within the religious sphere, to which I would reply: Glass houses and throwing stones. How many of you claim to not be religious but nevertheless still believe in gender identity? Tell me, who is more intelligent, a man who believes something based on faith that is contradicted by the currently available evidence but correctly treats this as a religious belief, or a man who believes something based on faith that is contradicted by evidence yet still claims it should be treated as fact within the secular sphere? Because the latter scenario describes gender identity exactly. Within the religious sphere, gender identity could be perfectly respectable, but within the secular sphere, it's really, really stupid. Let me count the ways ...

## **Gender identity is stupid because it's self-defeating**

There is a common game that conservative commentators like to play when someone makes a ridiculous comment based on gender identity like "Some men have periods" or "Some women have penises". The game is pretty simple, all you do is ask a basic question:

"What is a woman?"

Now, to someone with a proof-based definition of gender, the answer is simple: A woman is a human with XX chromosomes. (Add appropriate qualifiers to handle the rare cases of intersex birth defects if you wish.)

But for someone who believes in gender identity, the answer is much harder than it might appear at first glance. The first time they are asked it, they will probably say something like this:

“A woman is someone who identifies as a woman.”

And the reply to that circular reasoning is obvious:

“Great, so what’s a woman?”

To which they will go off in various directions in a vain attempt to make sense of the nonsensical:

“A woman is someone who identifies as the feminine half of humanity.”

“Great, so what’s the feminine half of humanity?”

And on ... and on ... and on ...

The game demonstrates two truths:

1. Gender identity is an irrational belief that cannot withstand scrutiny
2. Most believers in gender identity haven’t really reasoned through it (see #1)

That said, I think there actually is a correct way to describe what gender identity believes a “woman” is. Here is the first draft:

“A woman is someone who identifies as a biological woman.”

Pretty good, right? That is the essence of what gender identity is claiming: It’s not biological sex that matters, it’s identity, but what you are identifying as is the biological sex. That is the concept behind the word you are trying to claim. Except that definition misses one critical piece. Remember, some biological women claim they are men, so those obviously couldn’t be women, right? Which brings us to this enhanced definition:

“A woman is someone who identifies as a biological woman who identifies as a biological woman.”

Much better, right? Now technically the “who identifies as a biological woman” qualifier needs to keep being added an infinite number of times because, like an irrational number, gender identity can never actually reach the end of its own definition. (Because it’s irrational.) But let’s leave it at that and talk about something more important.

Words don’t exist on their own, frozen in time like some prehistoric mosquito trapped in amber. Words refer to concepts, and those concepts change over time based on how the words are used. A good example of this is the word “fascist”. There was a time, decades ago, when that word actually referred to a specific type of person with a specific type of political ideology, but now it’s thrown around haphazardly, describing people as varied as literal neo-Nazis to sweet eighty-year-old grandmas, and this wide-spread usage has diluted the concept behind the word into nothing. I’m not sure I could come up with a more accurate definition of how the word is actually used today other than to say “a bad person” or “someone with politics I really dislike”.

And here’s the point: the word “woman” means something. There is a concept behind the word, something that comes to your mind when the word is used. Before gender identity the concept behind the word “woman” was simply a biological woman, and that is the concept that gender identity is trying to steal. Let’s try again to define “woman” according to gender identity:

“A woman is someone who identifies as (the concept of “woman” that everyone agreed on before gender identity was invented).”

That’s it, right? Basically, what gender identity is demanding is that the word “woman” be expanded to include anyone who identifies as a woman, yet at the same time it wants the original concept behind the word “woman” to remain frozen in place. Gender identity wants to have its cake and eat it too. But that’s just stupid because that’s not how language works. When you steal a word and alter its usage, you inevitably alter the concept behind that word as well.

Imagine you’ve been training for a 100-meter dash. You’ve spent months sprinting, pushing yourself to the limit, the whole time dreaming of attaining the distinction of “winner”. You live that word, you sleep that word, and when it runs through your mind, you imagine the concept behind it: being the fastest in the race and having the adoration and

congratulation that provides. And so you run your race and do your best, but you're the fifth to cross the finish line.

No! This can't be! You wanted to be the winner! You deserve to be the winner! And so you scream, and you howl, and eventually the judges shrug their shoulders and declare that everyone who ran the race is the "winner". So, you won, right? You're the "winner", which means you won, right?

No. You might be the "winner", but the word "winner" doesn't mean the same thing it meant before the race began. Before the race it meant the one person who ran with the best time, but now it means everyone. And if everyone is the winner, then no one is. The concept of the word "winner" that you so desperately wanted was changed into something else when you wrestled its usage in a different direction.

And that's the case with gender identity as well. Those men who claim to be women, they want to be thought of as women—as the original concept of women before gender identity entered the picture—but that's an impossibility. When you alter the way a word is used, you alter the concept behind that word. By stealing the word "woman" away from its original usage, these men cause the concept behind the word to change away from the concept they are trying to steal. It's self-defeating.

