

CHAPTER FOUR

I Am He As You Are She

Getting Our Terms Straight

On November 15, 2021, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, led by Dr. Anthony Fauci, awarded a \$205,000 grant to the Scripps Research Institute in Florida to pump male monkeys full of female hormones.⁹³ The goal of the study was to discover why HIV infections are now rampant among transgendered women.

Hmm. Let's see. You've got a virus that historically has disproportionately afflicted gay men, and now it is showing up disproportionately in transgendered women.

Yeah, it's a real puzzler.

This is what happens when you elevate subjectivity over objectivity, when you forget you're pretending, when you reject what's demonstrably true in favor of what a sympathetic group of people *wishes* were true. You start out with good intentions. But you end up flushing two hundred grand down the toilet and inspiring chimps to *feng shui* their cages.

It should go without saying, but I'll say it regardless, since in the current political climate *what should go without saying* needs to be said over and over: the reason HIV infections, previously found disproportionately in gay men, are now found disproportionately in transgendered women is that, despite what they believe themselves to be, despite their heartfelt demand that the rest of us agree with them, despite the willingness of the rest of us cater to that demand, *transgendered women are in fact men*. More to the point, with

respect to the Scripps study, transgendered women are men who are engaging in the same set of behaviors by which the HIV virus has always been transmitted. You don't need a research grant to figure that out. You only need to acknowledge reality.

“Transgendered women” are men. “Transgendered men” are women.

That's the reality.

How do I, absent a medical degree, absent a psychologist license, and with not a piece of performance art to my credit, feel competent to render such a judgment? Because the debate isn't about medicine, psychology, or bullshit. It's about language. The words are not difficult: a man is an adult male human being; a woman is an adult female human being. That is what the words “man” and “woman” mean. So, too, “male” and “female” have clear definitions. They are sexual classifications. They are not mysterious or conjectural. There are two and only two sexual classifications, and even in those vanishingly rare cases where observable anatomy is not immediately decisive, scientists can peer into a person's DNA profile and determine his or her biological sex with 100 percent accuracy.

These points become contentious only if you *deconstruct* the terms “man” and “woman,” and “male,” and “female,” which is the reason gender studies is joined at the hip to postmodernism. By means of deconstruction—that is, targeted free-association, honey-glazed with pseudo-intellectual gibberish—you attempt to show how such terms are not the binaries that their dictionary definitions indicate, that they don't exhaust the categorical possibilities, and furthermore that they are not hard and fast designations but merely “assignments” that can be overridden at any point by imagination and will.

No one in their right mind honestly believes that.

Which is to say that many people *who are not in their right mind* honestly *do* believe it, and many others *who are in their right mind* dishonestly *say* they believe it. But how far through the looking glass are they willing to travel? According to the National Human Genome Research Institute:

Identical twins (also called monozygotic twins) result from the fertilization of a single egg by a single sperm, with the fertilized egg

then splitting into two. Identical twins share the same genomes and are always of the same sex. In contrast, fraternal (dizygotic) twins result from the fertilization of two separate eggs with two different sperm during the same pregnancy. They share half of their genomes, just like any other siblings. Fraternal twins may not be of the same sex or have similar appearances.⁹⁴

If sexual classifications are assigned rather than observed, if they are fluid rather than fixed, then the National Human Genome Research Institute is spreading misinformation. Identical twins are *not* always the same sex. Are you going to tell the folks in the lab coats, or should I?

How far through the looking glass are *you* willing to travel? Here is a self test, two propositions:

Proposition One: “*One characteristic common to all hominids is that only the female of the species can give birth.*”

Proposition Two: “*Humans are unique among hominids in that both the female and the male of the species can give birth.*”

Only one of those propositions can be true. Which is it?

It’s possible, to be sure, that both propositions are false. It’s possible that the reason primatologists tend to subscribe to Proposition One is that chimpanzees lack the cognitive and verbal capacities to communicate their true identities, that out in the savanna, when they let their hair down, male chimps are splatting out babies left and right, then suckling them in tender simian moments—right before those males gather in groups to tear off the penises of lone males (if indeed they are males) who trespass into their territory. Many textbooks, in that case, will have to be rewritten.

