



Queer Theory: A deep dive

Dr. Neil Shenvi

American Christian Tours

Jan. 12-13, 2023

A Biblical Response to Gender Ideology

- Why does it matter?
- Understanding Queer Theory
- Engaging Gender Ideology
- Practical Questions
- Acknowledgements

J.K. Rowling



J.K. Rowling ✓
@jk_rowling



'People who menstruate.' I'm sure there used to be a word for those people. Someone help me out. Wumben? Wimpund? Woomud?

Opinion: Creating a more equal post-COVID-19 world for people who menstruate



Opinion: Creating a more equal post-COVID-19 world for people who me...
What implications does COVID-19 have on the global menstrual health and hygiene agenda? WASH and health experts explain.
[devex.com](#)

5:35 PM · Jun 6, 2020



J.K. Rowling ✓
@jk_rowling

The idea that women like me, who've been empathetic to trans people for decades, feeling kinship because they're vulnerable in the same way as women - ie, to male violence - 'hate' trans people because they think sex is real and has lived consequences - is a nonsense.

7:09 PM · Jun 6, 2020



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J.K. Rowling ✓
@jk_rowling

I respect every trans person's right to live any way that feels authentic and comfortable to them. I'd march with you if you were discriminated against on the basis of being trans. At the same time, my life has been shaped by being female. I do not believe it's hateful to say so.

7:16 PM · Jun 6, 2020



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J.K. Rowling



J.K. Rowling ✓
@jk_rowling



If sex isn't real, there's no same-sex attraction. If sex isn't real, the lived reality of women globally is erased. I know and love trans people, but erasing the concept of sex removes the ability of many to meaningfully discuss their lives. It isn't hate to speak the truth.

6:02 PM · Jun 6, 2020



231.1K



82.3K people are Tweeting about this

“Transgender women are women.” – Daniel Radcliffe (Harry)

“Trans people are who they say they are” – Emma Watson (Hermione)

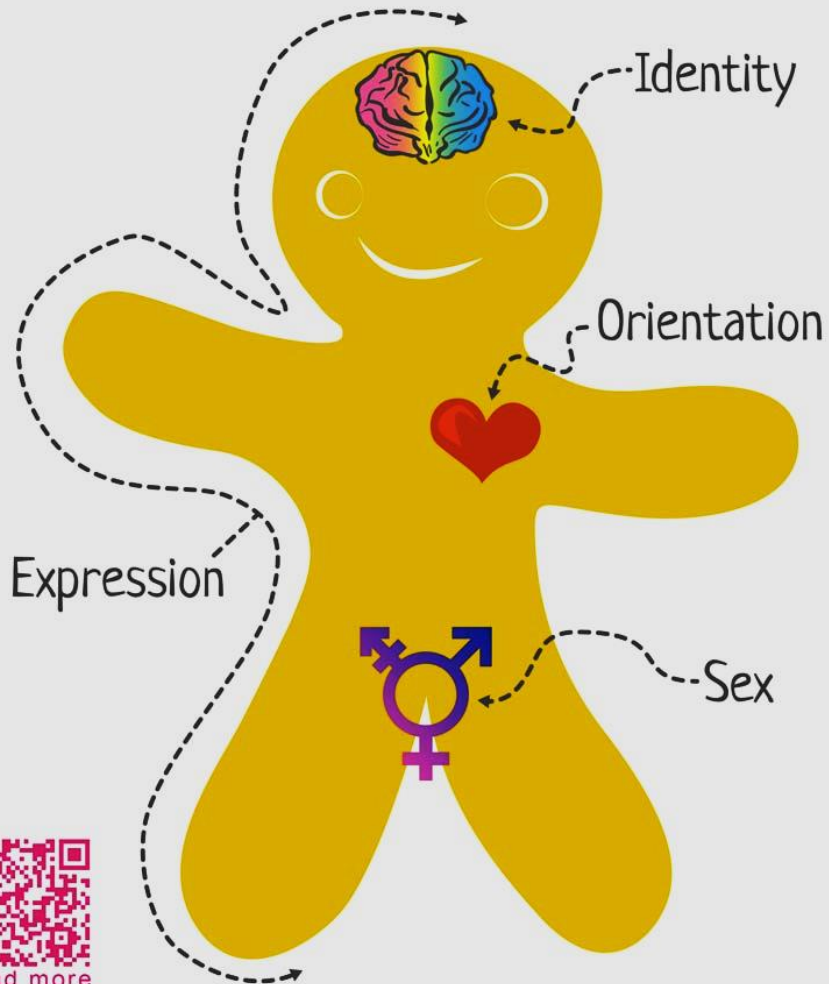
“Trans women are women. Trans men are men,” – Rupert Grint (Ron)

“Transwomen are women.” – Bonnie Wright (Ginny)

“Trans women are women, trans men are men” – Eddie Redmayne (Newt)

The Genderbread Person

by www.ItsPronouncedMetrosexual.com



Gender Identity

Woman Genderqueer Man

Gender identity is how you, in your head, think about yourself. It's the chemistry that composes you (e.g., hormonal levels) and how you interpret what that means.

Gender Expression

Feminine Androgynous Masculine

Gender expression is how you demonstrate your gender (based on traditional gender roles) through the ways you act, dress, behave, and interact.

Biological Sex

Female Intersex Male

Biological sex refers to the objectively measurable organs, hormones, and chromosomes. Female = vagina, ovaries, XX chromosomes; male = penis, testes, XY chromosomes; intersex = a combination of the two.