Imagine you're standing in a hallway looking at two bathrooms. One says "Men" and the other says "Women". Imagine you're in a society that has never heard of gender identity before and imagine you haven't either. Now imagine what would be in each of these bathrooms. Due to the biological reality of women, you could expect their bathroom to have only stalls and a sanitary napkin dispenser might be present. In contrast, due to the biological reality of men, you could expect their bathroom to contain both stalls and urinals and to not contain a sanitary napkin dispenser.

Now imagine the individuals that enter each bathroom. Look at the men who enter the men's bathroom. Look at the women who enter the women's bathroom. Can't you see the concept behind the words "man" and "woman"? Isn't it clear and obvious and common sense?

But now imagine gender identity invades that tiny haven of common sense and takes over. Now we have people saying, "Some men have

periods”. Well, if some men have periods, then we need sanitary napkin dispensers in the men’s bathroom, too, right? And we have people saying, “Some women have penises”. Well, if some women have penises, then shouldn’t we include urinals in the women’s bathroom too?

So now we have a men’s and a women’s bathroom, both of which have urinals, both of which have sanitary napkin dispensers. And imagine the concept of the people who enter the men’s bathroom and the concept of the people who enter the women’s bathroom. Can you see the sharp difference between the concept of “woman” in the first scenario versus the concept of “woman” in the second scenario? The meaning has changed. “Women” are no longer “women”. “Men” are no longer “men”. The original concept behind the words has been muddled and lost.

And now comes the bigger question: If there is no difference between the needs of the men’s bathrooms versus the needs of the women’s bathrooms, then why have separate bathrooms at all? Why even have the words “man” and “woman”?

So, while gender identity proponents might be able to steal the word “woman” if they flex sufficient social and political force, their act of stealing that word will have the inevitable consequence of changing the concept they were trying to steal in the first place. Their actions are self-defeating. Their actions are really, really stupid.

## **Gender identity is stupid because it prioritizes faith over proof within secularism**

As I stated before, it’s perfectly fine to have faith in things that contradict provable reality as long as you correctly classify that belief as a religious belief. Do you believe that Noah survived a flood in an ark? (I do.) That’s fine—as long as you classify it as a religious belief. Do you believe Jesus performed the miracles claimed by the Bible? (I do.) That’s also fine—as long as you classify it as a religious belief.

The reason why the correct classification of beliefs is so important is because of the different way our society treats religious beliefs vs secular beliefs. It’s fine to teach students in Sunday School that Noah built an ark, but it’s not fine to teach that in the history class of a public school.

Why? Because public schools should be based on secularism, and secularism requires that everything provable should be based on proof, not faith. Whether or not a worldwide (or even limited) flood occurred within a certain time period is something that can reasonably be expected to be seen in the empirical evidence, so you can only teach it in public school *if the empirical evidence supports it*.

Yet gender identity fails at this because it's based entirely on faith, not proof; and worse, gender identity actually *contradicts* the available proof.

Let's consider that question again, "What is a woman?" Tell me, which of the following definitions is based on empirical evidence?

1. A woman is a human with XX chromosomes\*
2. A woman is someone who identifies as (the concept of "woman" that everyone agreed on before gender identity was invented).

(\* Insert technical qualifier to handle intersex birth defects here if you wish.)

Obviously the first one is the one based on empirical evidence because it is the only one based on proof, no faith required. A baby is born—which gender is it? Well, in almost all cases you can just look at them and know, but if it comes down to it you can take a blood sample and look at their DNA. The definition is measurable and objective. It's based entirely on *proof* just like secularism should be.

Now consider the definition provided by gender identity. In this case, proof is entirely absent, and the only thing that matters is their "identity". But what is "identity" and how can you know it? Can you see it? Can you measure it? When a baby is born, do you know what their gender identity is? If a naked comatose mugging victim is found in a dark alley, can you do a visual exam or take a blood test and know if their gender identity makes them a "John Doe" or a "Jane Doe"? No, you can't because gender identity isn't based on proof. Someone's identity is whatever they say it is. We listen to their identity and we simply believe them. They could be wrong. They could be lying. We have no way to know. We are forced to accept their identity on *faith*.

So you have one way to define the word “woman” that is based on proof and another way that’s based on faith. Obviously secularism must accept the definition based on proof. To do otherwise would be really, really stupid.

A believer in gender identity might interject here some nonsense about gender being different from sex, and they might say that that difference justifies the lack of proof when it comes to gender identity, but that argument is deceptive stupidity. You cannot take an unprovable concept and use it to override a provable concept. That’s just a deceptive way to get around the need for proof, and if you allow that with gender identity, you could allow it with anything, and that leads to theocracy, not secularism.

The question we are considering is: “What is a woman?” That question can be answered via empirical evidence as long as we understand that gender and biological sex are the same thing. You can waive your arms and declare that gender and sex are different all you want, but it won’t change the fact that you’re trying to change the definition of “woman” from a proof-based definition to a faith-based one.

And remember what I said about the existence of something? That’s part of provable reality, and if you can’t prove that something exists, then the default belief should be that it doesn’t. Well, if “gender” is something that truly exists separate from biological sex, then the burden of proof is on you to prove its separate existence. We’re under no obligation to believe there’s a teapot orbiting around in space or a galactic space platypus or anything else until we’re given evidence to prove that such things exist. And likewise we’re under no obligation to believe that “gender” exists as a separate entity from biological sex until proof is provided for its separate existence, and it’s really, really stupid for anyone to suggest otherwise.