So, yes, it’s *possible* that both propositions are false. But it’s not possible, not *logically* possible, that both are true. Only one can be true. So what’s your opinion? Are both false? Or is Proposition One true? Or Proposition Two? You’ve only got three possibilities. Before you answer, however, give a moment’s thought to all those #IFuckingLoveScience memes you’ve posted to social media. Just how much do you fucking love science?

The answer is that Proposition One is true. Only female hominids give

birth.

You know that, and I know that, and every primatologist on earth knows that.

Human beings are hominids. Therefore, only female human beings give birth.

So what does it tell you when mainstream media, including many traditional news sources, regularly report that men—male human beings—have given birth?

“Transgender man gives birth to a boy.”⁹⁵

“The dad who gave birth: ‘Being pregnant doesn’t change me being a trans man.’”⁹⁶

“In a first for Illinois, transgender man who gave birth will be listed as the father on his baby’s birth certificate.”⁹⁷

“Transgender man gives birth to healthy baby, talks navigating pregnancy as a man.”⁹⁸

“Trans man: ‘How I coped with my shock pregnancy.’”⁹⁹

“Transgender man gives birth after ‘Grindr one-night stand’ while transitioning.”¹⁰⁰

“Transgender man who gave birth to his son criticizes medical staff for calling him ‘mother’ and claims that it’s ‘important’ to STOP automatically linking pregnancy with being a woman.”¹⁰¹

Each of these headlines is howlingly false. Yet the reportage that follows each one is straightforward, without a hint of equivocation or irony. So let me re-reiterate, in case it still has not sunk in: a “transgendered man” is a woman. She is not a man *in a certain sense*; she is not a man *with an asterisk*. She is a woman, a female human being, to whom, by the rules of English grammar, female pronouns properly attach. If she is sincere in believing that she is a man, and there is no reason to suspect insincerity in any of the reported cases, then she is delusional.

According to Merriam-Webster, a *delusion* is “a persistent false psychotic belief regarding the self or persons or objects outside the self that is maintained despite indisputable evidence to the contrary.” The fact that each of the women referenced in the headlines *gave birth to a living, breathing,*

human child is indisputable evidence that she is female; the fact that each of them continues to insist that she is male is definitionally delusional.

Thus, a factual headline for each of these news reports would substitute the phrase “delusional woman” for “transgender man.” But of course if you make that substitution, none of the reports is news. Delusional women have given birth, as Senator Hirono might say, since time immemorial.

“Transgender men” and “transgender women” are delusional women and delusional men. “Transgender children” are delusional children. They are to be pitied, not indulged, and their mental health needs addressed as compassionately as possible.

But what is the most compassionate way to address the mental health needs of a delusional person, male or female? That’s a complex question. Surely, though, we can agree that acquiescing to his or her delusion isn’t the way to go. You don’t tell a schizophrenic man that the voices inside his head really and truly exist outside his head. You don’t tell a woman suffering from multiple personality disorder that she really and truly is more than one person. That’s not compassion.

Nor is it compassion to acquiesce to the delusions of a transgendered person. Nor is it progress, or justice in any sense of the word, to compel acquiescence on pain of ostracism or termination of employment.¹⁰²

But wait! Haven’t I overlooked the fact that *gender identity* and *sexual classification* aren’t the same?

No, I haven’t overlooked that. On the contrary, the reason the preceding analysis feels unsympathetic, and perhaps even cruel, is that I’m insisting that gender identity and sexual classification are not only different but remain distinct in our discussion. This runs counter to the shape-shifting rhetoric of transgender-activists who slide back and forth, sometimes conflating gender identity and sexual classification, sometimes separating them, in piecing together their arguments. If you keep them distinct, those arguments evaporate.

What is gender identity?