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual Bisexual Homosexual

Sexual orientation is who you are physically, spiritually, and emotionally attracted to, based on their sex/gender in relation to your own.

CNN on Sex and Gender Identity

Though [the two executive orders](#) signed by Noem do not explicitly mention transgender athletes, they reference the supposed harms of the participation of "males" in women's athletics -- an echo of the transphobic claim, cited in other similar legislative initiatives, that transgender women are not women. The orders also reference "biological sex," a [disputed](#) term that refers to the sex as listed on students' original birth certificates.

It's not possible to know a person's gender identity at birth, and there is no consensus criteria for assigning sex at birth.



Supporters of the ban have argued that trans women have a physical advantage over cisgender women in sports, but trans advocates and some Democratic

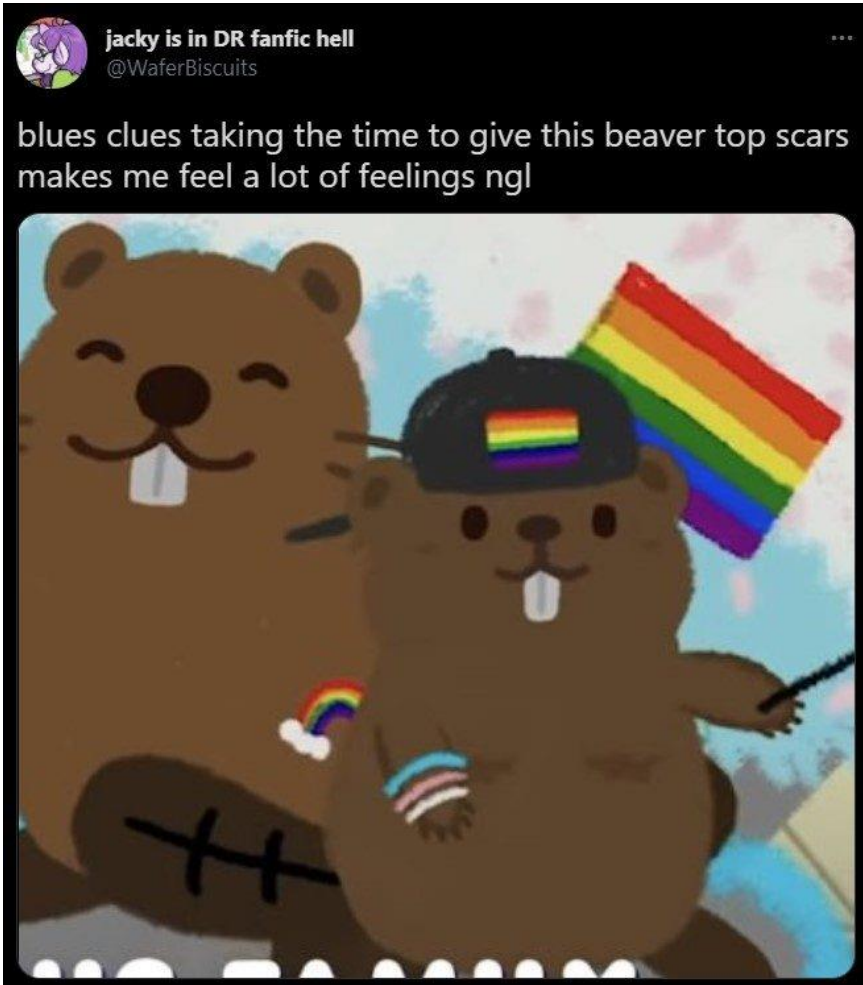
Black Lives Matter

“We are self-reflexive and do the work required to dismantle cisgender privilege and uplift Black trans folk, especially Black trans women who continue to be disproportionately impacted by trans-antagonistic violence...

We foster a queer-affirming network. When we gather, we do so with the intention of freeing ourselves from the tight grip of heteronormative thinking, or rather, the belief that all in the world are heterosexual (unless s/he or they disclose otherwise).”



Blue's Clues Pride Month Cartoon



"Families marching one-by-one

Hurrah, hurrah

Families marching one-by-one

Hurrah, hurrah

This family has two mommies

They love each other so proudly

And they all go marching in the Big
Parade...

These babas are non-binary

They love each other so proudly...

Ace, bi and pan grown-ups you see can
love each other so proudly

And they all go marching in the Big
Parade"

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- Why does it matter?
- Understanding Queer Theory
 - Sex vs. gender
 - Gender and sexual norms as oppressive social constructs
 - Intersectional oppression
 - Deconstruction of all norms
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The Origins of Queer Theory