## **Gender identity is stupid because it provides no compelling evidence to believe in it**

Why would someone actually believe in gender identity? What is the thought process that gets them there? I think that would be fascinating to track. You start with the idea that a woman is a woman because she

actually is ... well ... a woman, and you end with the idea that a man is a woman if he says so because ... well ... just because.

Obviously believers in gender identity will say this is because gender is different from biological sex and “woman” is gender instead of sex, blah, blah, blah, but why do they believe that gender is different from sex? There is no compelling reason to believe that. “Woman” isn’t some word that was just invented yesterday. This is a word that has always had a meaning and that meaning has always been proof-based. So why replace a proof-based definition of “woman” with a faith-based one? If this were a religious discussion, I might have something different to say here, but this isn’t a religious discussion, it’s a secular discussion, and in the secular sphere, there’s simply no compelling evidence to suggest that gender should be treated as distinct from biological sex, and certainly not that it should be allowed to *override* biological sex like gender identity believers claim that it should.

Sure, there are people who believe they are a different gender than their biological sex, but there are people who believe lots of wrong things. Some people believe the earth is flat. Some people believe vaccines cause autism. Does the fact that people believe those things prove those things are true? Of course not. So why would it prove that gender is different than biological sex? It doesn’t.

Perhaps if people really, really, really, in the depths of their soul, believe their gender is different from their biological sex, then that proves they’re right? No, that argument is just as ridiculous. Children have died because they weren’t vaccinated! Obviously their parents really, really, really believed that vaccines cause autism. The sincerity of someone’s belief doesn’t make any difference when it comes to proof. Heck, a few years ago a man took guns to a pizza shop in Washington D.C. to rescue children he thought were being held there by a Satanic sex abuse cult involving our nation’s top Democrats. And this wasn’t a case of psychosis either, this was simply a man who really, really, really believed something that was really, really, really wrong. And the same goes for those who believe they’re a different gender than they physically are. Belief, even deeply held belief, isn’t proof.

Another argument a gender identity believer might try is that the positive results psychologists report for patients who “transition” to their desired

gender proves that gender is different from biological sex, but this is just as ridiculous as all the rest. Reality is not what you believe makes you the happiest. Reality is reality. And we're under no obligation to pretend reality is whatever someone else wishes it were. Thank goodness we're not, because if we were, we'd have to spend all our lives trying to pretend every teenage boy was a rock star and every teenage girl was a supermodel. But they're not, even if they would be happier if everyone pretended they were, and it's stupid to think otherwise.

Brain scans are another complete dead end. To someone who thinks they provide proof for gender identity, I would reply: Then why aren't brain scans used to determine someone's gender identity? If proof is available, why are we still expected to operate on faith? The answer, obviously, is because brain scans prove nothing. Interesting statistical correlations have been found, at best, nothing that could be used to objectively prove someone's gender identity. Furthermore, consider what it would mean if brain scans actually could prove gender. That would mean that if your brain scan said one thing, and you claimed your gender identity was another, then too bleeping bad, we're going with the brain scan. And that would obviously be unacceptable to gender identity believers because ultimately they *want* gender identity to be faith-based. They want to be able to say that reality is whatever they say it is and that all contradictory evidence must be ignored. Brain scans would never be accepted as proof against gender identity, and therefore they can never be accepted as proof in favor of gender identity. The whole topic is just a waste of time.

(If you want to see what actual provable gender identity would look like and the consequences of that proof, then take a look at my short satire "Unwanted Proof".)

What it all comes down to, I think, is people are told that gender is different than biological sex and they just ... believe it. It's all based on faith. And I'll point out this is all happening within the secular sphere, not the religious one. Supposedly-secular people are choosing a faith-based belief over a proof-based one, and they're believing it simply because they're told to believe it.

"Well, you see, a galactic space platypus spewed its guts out all over the Earth and then humankind just popped out. Any questions?"

"Nope, that all checks out!"

And that's really, really stupid.

## **Gender identity is stupid because it contains no limiting principles**

And because gender identity has no logical reason to believe it, it also has no ability to prevent itself from morphing into something even stupider than it already is. If you believe in an invisible "identity" simply because you've been told to believe in it, what will stop you from believing in a different "identity" for the exact same reason?

This is a common objection to gender identity. "If I can identify as a woman, why can't I identify as being 29?" "If I can identify as a man, why can't I identify as being black?" In other words, if gender identity exists, then why doesn't age identity or race identity or species identify exist?

The response from gender identity believers is basically that that's a stupid objection because none of those identifies actually exist, so it's ridiculous to compare them to gender identity. Except, why should we believe gender identity exists? There's no compelling proof for that identity either. Why is gender different from biological sex? Because it is! We're told to believe it, and we're expected to believe as we're told. Proof? Stop being such a transphobe!