According to the World Health Organization, gender identity “refers to a person’s deeply felt, internal and individual experience of gender, which may

or may not correspond to the person's physiology or designated sex at birth."¹⁰³ The problem, of course, is that now you need to define gender, and here things start to get slippery, since the WHO's definition of gender rambles along for three digressive, decidedly Woke, and not altogether coherent paragraphs:

Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviors and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.

Gender is hierarchical and produces inequalities that intersect with other social and economic inequalities. Gender-based discrimination intersects with other factors of discrimination, such as ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability, age, geographic location, gender identity and sexual orientation, among others. This is referred to as intersectionality.

Gender interacts with but is different from sex, which refers to the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males and intersex persons, such as chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs. Gender and sex are related to but different from gender identity....¹⁰⁴

Integrating the WHO's definition of "gender" with its definition of "gender identity," we can thus say that gender identity refers to a person's embrace or rejection of the socially constructed behaviors and roles traditionally associated with being a woman, man, girl, or boy; these behaviors and roles may or may not match up with a person's sexual classification. When gender identity and sexual classification don't match, the person may or may not adopt the designation, "transgender."

None of that is especially problematic...as long as we keep gender identity and sexual classification separate in our minds. It only becomes problematic if we don't. Transgender-activists don't. They conflate gender identity and

sexual classification. It is both a rhetorical tactic and an emotional sop.

That is the core of the debate over transgenderism.

The Meaning of “Is”

After his Senate confirmation as Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services in October of 2021, Dr. Rachel Levine issued a statement expressing his heartfelt gratitude: “I am humbled to serve as the first female four-star officer of the US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps and first openly transgender four-star officer across any of the eight uniformed services.”¹⁰⁵

But, of course, he *isn't* the first female four-star officer of the US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. He is another in a still-unbroken line of male officers to serve in that capacity, though he is apparently the first one *who identifies as female*. In the real world that exists beyond his self-perception, the world in which the rest of us are compelled to live, regardless of our willingness to embrace falsehoods in order to massage other people's feelings, Dr. Levine is a man who erroneously insists that he is a woman, serving in a position of great responsibility in the Biden administration.

It's an important job, and he has every reason to feel good about himself; it doesn't change who and what he is.

You'll search Dr. Levine's *Wikipedia* entry in vain to discover that he was born Richard Levine. By contrast with other biographical entries, the birth names of transgendered people are suppressed on Wikipedia following a July 2015 company edict: “It was decided that [the Wikipedia Style Manual] should be updated to say that a trans or non-binary person's former name should only be mentioned in the lead if they were notable under that name.”¹⁰⁶

Why are the birth names of transgendered or nonbinary people omitted on Wikipedia? Because the reportage or utterance of such information has been deemed taboo by transgender-activists. The taboo even has a name: *dead-naming*.

What clearer evidence could there be of the cluster of cultural neuroses that orbit the idea of transgenderism, or of our collective determination to indulge

and infantilize those who identify as transgendered, than the existence of such a taboo? How can it be that transgendered people themselves fail to hear the condescension? *The sound of the name given to them when they were born is just too painful for their delicate psyches, so we must not communicate it in any way....*

I'm reminded of a Facebook exchange I had with an old graduate school friend several years ago. We were chatting about the cultural differences she'd experienced, as a lesbian, moving from New York City to the South. "My friend was assaulted because he used a men's room," she informed me. (Given the topic of this chapter, I imagine you can figure out what she meant.) Horrified, I told her that culture had nothing to do with a guy getting assaulted for using a men's room; I asked her if her friend had been robbed, or if he'd known his attacker, or if he had said or done anything that might have drawn his attacker's attention or in some way provoked him. During the entire exchange, all she could do by way of clarification was say, "You just don't get it," or, "You're still not getting it," or, "You're missing the point." Why? Because in order to accurately convey what had happened, she would have had to admit that her friend wasn't *really* a man, that she was a woman using a men's room, and that *that* was what had gotten the attention of her attacker.