Jacques Derrida



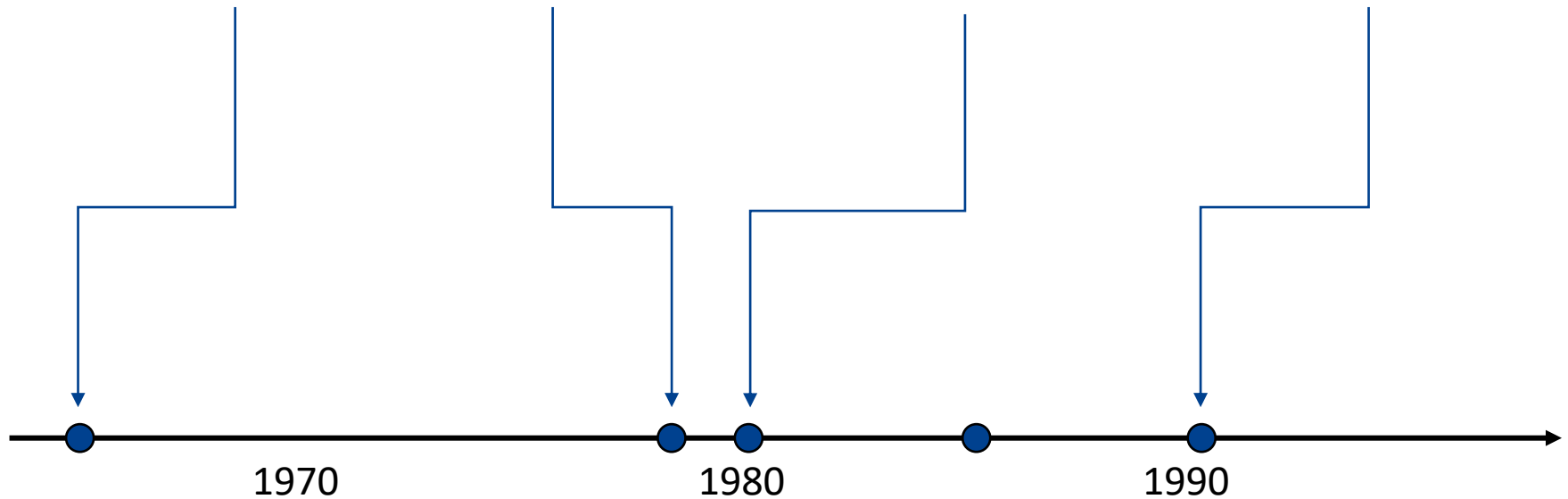
Michel Foucault



Adrienne Rich



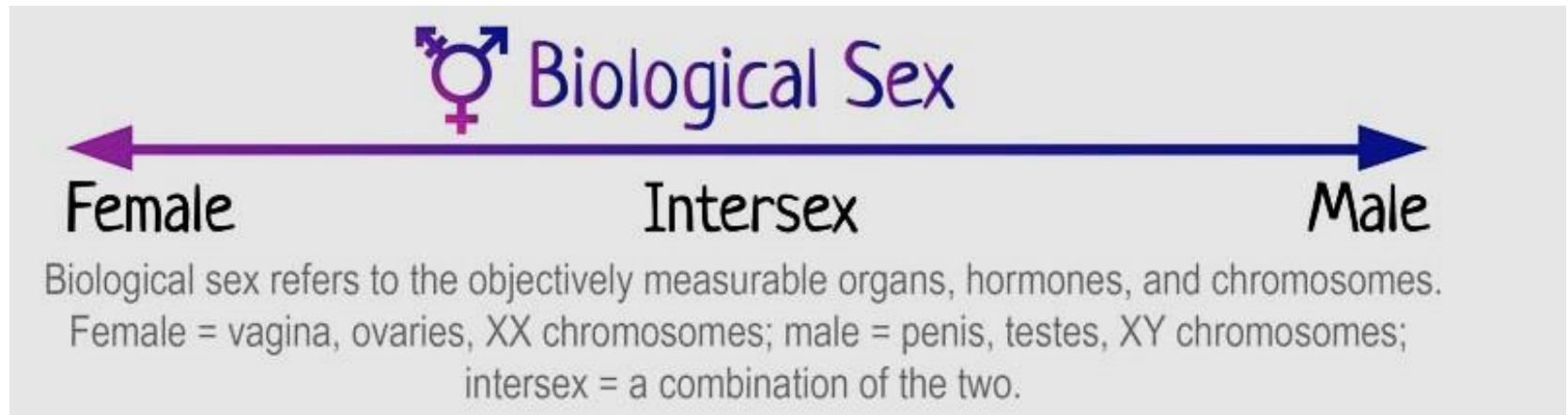
Judith Butler



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Sex vs. Gender



Sex vs. Gender

“Gender is a language, a system of meanings and symbols, along with the rules, privileges, and punishments pertaining to their use—for power and sexuality (masculinity and femininity, strength and vulnerability, action and passivity, dominance and weakness)” – Wilchins, Queer Theory, Gender Theory, p. 40-41



Sex vs. Gender

“Western society’s values legitimate gendering by claiming that it all comes from physiology – female and male procreative differences. But **gender and sex are not equivalent, and gender as a social construction does not flow automatically from genitalia and reproductive organs,** the main physiological differences of females and males” - Judith Lorber, “Night to His Day,” in *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*, p. 205



Sex vs. Gender

“gender, like race, is a socially constructed experience, not a biological imperative...Sex refers to one’s biological identity as male or female; gender refers to the systematic structuring of relationships between women and men in social institutions. Gender is a learned identity, but, as with race, it cannot be understood at the individual level alone.” - Anderson and Collins, *Race, Class, and Gender*, p. 51

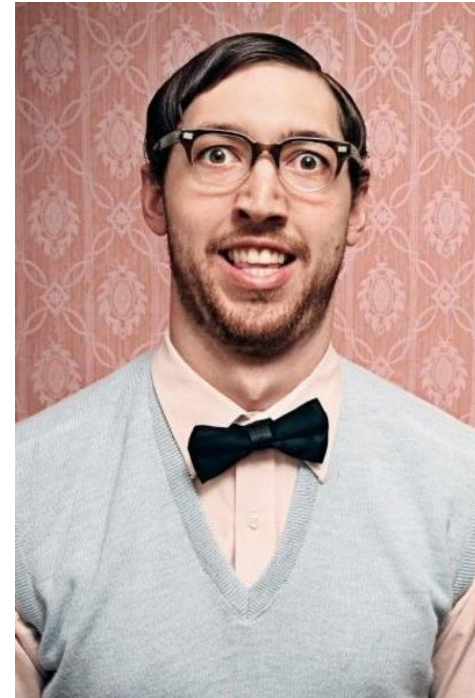


Analogy to “Jock” and “Nerd”