Gender identity has no limiting principles. If you accept gender identity as fact despite its lack of evidence, there's no logical reason why you shouldn't accept age identity or race identity or any other nonsense. The only reason why you don't today is because you haven't been asked to accept it yet. But once progressivism demands you believe in those identities as well, what will you do? Will you suddenly become picky about proof? And risk being called a transphobe? I doubt it.

Heck, gender identity doesn't even have any limiting principles to contain the explosion of gender identities within itself. So far I've been speaking as if gender identity just consisted of men identifying as women and women identifying as men. But given that gender identity is faith-based, it provides no provable way to limit the number of genders to only two. You can be any gender you feel like, even if it's a

completely made up concept. And so we have non-binary, and gender-fluid, and bigender, and pangender, and on and on and on.

But here's the thing: words refer to concepts, and what is the concept behind non-binary or gender-fluid or pangender or whatever? Those concepts relate to nothing in the actual world. When someone says their gender is (insert nonsense made-up word here), what are we supposed to do with that information? Gender identity is just a layer of made-up nonsense overriding the proof-based reality of biological sex. It's really, really stupid.

## **Gender identity is stupid because preferred pronouns are completely unworkable**

But of all the stupid things about gender identity, surely the prize for the most idiotic is the idea of preferred pronouns. Whoever came up with this idea must have spent their life in academia because it's completely unrealistic to use in the real world and it's destined to cause nothing but misery in everyone's lives until it collapses in a pile of its own incoherent unworkability.

You can see where the idea started, if a man is allowed to identify as a woman or a woman is allowed to identify as a man, they are going to want people to call them by the pronouns that correspond to those genders. She instead of he, her instead of him, etc. Alright, so basically we are asked to speak about men as if they are women and women as if they are men.

In other words, the expectation is that you'll translate this:

“This is Bob. Bob's a man, but Bob believes he's a woman, so when you talk about him, pretend like he's a woman when you refer to him with a pronoun.”

Into this:

“This is Bob. Bob's a man, but Bob believes she's a woman, so when you talk about her, pretend like she's a woman when you refer to her with a pronoun.”

Alright, this is an inappropriate demand, but at least it's a realistic one. We know how to talk about a woman, so we're being told to pretend Bob is a woman and talk accordingly.

Now, how about this one?

“This is Bob. Bob's a man, but Bob believes tey's a pangender, so when you talk about vis, pretend like tey's a woman when you refer to vis with a pronoun.”

So I have questions:

- What's a “tey” or a “vis”? When you hear the words, what concepts come to your mind? Probably nothing.
- What is Bob's preferred objective pronoun? How about his preferred subjective pronoun?
- How long would it take you to write a follow-on sentence using Bob's correct preferred pronouns?

Welcome to the wonderful world of preferred pronouns, the inevitable result of the stupidity of gender identity and its lack of any limiting principles. Gender identity is unable to provide a list of potential genders (you can be whatever you want), which means it obviously can't restrict you to the standard male/female pronouns. (Because what if you decide you aren't a male or a female?) And so we're left with this mess. Everyone can come up with whatever pronouns they want, and you're expected to be able to just remember them and use them in your standard English.

But how many people even know what a pronoun is? Sure, they use them everyday in their language, but how many actually understand the whys and the hows behind pronoun usage? How many understand the difference between subjective and objective, etc? And just as importantly, how many people are capable of memorizing a set of preferred pronouns for every person they know or will ever have to speak about, especially given that some of those pronouns could be completely made-up or could be the same pronouns that others are using but in a different tense?

I lack the creativity to accurately convey how absolutely unbelievably stupid this idea is. I cannot believe someone actually thought it was a

good idea. It's like an April 1st joke that someone forgot to end. It's really, really stupid.

## **Does this mean you think “transgenders” don't exist?**

I include this here simply to highlight that this is such a stupid thing to say. It's a common claim that those of us who don't believe in gender identity therefore don't believe that transgenders exist or are somehow trying to erase their humanity or some other nonsense. I'm not going to waste much time on this, but I will simply say this:

- A transgender is someone who believes their gender doesn't match their biological sex.
- Those people exist.
- Those people are wrong.
- I don't have to believe someone is correct to accept them as humans.
- You don't have the right to *demand* I believe something that contradicts provable reality.

Flat-Earthers believe the earth is flat. They exist, but they're wrong. Anti-vaxxers believe vaccines cause autism. They exist, but they're wrong. Transgenders believe their gender doesn't match their biological sex. They exist, but they're wrong.

The argument “You're saying that transgenders don't exist!”, is a really, really stupid one.

## **If gender identity is so stupid, why is it so powerful?**

It's reasonable to ask, if gender identity is so stupid, then why do so many people believe it and why does it have so much influence over society today?

To answer that, let me share a personal experience. I've been publishing stories and essays for a number of years now, and I make a lot of my

work available as ebooks through many different online outlets including Amazon, Apple Books, and Google Play. I used to make them available via Kobo's bookstore as well, but that stopped in November of [2019] after I released my essay "How to Talk to Progressives about Gender Identity". I had decided to make that essay available as an ebook on the various platforms, so I submitted it to Kobo like I have submitted dozens of other ebooks in the past. But this time was different. Obviously, they really, really didn't like what I had to say about gender identity in that essay because they sent me an email in response informing me they were deleting my account and removing all my books from their website, in other words, they were banning me.