Does that alter the morality of what happened in the restroom? No, if anything it makes what happened worse. (Call me old-fashioned, but I still cling to the idea that a man assaulting a woman is worse than a man assaulting another man.) The point here is that my friend and I went back and forth for five minutes before the truth at last dawned on me...and even then, even after the light bulb turned on, my friend couldn't bring herself to acknowledge the reality of the incident.

As I said earlier, the debate over transgender-recognition is ultimately a debate over language, about whether the meaning of words is stable enough to determine the truth value of propositions.

But back to Dr. (now Admiral) Levine. He is a man, according to the definition of "man" found in every English dictionary, who is from every indication sincerely convinced that he is a woman. He is wrong. He's not

wrong to identify as a woman; he's not wrong to express that identification in the way he looks, the way he dresses, and the way he behaves. But as a factual matter, he is not a woman. The proposition "Rachel Levine is a woman" does not correspond with reality.

If you want to pretend that Rachel Levine is a woman, that's your affair. It's a private decision. But a society whose intellectual foundation is laid on the Enlightenment values of rational inquiry, socioreligious tolerance, and natural rights cannot impose a kindly fiction on its members, one by one or en masse.

This is not to say that transgenderism, the psychological condition, is not real. Recent studies have suggested that it may have a genetic component.¹⁰⁷ If the research pans out, then that would prove a measurable correlation between a transgendered person's genetic profile and his sense of distress at his sexual classification. But it still wouldn't prove that his sexual classification is erroneous.

Again, the comparison with schizophrenia is instructive. Schizophrenia also seems to have a genetic marker.¹⁰⁸ But that doesn't mean that the voices a schizophrenic hears inside his head exist outside his head.

Delusions are a reality. But the content of delusions is, by definition, unreal.

The point must be made over and over because the entire debate turns on it: gender identity is an altogether subjective phenomenon. It's a perception, often an unshakable perception, of who and what you are. Like all perceptions, however, it must be compared with reality to determine whether it is true or untrue—that is, whether or not it corresponds with reality. The fact that a perception is deeply felt, or even unshakable, does not count toward gauging that correspondence.

Like every other person to have served as assistant secretary of Health and Human Services, Dr. Rachel Levine is a man. He *feels* like a woman. He *identifies* as a woman. He *expresses* that identity in ways that are traditionally female. None of this is in dispute. None of it is problematic. Nevertheless, he *isn't* a woman. The meaning of "is" is distinct from the meaning of "feels"... or "identifies"...or "expresses." That which is, is. That which *could be*,

should be, or in a perfect world *would be*, but isn't, is not.

The Nonbinary Bind

Oscar-nominated actress Elliot Page, formerly known as Ellen Page, teenaged star of the hit movie *Juno*, announced in late November 2020 that she was transgendered.¹⁰⁹

Hi friends, I want to share with you that I am trans, my pronouns are he/they and my name is Elliot... I love that I am trans. And I love that I am queer. And the more I hold myself close and fully embrace who I am, the more I dream, the more my heart grows and the more I thrive. To all the trans people who deal with harassment, self-loathing, abuse, and the threat of violence every day: I see you, I love you, and I will do everything I can to change this world for the better.

Page subsequently clarified that she was neither male nor female but “nonbinary.” That is, she does not identify as a man or a woman but as both, or neither—which hints at, but cannot fully account for, the reason she prefers the pronouns “he” and “they.” That lacuna is filled, to a certain extent, by the term “queer,” which means whatever people who identify as queer want it to mean; it is intended to be understood by non-queer people as roughly: “I don’t fit into your traditional logical categories, so either love me for my irreducible singularity, or shut the fuck up.”

Except, of course, that queer people, and nonbinary people, and people who mingle around the smorgasbord of initials, punctuation marks, and printer symbols being served at the end of “LGB,” *do* in fact fit into traditional, logical categories. They may not want to fit into them, but the categories exist nevertheless, encompassing them, just as those categories have encompassed individual expressions of fauna ever since the earth started burping up sexually-bifurcated species all those eons ago.

More to the point, it is a philosophical error—specifically, Bishop Berkeley’s error—to think that real things, such as the sexual bifurcation of