“Jock”

“Nerd”

Social
Category:



Biological
Category:

> 6-feet tall

< 6-feet tall

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Gender and Sexual Norms as Oppressive Social Constructs

“Western thought tends to cast any difference into opposing halves that between them exhaust all meaning... But with gender, it’s exactly this space in between – familiar binaries like masculine/feminine, man/woman, top/bottom, butch/femme, and real/artificial – that we want to explore, reclaim, uphold... In the end, **binaries are not just a curious way we have of understanding the world. They are political. They are about power.** They create hierarchies – male/female, white/black, colonial/native – that produce winners and losers” - Wilchins, *Queer Theory, Gender Theory* p. 46-47



Gender and Sexual Norms as Oppressive Social Constructs

“gay liberation understood that the marginalization and devaluation of homosexuality was effected by that dominant and rigidly hierarchical conceptualization of sex and gender which constituted the social norm. In order to liberate homosexuality, gay liberation was committed to **eradicating fixed notions of femininity and masculinity: that move would similarly liberate any other groups oppressed by what it critiqued as normative sex and gender roles.**” - Jagose, *Queer Theory*, p. 41

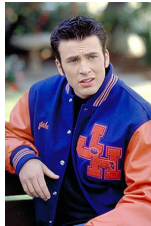
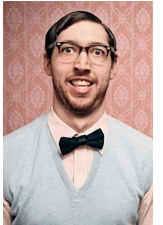


Gender and Sexual Norms as Oppressive Social Constructs

“Heterosexism, which has its roots in sexism, is **the institutionalization of a heterosexual norm or standard, which establishes and perpetuates the notion that all people are or should be heterosexual** thereby privileging heterosexuals and heterosexuality, and excluding the needs, concerns, cultures, and life experiences of LGBTQ people.” – Blumenfeld, *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*, p. 262



Analogy to “Jock” and “Nerd”

	“Jock” > 6-feet	“Nerd” < 6-feet
Norms	<p>Strong Athletic Attractive Assertive Permitted to participate in student government Awarded college scholarships</p> 	<p>Weak Unathletic Unattractive Submissive Not permitted to participate in student government Not awarded college scholarships</p> 

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Intersectional Oppression

“Gay liberation also has a perspective for revolution based on the unity of all oppressed people—that is, **there can be no freedom for gays in a society which enslaves others through male supremacy, racism and economic exploitation (capitalism).**”

– Allen Young cited in Jagose, *Queer Theory*, p. 34



Intersectional Oppression

“[race is] inseparable from other dimensions like age, sex, class, sexual orientation, and gender... Proponents of Critical Race Theorist [sic] (CRT) are reimagining race, racial identity, and its intersection with homosexuality and even queerness.”

“Motivating their work is the assertion that racist -and even racist- behavior is not simply a cultural aberration, but an important cultural norm.”— Wilchins, *Queer Theory, Gender Theory*, p. 110, 116



Intersectional Oppression

“The ideology of sexism supports the system of gender relations, just as the ideology of racism supports the system of race relations. **Like racism, sexism is a system of beliefs and behaviors by which a group is oppressed, controlled, and exploited because of presumed gender differences....** Homophobia – the fear of homosexuality- is part of the system of social control that legitimates and enforces gender oppression. It supports the system of compulsory heterosexuality” Andersen, p. 51-52- Anderson and Collins, *Race, Class, and Gender*, p. 51-52



Intersectional Oppression

64

Is Everyone Really Equal?

Figure 5.1. Group Identities Across Relations of Power

Minoritized/Target Group	Oppression	Dominant/ Agent Group
Peoples of Color	Racism	White
Poor		
Working Class	Classism	Owning Class
Middle Class		
Women; Transgender; Genderqueer	Sexism	(cis)Men
Gays; Lesbians; Bisexuals; Two Spirit	Heterosexism	Heterosexuals
Muslims; Buddhists; Jews; Hindus; and other non-Christ- ian groups	Religious Oppression Anti-Semitism	Christians
People with Disabilities	Ableism	Able-bodied
Immigrants (perceived)	Nationalism	Citizens (perceived)
Indigenous Peoples	Colonialism	White Settlers



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Deconstruction of all norms

“what if Sex is already a gendered way of looking at bodies? What if Sex is already gender, so that the distinction between the two is no distinction at all? **What if Sex—the original Given, transcendent and universal—could be deconstructed?**”

“Like the body itself, **the facts of sexual reproduction have resonance only if we imbue them within a meaningful narrative, a context.** In this case it’s the cultural narrative of power and gender, as we understand it in a sexist, hetero-centric culture.”— Wilchins, *Queer Theory, Gender Theory*, p. 77, 83-84