So what can we learn from this experience? Gender identity isn't winning in our society because of intelligence or reason. Gender identity is winning because of *power*. Those who hold secular power within our society are exercising that power to prevent the argument against gender identity from even being made. If you speak against gender identity, if you refuse to go along with the stupidity, you will be canceled: you will be fired, you will be shunned, you will be stripped of any influence you might have had in order to keep society "safe" from the danger you present—the danger of a sound argument.

Imagine if our secular elites did this with evolution. Imagine if they decided evolution was so hateful, bigoted, and discriminatory that it didn't even deserve to be heard. Imagine if they decided that the only explanation of human origins that should be permitted is belief in a vomiting galactic space platypus. How could you convince people that belief in a galactic space platypus was stupid and that belief in evolution made more sense if that argument wasn't even allowed to be made? (*Kobo banned all my books from their bookstore!*)

So right now this isn't a struggle about reason, it's a struggle about power. Either we strip the power from the secular elites who are using that power to impose gender identity on the world, or else we so thoroughly embarrass them about how stupid gender identity is that they quietly reject it themselves out of shame.

## **A Concluding Olive Branch**

All that said, even though gender identity is thoroughly stupid and unworthy of respect in the secular sphere, I maintain my commitment to fully respect and accommodate it within the religious sphere, and I encourage everyone else to do so as well. We all have the right to choose what we wish to believe, but we don't have the right to impose beliefs that contradict provable reality onto others. If we can prove our beliefs, then we can prove them, but if we can't, then we must leave it to others to choose whether to believe them or not.

Gender identity in the religious sphere is completely different from gender identity in the secular sphere. And you have the right to believe in gender identity, as a religious belief, if that is what you choose to believe in. And if you make that choice, and if you make it clear that it's a religious belief instead of a secular one, then I will accommodate that belief. No, I'm not going to use preferred pronouns. No, I'm not going to pretend you're a gender that you're not. But I'll avoid the topic of gender entirely with you to the extent possible. I'll use the single-person gender-neutral "they" to describe you. (I prefer that approach anyway when dealing with an antecedent of unknown gender.) I'll avoid mentioning your biological sex unless it's absolutely necessary, and when I do so, I'll note that you believe (in a religious sense) that your actual gender is different.

Gender identity has as much right to exist and be taken seriously within the religious sphere as any other religious belief, but it doesn't have a right to exist within the secular sphere because stupidity cannot be permitted there and, within secularism, a faith-based belief that contradicts provable reality is really, really stupid.

Secularism is a fragile thing. If it isn't based on reason and proof, then it's no different from religion, and if secularism is simply another religion, then why should it exist at all?

# Real-Gender vs Woke-Gender

In my last essay, “If Gender Identity Isn’t a Religious Belief, Then It’s Really, Really Stupid”, I demonstrated how gender identity, which could be completely respectable as a religious belief, is utterly ridiculous as a secular belief.

One of the things I talked about in that essay is the “What is a woman?” game, and I’ve decided to dive deeper into that topic here because I believe I now have an even better resolution to that game than I settled on in my last essay.

As a reminder, the “What is a woman?” game is simple. After a gender-identity believer says something foolish about gender like “some men have periods” or “some women have penises”, a rational individual will respond with the question “What is a woman?” And the game begins.

Now, with a proof-based concept of gender, the answer is simple: just use the empirical evidence. A woman has certain anatomical characteristics, certain chromosomes, etc. But for a faith-based concept of gender like gender identity, it is far more difficult than first expected, and as a gender-identity believer tries again and again to come up with something that makes sense, they will make their answers more and more convoluted in a vain attempt to make sense of the nonsensical, and that’s what makes the game entertaining. But at the very beginning, a gender-identity believer’s first answer is likely to be:

“A woman is someone who identifies as a woman.”

Now the obvious response from the rational person is that that definition is circular, forcing the gender-identity believer to scramble to come up with a definition that doesn’t involve a logical fallacy, and the game goes on and on.

But I’m going to stop here because after thinking about it more, I actually don’t think that definition is intentionally circular after all. And, more importantly, I think if you dig into the intention behind that statement, you can really understand what gender-identity believers are

claiming, and you can better highlight how foolish gender identity really is.

## **Words and their concepts**

But first let's talk about words and the concepts behind words. If a word has no concept behind it, then it's meaningless. If I write the word "eubl", does that mean anything to you? Probably not. It probably just looks like a random sequence of letters. But what if I rearrange those same letters a different way: "blue". Now that is a word you likely have a clear concept for. Perhaps you picture the color of the sky, or the color of the ocean as it stretches into the horizon. Either way, the word "blue" relates to a concept in your mind, which makes it meaningful. Yet just because a word is meaningful to you, doesn't mean it is useful in communication with others. In order to communicate with a word, the concept you have for that word should match the concept others have for that word as well. Let's take the word "blue" again. In a perfect world, when you said "blue", everyone would know what you meant. But imagine a parent was sadistic and purposefully taught their child that the word "blue" applied to the color of an orange. Now when you say "blue", that child would picture something completely different than what you meant, and confusion would result.