Deconstruction of all norms

“Various referred to as intergenerational sex, child abuse, man-boy love and paedophilia, even the semantic continuum of terms used to describe the concept evokes a variety of positions in a debate structured overwhelmingly by such issues as consent, power and the legal definition of childhood... **the issue of intergenerational sex continues to be debated vigorously in many gay and lesbian communities.** The protection of children is deemed by some to be ethically crucial to the development of gay identity, but is dismissed by others as “erotic hysteria” (Rubin, 1993:6). What is the status of different, and arbitrary, age-of-consent laws? Do children have a sexuality and a right to sexual agency? Why is age—unlike, say, race or class—understood as a sexualized power-differential protected by law? **Is it possible to eroticise children in an ethical way? These are the questions commonly raised—and by no means yet resolved—in the controversy over intergenerational sex.**” – Jagose, *Queer Theory*, p. 70-71



Deconstruction of all norms

“the Trinity needs to be understood as an orgy, which breaks down the privileging of binary or pair-bonded relationships...each person of the Trinity has her/her [sic] own closet of lovers and ‘forbidden desires’ (for example, Jesus’ relationships with Mary Magdalene and Lazarus), which in turn results in the death of the ‘illusion of limited relationships.’” – Althaus-Reid summarized in Patrick Cheng, *Radical Love*, p. 58-59



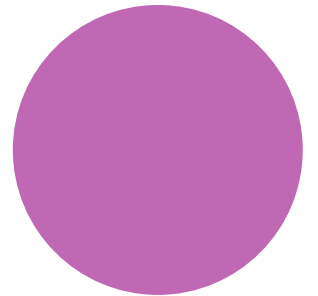
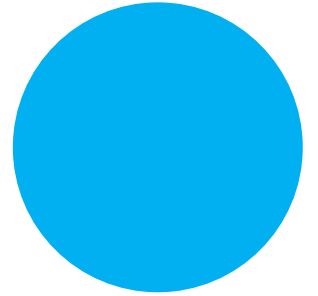
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Gender is a God-ordained category

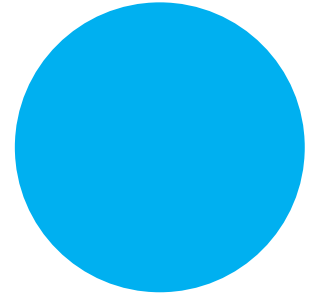
“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” – Gen. 1:27

[Jesus said:] “But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” – Mark 10:5-9

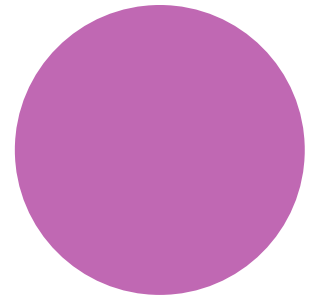


Gender is good

“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.” – Gen. 1:31

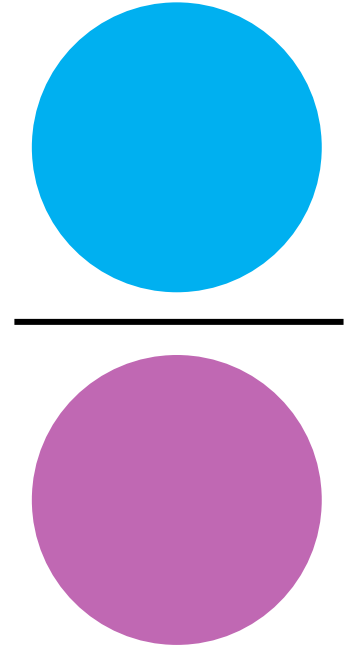


“And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” – Rev. 21:2



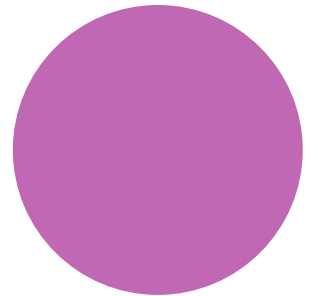
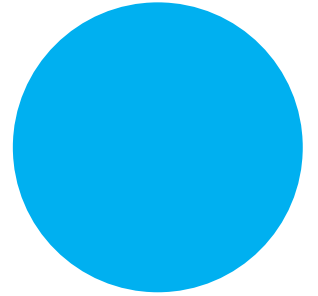
Some, but not all, norms are social constructs

- Blue is for boys; pink is for girls
- Husbands should lead their families
- Men shouldn't wear skirts
- Children should obey their parents
- Physical aggression is a masculine trait
- Boys like trucks; girls like dolls
- Only men should be pastors
- Hunting is a masculine activity; cooking is a feminine activity



Some, but not all, norms are oppressive

- Women shouldn't be educated
- People shouldn't walk around naked in public
- Men shouldn't express emotion
- Widows should commit *sati*
- Children shouldn't be left unsupervised
- A wife should take her husband's last name
- Men shouldn't have long hair

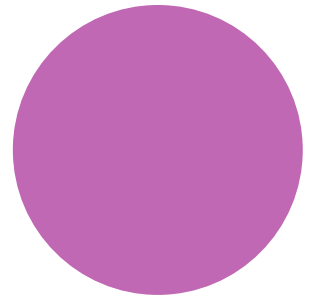
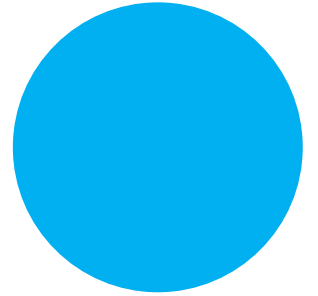