This is what is happening today with the word "gender" and by extension with the words "man" and "woman". There are two separate concepts people are tying to these words, resulting in both confusion and foolishness. I'm going to dive deeper into these two different concepts for the word "gender", but first I want to return to that enlightening game "What is a woman?"

## **Non-circular reason 1: A claim of meaninglessness**

When a gender-identity believer says "A woman is someone who identifies as a woman", there are two ways that could not be circular. To examine the first way, let's jump away from real genders like man and woman and instead focus on made-up genders like non-binary or

pangender. Now, let's try that definition again, using non-binary instead of woman:

“A non-binary is someone who identifies as non-binary.”

Once again, at first glance, this appears like circular reasoning, but I would argue that it's actually saying something that isn't circular. What it's saying is that the only characteristic that the word “non-binary” indicates is that that person identifies as “non-binary”. In other words, it's saying that the word is meaningless. Think about it. What do you actually know about someone who says they are non-binary? Nothing. You know they call themselves non-binary, and that's it. They might as well call themselves pangender, or genderqueer, or any other made-up gender. In every case, the word is meaningless and tells you nothing except that they have chosen to identify as a made-up word.

Now, a gender-identity believer might say, “No, non-binary means this or this” or they might say “No, pangender means this or this”. To which I respond: “Don't be ridiculous. Who made you the gender-identity police?” Gender identity is faith-based. Someone tells you what their gender identity is, and you're required to believe them. Those are the rules, right? That means you could have the manliest of manly lumberjacks who wears nothing but flannel and does nothing but cut down trees and watch football all day, and he could say he's non-binary and there's nothing you can do about it. The word is meaningless. “A non-binary is someone who identifies as non-binary.” That's it. There's nothing more to it. You might as well say your gender identity is dodirdmi or solwooloth. Those words are no less meaningless than non-binary or pangender or any of the other made-up genders.

And this leads to the first non-circular reason for a gender-identity believer to say “A woman is someone who identifies as a woman”: They might be trying to argue that the word “woman” is just as meaningless as the words “non-binary”, “pangender”, or the other made-up genders.

But if this is what they're trying to say, then they're clearly wrong because the word “woman” obviously isn't meaningless. You can see this even amongst gender-identity believers themselves. For example, look at all the fanfare in the progressive media about President-elect Biden's “all-women communications team”. If the word “woman” is meaningless, then who cares if his proposed communications team is

composed entirely of women or not? Would anyone care how many “non-binary” there were in a group compared to how many “pangenders”? Of course not because those words are equally meaningless so they’re interchangeable in a way that “man” and “woman” are not. As another example, look at California’s law that corporate boards must include at least one woman. Or look at the countless articles worrying about pay differences between men and women. Again, if the word “woman” is meaningless, then who cares? But people do care, so clearly there is *something* behind the word “woman” that everyone, even those who believe in gender identity, recognize.

## **Non-circular reason 2: Two different concepts for the word “woman”**

And this leads me to the second way the statement “A woman is someone who identifies as a woman” can be non-circular: It could be referring to two different concepts for the word “woman”.

In other words:

“A (definition one) woman is someone who identifies as a (definition two) woman.”

This, I think, is the real answer. What’s going on here is there are two different concepts behind the word “gender”, which extends into two different concepts behind the words “man” and “woman”. Let’s call these two concepts real-gender and woke-gender.

## **Real-gender vs woke-gender**

The real-gender concept of gender is simple: The word “gender” is just a euphemism for the word “sex”. In other words, people say “gender” because they are embarrassed to say “sex”. Imagine a questionnaire that asks people what their sex is. If enough people fill it out, then you know that eventually someone is going to answer “Yes”, or “Please”, or “Not Enough”. The way to avoid that is to replace “Sex” on the questionnaire with “Gender”, and with real-gender that works fine because the two

words are synonyms. Your gender is your sex. Your sex is your gender. And this direct relationship with biological sex makes real-gender completely proof-based. You are the gender you can prove you are. That's all there is to it.

The woke-gender concept of gender, on the other hand, is based on the belief that gender is something different than sex. Woke-gender claims that gender is a social construct and that your gender is based, not on your biological sex, but on your gender identity, which is what you *believe* your gender is. There is no proof of gender identity. No way to verify it, and no way to limit it to real genders. You can make up a word and say it is your gender, and no one can tell you you're wrong. Woke-gender is entirely faith-based. Someone says what gender they are, and everyone is expected to just believe them.

Now, with the competing concepts of real-gender and woke-gender explained, here is the true answer to "What is a woman?" according to a gender-identity believer:

**"A woke-gender woman is someone who identifies as a real-gender woman."**

Can't you see? The concept of "woman" within woke-gender cannot exist without the concept of "woman" within real-gender. It is that concept of "woman" within real-gender that gives that word the *something* everyone knows is there. And this is why woke-gender is entirely dependent on real-gender. It cannot exist without it. Woke-gender is a parasite of real-gender, and it's a parasite that is trying to kill its host, which is rather stupid, but that's gender identity for you.

And with this understanding of the two different concepts for the word "gender", it should be obvious what concept of gender someone is using when they speak to you. If they say your gender is your biological sex or they say a woman is someone with XX chromosomes, then they're using real-gender. On the other hand, if they say that gender is a social construct or they say that a man who identifies as a woman is a woman, then they're using woke-gender.

Which leads us to our final question: If there are two competing concepts for the word "gender", which concept should be used in a secular society? The answer is simple. Real-gender is proof-based. Woke-gender

is faith-based. In a secular society, proof must always be given precedence over faith. Why is evolution taught in public schools instead of creationism? Because proof is given precedence over faith in a secular society. Why is archaeological evidence used to teach ancient American history in public schools instead of the Book of Mormon? Because proof is given precedence over faith in a secular society. And the same goes for gender. Real-gender must be used in a secular society because only real-gender is based on proof, and a secular society must always give precedence to proof.

You have the right to believe in woke-gender if you choose to, just like you have the right to believe in creationism or the Book of Mormon or angels or visions or reincarnation or anything else you choose to believe in. Everyone has that right, and I, for one, openly believe in many faith-based beliefs. But no one, neither you nor I nor anyone else, has the right to impose faith-based beliefs that contradict provable reality onto someone else. That cannot be permitted in a secular society. For secularism to be secularism, proof must always have priority over faith, otherwise secularism effectively becomes just another religion.

And that is ultimately what we are fighting against: a corrupted secularism that has failed to live up to its own name, a secularism that has been so focused on opposing formal religion that it has failed to recognize it was acting like a religion itself. That cannot be permitted to happen. If secularism is allowed to act like a religion, then it becomes the de facto state religion and religious freedom for everyone vanishes. We must stand up for the preference of proof over faith within a secular society because without that, we have no freedom to believe.

# **A Non-Religious Theocracy**

In the sixth season of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, there is a two-part episode called “Chain of Command” where Captain Picard, the starship captain of the USS Enterprise, is captured by the Cardassians, a hostile alien race on the verge of war with the Federation. Seeking military intelligence, the Cardassians interrogate Captain Picard, torturing him in an attempt to break him. One of the tactics the interrogator uses against Picard is to shine four bright lights into his face and ask how many lights he sees. When Picard answers that he sees four lights, the interrogator tortures him, insisting there are five lights despite there only being four. The goal is to coerce Picard to accept whatever the interrogator claims reality to be, even when it directly contradicts what Picard himself knows to be true. This torture technique continues through various scenes until the final confrontation between Picard and his interrogator, where the interrogator has lied and claimed that the Enterprise has been destroyed, that Picard has been reported dead, and that he now faces a lifetime of torture unless he cooperates. Once again the four lights are shined in Picard’s face and once again he is asked how many lights he sees. There is a dramatic pause here where the audience is left to wonder if Picard will cling to reality or if he will bend to the tyranny of the interrogator; but before Picard can answer, he is rescued, and as he leaves the interrogator, he defiantly declares for the last time: “THERE ARE FOUR LIGHTS!”

## **A non-religious theocracy**

So let’s talk now about reality and about standing up for reality. This is the third in a trio of essays on gender identity. It started with “If Gender Identity Isn’t a Religious Belief, Then It’s Really, Really Stupid”, it continued with “Real-Gender vs Woke-Gender”, and it concludes with this essay.

The underlying theme of this set of essays has been a comparison between faith-based beliefs and proof-based beliefs. Gender identity, as I have demonstrated, is a faith-based belief and should be treated as one; and faith-based beliefs that contradict provable reality (like gender

identity does) should never be accepted by a secular society; otherwise, your secular society is nothing more than a non-religious theocracy.

Gender identity is logically incoherent. Simply put, there is no there there. People believe in gender identity because they have been told to believe in it. When they are no longer told to believe in it, they will stop believing in it. I expect that day will come, hopefully soon, but in the meantime, while gender identity enjoys its irrational day in the sun, it serves as a perfect illustration of a truth about humanity: Everyone has a religion. Or to put it a different way: Everyone believes in some faith-based beliefs.

And gender identity serves as the perfect example of that truth. We have a proof-based concept of gender, biological sex, which has been used for thousands of years, yet someone just decided to throw that away in favor of a faith-based concept of gender, gender identity, and people just believed it. No proof. No rational reason to believe it. They just believed. And what is so obnoxious is that many of these gender-identity believers are the exact same people who constantly demean organized religion and faith in general. Do you remember the first decade of the 2000s when President Bush was in office? Do you remember how often liberals would call religious conservatives the “American Taliban”? How many of those exact same people now call someone a “transphobe” for believing that gender should be decided objectively by proof instead of by faith in gender identity? Who is the “American Taliban” now?

It is a common tactic of the political left to warn of a looming theocracy that will descend on America if the wrong politician is elected or the wrong law is passed, but really what would be the difference at this point? Gender identity, a faith-based belief that contradicts provable reality, is being imposed on our society. Sure, it’s a faith-based belief that doesn’t stem from an organized religion, but so what? Is that supposed to make me feel better? Whether I am forced to believe that a biological man is a woman, or whether I am forced to believe that the earth was created in seven 24-hour days, either way I am being forced to believe something that contradicts provable reality, either way I’m staring at four lights and being told I have to believe there are five.