Love does not require affirmation

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him.” – Lev. 19:17

“Love takes no pleasure in evil, but rejoices in the truth” – 1 Cor. 13:6

“Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.” – Rev. 3:18-19



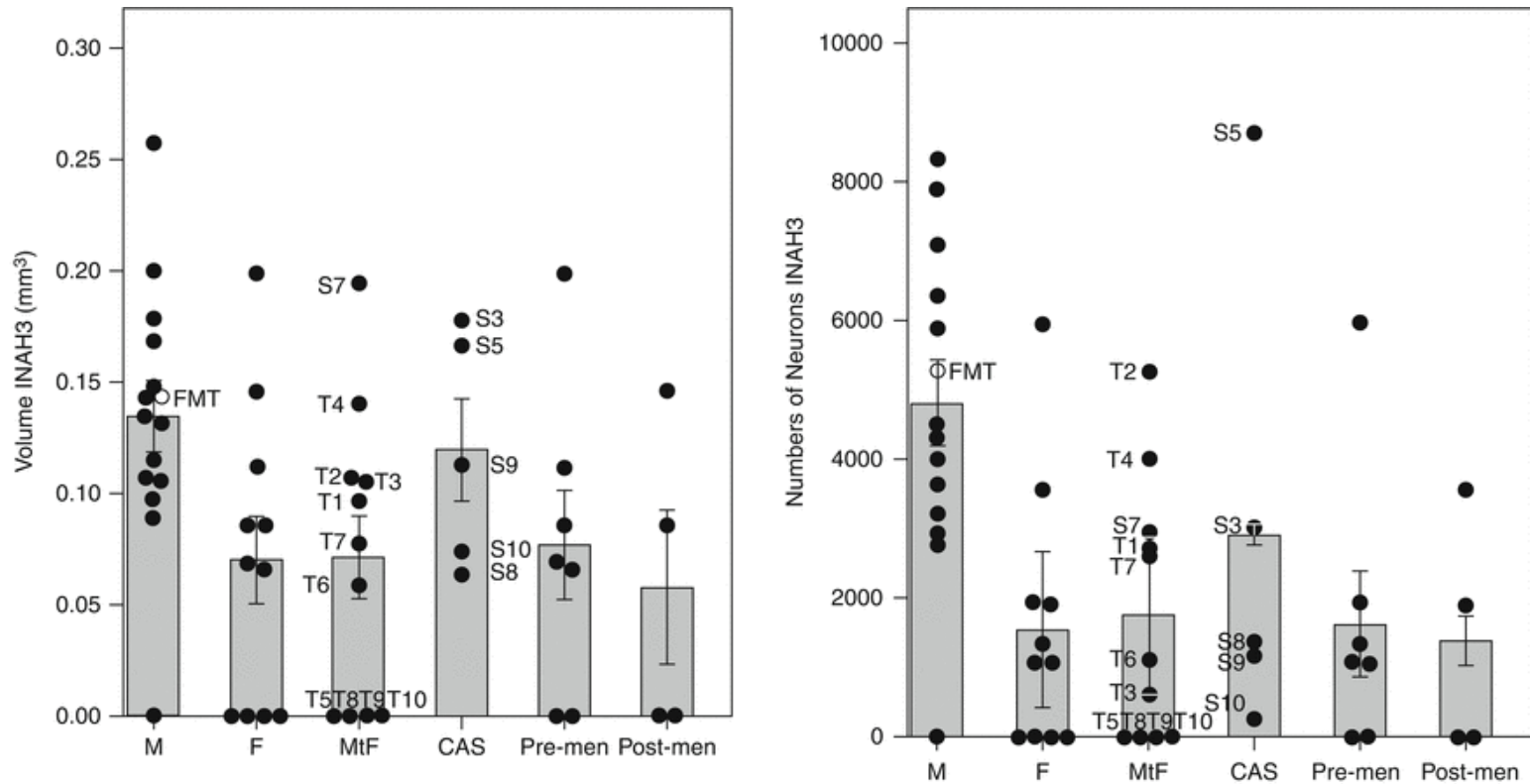
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 - What causes gender dysphoria?
 - Do the brains of transgender people resemble the brains of their experiences sex?
 - How do I navigate gender ideology in the workplace?
 - Should we refer to people by their preferred pronouns or chosen names?
 - What is intersex? Is it different than transgender?
- Acknowledgements

What causes gender dysphoria?

(NO ONE KNOWS)

Do the brains of transgender people resemble the brains of their experienced gender?



How do I navigate gender ideology in the workplace?

- Good relationships
- Proactive
- Provide input
- Do your homework
- Freedom of conscience
- Compelled speech

Should we refer to people by their preferred pronouns or chosen names?



Buck Angel® (TRANSEXUAL MAN) ✓
@BuckAngel



I disagree with you! I am a transsexual man. Transitioned from a woman to man 25 years ago. I am and will forever be a biological female. How is this so hard to understand. If I was not a biological female then I would not be transsexual. Its dangerous to discount biology.



George Takei ✓ @GeorgeTakei · Jun 10, 2020

When you defend so-called "biological sex," you sound scientifically ignorant and you elevate transphobia.

[Show this thread](#)

10:17 PM · Jun 11, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

2,729 Retweets 193 Quote Tweets 15.7K Likes

Should we refer to people by their preferred pronouns or chosen names?

- Primary motivation should be to honor God
- Secondary motivation should be to love your neighbor
- Last names are gender-neutral
- Proper names are chosen; biological sex is not
- Singular “they” has been in use since 14th century

What is intersex? How is it different than transgender?

What is intersex?

Intersex is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. For example, a person might be born appearing to be female on the outside, but having mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside. Or a person may be born with genitals that seem to be in-between the usual male and female types—for example, a girl may be born with a noticeably large clitoris, or lacking a vaginal opening, or a boy may be born with a notably small penis, or with a scrotum that is divided so that it has formed more like labia. Or a person may be born with mosaic genetics, so that some of her cells have XX chromosomes and some of them have XY.

What is intersex? How is it different than transgender?

How common is intersex? a response to Anne Fausto-Sterling

Leonard Sax ¹

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 12476264 DOI: [10.1080/00224490209552139](https://doi.org/10.1080/00224490209552139)

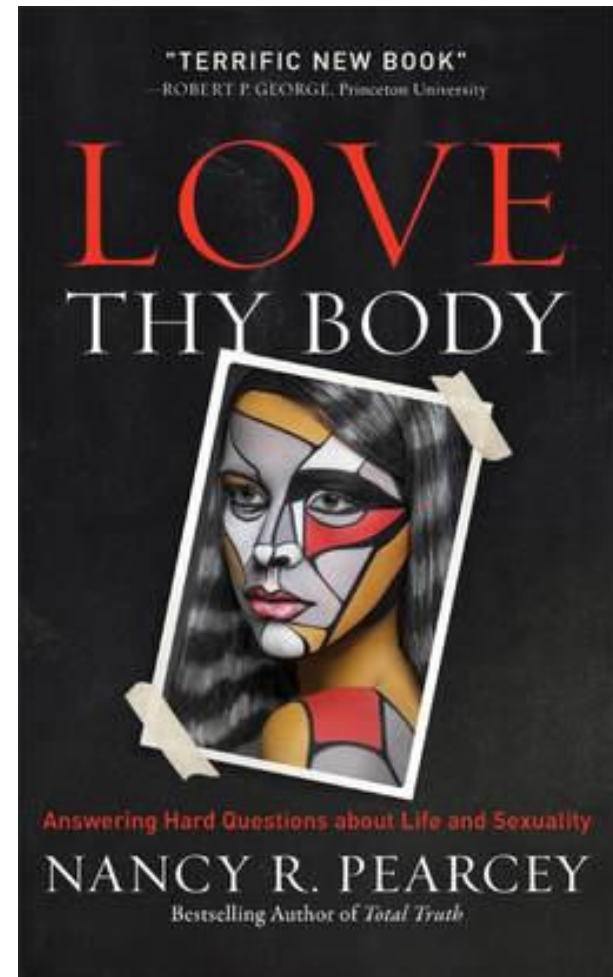
Abstract

Anne Fausto-Sterling's suggestion that the prevalence of intersex might be as high as 1.7% has attracted wide attention in both the scholarly press and the popular media. Many reviewers are not aware that this figure includes conditions which most clinicians do not recognize as intersex, such as Klinefelter syndrome, Turner syndrome, and late-onset adrenal hyperplasia. If the term intersex is to retain any meaning, the term should be restricted to those conditions in which chromosomal sex is inconsistent with phenotypic sex, or in which the phenotype is not classifiable as either male or female. Applying this more precise definition, the true prevalence of intersex is seen to be about 0.018%, almost 100 times lower than Fausto-Sterling's estimate of 1.7%.

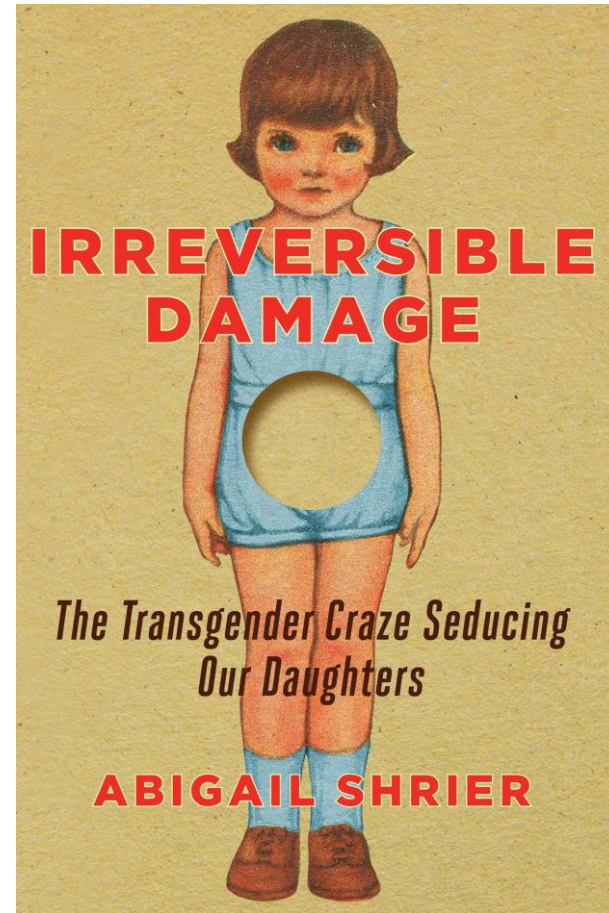
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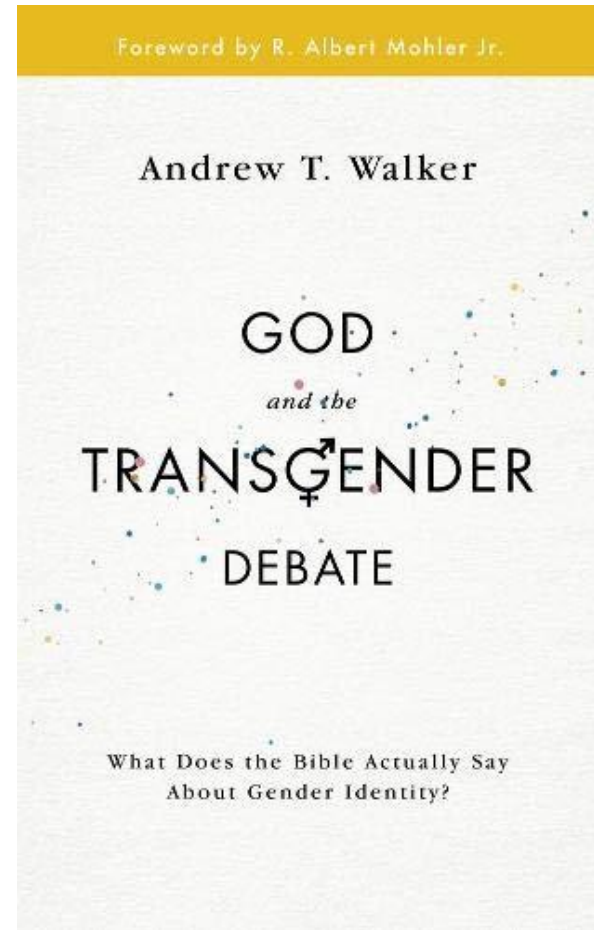
Pearcey's *Love Thy Body*