And that’s grossly wrong. Freedom of religion, freedom of belief, is a core human right. This is something so core to humanity that revolutions

can be fought over it. Everyone has the right to believe what they choose to believe, but no one has the right to force others to believe something that contradicts provable reality. Proof must be the foundation of the secular sphere. It must be the common language, the common framework that allows freedom of belief **for everyone** to exist.

## **Participants instead of principles**

All this time, secularism has been focused on the wrong opponent. All this time, it has thought the threat came from organized religion when the actual threat is different. Imagine you live in the early 20th century and you believe strongly in evolution. You have studied the science, you have examined the proof, and you believe evolution is the best explanation for that proof. And yet as you try to base secular society on that proof, as you try to have it taught in public schools for example, you continue to be blocked by belief in creationism. That belief comes from organized religion, so you aim your arguments against religion and eventually you win, and evolution becomes the preferred belief about human origins within the secular sphere. Satisfied, you fall asleep for a hundred years confident that when you awake, everything will be as it should be. But when you wake up a century later you are shocked to find that belief in evolution as the origin of the human species has been replaced by the belief that humanity was spawned in the vomit of a galactic space platypus. Your immediate thought is that some strange new religion has taken hold, but you're shocked to learn that, no, people don't believe in a galactic space platypus because of religion, they believe in it because they have been told to believe in it, and they just do. You demand proof for this absurd belief, and you are called a bigot. You continue to argue that proof-based belief in evolution should be given precedence over faith-based belief in a galactic space platypus, and you are deplatformed, canceled, and blocked from even making the argument.

The problem is that you misjudged the situation. You saw the conflict, and you saw the participants in the conflict, and you thought it was the participants that mattered—but you were wrong. It's not the participants in the conflict that really matter, it's the principles each of those participants stand for. This is key because participants can change over time. Perhaps in the past they stood for a particular principle, but over years and decades they can change, morphing into something

unrecognizable from where they started. Consider what has happened to the ACLU and the SPLC.

And that is what has happened in this example as well. You assumed that as long as you favored the non-religious over the religious, then proof would always triumph over faith. What you didn't consider is that a non-religious person is capable of believing a faith-based belief, and a religious person is capable of believing a proof-based belief. It's not the participants you should have been focusing on, it's the principles. And the principle that failed in this hypothetical scenario is the preference for proof over faith within a secular society. And it is that same principle that is being abandoned as more and more supposed secularists champion gender identity. Gender identity is not based on proof; it is based on faith. According to gender identity, how can you know someone's gender? Can you know it based on their chromosomes? No. Can you know it based on their anatomy? No. Can you know it based on anything objective, anything measurable at all? No. According to gender identity, you can know someone's gender only by asking them. They tell you what their gender is, and you are simply expected to have faith in their words. It is completely faith-based, and this faith-based belief of gender is being preferred within our society to the proof-based belief that gender should be determined by biological sex. Faith is winning over proof, and it is the non-religious that are leading the charge.

## **The true danger to secular society**

Tell me, who is more dangerous to secular society, a man such as myself who chooses to believe in an organized religion, a man who chooses to believe in faith-based beliefs that contradict provable reality, yet a man who understands that such beliefs cannot be forced on others, and a man who understands that within the secular sphere, proof must be given precedence over faith. Who is more dangerous? That man, or a man who on the one hand shouts "Trust the Science!" and constantly belittles others for believing in a "magic sky fairy", yet on the other hand completely throws out all demand for objectivity or proof when it comes to gender? "Trust the Science" indeed! Either proof matters or it doesn't. Not belonging to an organized religion doesn't give you license to throw provable reality out the window. It's not the participants that matter, it's not the organization or movement or ideology you belong to, it's the principles; and secularism cannot exist without a preference for proof

over faith. Without that bedrock principle, secularism is indistinguishable from religion, and all those who supposedly fight against a looming theocracy are actually fighting to impose a non-religious theocracy instead.

Let's return to the original story about Captain Picard and the interrogator who claimed there were five lights instead of four. Whether the interrogator said, "There are five lights because God says so," or he said, "There are five lights because I say so," is there really any difference? Either way he is claiming that reality itself should be dictated by his words rather than by what Picard can perceive it to be. Either way he is demanding that Picard believe him based on faith rather than proof. Either way he is a tyrant, someone who must be opposed in order for freedom to exist. Reality is reality. You can believe what you wish about it, I can believe what I wish about it, but when our beliefs contradict what the proof currently shows to be true, then we have no right to force our beliefs onto others. And that describes gender identity 100%. It is faith-based. It contradicts the available proof. It absolutely should not be used to determine gender by a secular society, not when a perfectly objective proof-based concept of gender is readily available and has served us well for all of human history.

And so, I have a final message for all those wannabe tyrants who on the one hand claim to trust science and yet on the other hand call me a bigot or a transphobe because I respect proof when it comes to gender:

**THERE ARE FOUR LIGHTS!**



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