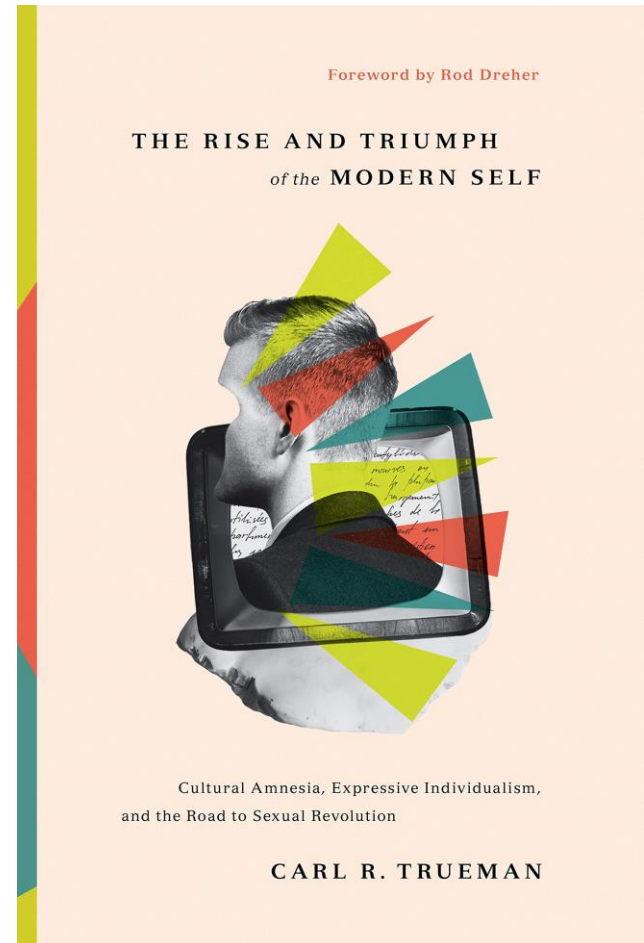
Shrier's *Irreversible Damage*



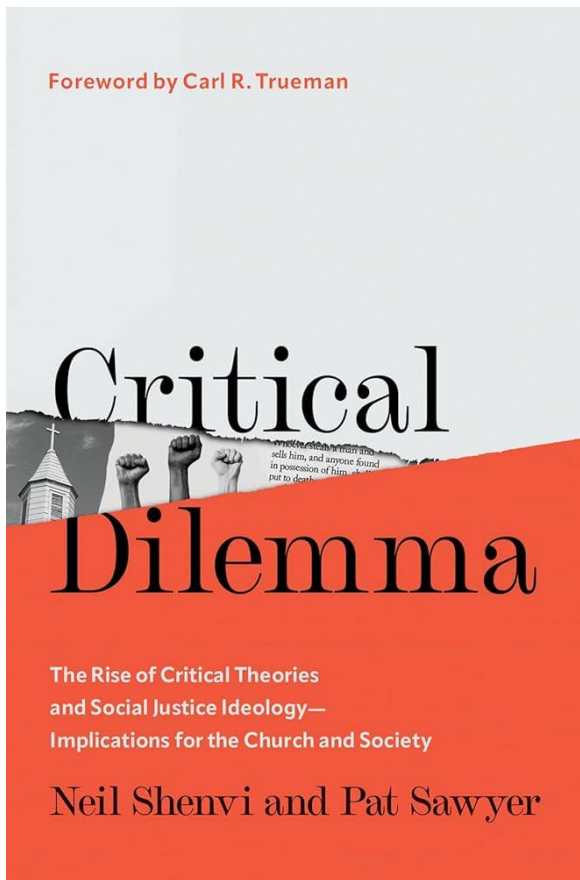
Walker's *God and The Transgender Debate*



Trueman's *Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self*



Critical Dilemma



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Acknowledgements

Dr. Christina Shenvi



Dr. Pat Sawyer



- “Affirming Ourselves to Death,”
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- “Book review: *Cynical Theories*,” *Themelios*
- “Gender, Intersectionality, and Critical Theory,” *Eikon*
- Twitter @NeilShenvi, @RealPatSawyer