

If You Can Be Transgender, Why Can't You Be Transracial?

I do not for a moment want to minimize the very real struggles of those who identify as transgender nor do I want to ignore those individuals who have genuine biological or genetic abnormalities.

I simply want to state once again—really, I want to shout it from the rooftops—that perception does not change reality, and so Bruce Jenner is no more a woman than Rachel Dolezal is black.

In the last week, a steady stream of articles has drawn comparisons, both positive and negative, between Jenner and Dolezal, with not a few stating that Dolezal's actions are harmful to the transgender cause. (The opening lines of Ben Shapiro's fairly comprehensive article, detailing many other claims made by Dolezal and dripping with sarcasm, are classic.)

Obviously, I have no idea whether Dolezal genuinely believes she is black or simply chooses to identify as black, but what's clear, if all the reports are true, is that she is not black.

How can I be so dogmatic?

It's because skin color is verifiable.

It is not based on perception.

It is not based on feelings.

It is based on provable data.

The same is true when it comes to gender (again, putting aside the question of how to best help those with biological or

genetic abnormalities that are not so easily categorized as male or female).

Some people are genetically and biologically male while others are genetically and biologically female, and to alter their physical appearance through cosmetic surgery no more changes their real identity than wearing leopard skins transforms a human being into a big cat.

The same is true when it comes to hormonal treatments: You can pump up Bruce Jenner with all the female hormones in the world but that does not make him into a woman. (To date, we have not been presented with any evidence that he is a genetic female in any form.)

In the words of Dr. Paul McHugh, one of the nation's most respected psychiatrists yet a man despised by many in the transgender community as out of date and out of touch, "Transgendered men do not become women, nor do transgendered women become men. All (including Bruce Jenner) become feminized men or masculinized women, counterfeits or impersonators of the sex with which they 'identify.'"

Not only so, but in many ways, the transgender movement is based on fundamental contradictions.

Otherwise, if it is gender stereotyping to say that boys like to play with guns and girls like to play with dolls, why are we told that our little boy is actually a girl if he likes to play with dolls? (I'm oversimplifying things here to make a point, but I trust the point is clear.)

Why did Chastity Bono say a few years back that, with hormonal therapy, she could better relate to being a man because she became more easily angered? Is this what distinguishes males from females?

If it's gender stereotyping to say that women (rather than men) like to wear pretty nail polish, why does Bruce Jenner's

desire to wear pretty nail polish confirm that he is female?

And if perception is reality, why go through years of hormone therapy and surgical procedures to alter one's very real biology rather than say, "I'm a female with what appear to be male organs," or, "I'm a male with what appear to be female organs"?

The very fact that so much effort is made to change one's physical realities (including voice pitch, the shape of the Adam's apple, and a host of other things) reminds us that gender is not simply what someone perceives it to be. As noted by Joseph Backholm, "The irony is that a sex change itself reinforces the gender stereotypes they claim to be rejecting."

Please understand that I am not a Johnny-come-lately to these issues.

I've been drawing attention to them for years, addressing them in a lecture series in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 2007 and already quoting Dr. McHugh back then. And I wrote about all this at some length in 2011 (based on several years of intensive research), also citing a December 2000 article in *The Atlanta Journal Monthly* entitled, "A New Way to Be Mad," by Carl Elliot, M.D., a professor at the Center for Bioethics at the University of Minnesota who compared the situation of those diagnosed with Body Identity Integrity Disorder with that of those diagnosed with gender dysphoria (in other words, transgender).

Also in 2011, I cited an article posted on the Oberlin University website which stated that, "The basic assumption of transgenderism is the transgressing of gender norms. Whether that means completely passing from one end to the other, or finding a space that combines or defies the binary in our society, it comes down to exploring outside of the norm you were assigned because of the discomfort that you feel in it."

Based on this, I asked, "But why stop here, with combining or

defying sexual categories? Why not go one step further (if, in fact, it is actually further) and create self-identified categories of race or color or nationality? How about, 'Even though I was assigned the ethnic identity of a white male at birth, I identify myself as a black female.' Why not? Or what if I sense that, despite my American pedigree, I am actually a Viking? What if I was sure I was actually a black Viking and wanted to identify as such? Are ridiculous concepts such as these all that different from 'the transgressing of gender norms' and 'def[ying] the binary in our society'?"

It is actually compassion, not hatred or anger or bigotry, that drives me, since I'm convinced that the best thing we can do for those struggling with gender identity issues is discover how to help them find wholeness from the inside out.

I'm also driven by the conviction that gender distinctions are an essential part of the fabric of human society, and so, I refuse to drink today's corporate Kool-Aid and celebrate a man who declares he's a woman just as I won't celebrate a white woman who declares she is black.

Please join me in saying, "I too will not drink to that!"

It's time to return to reality.

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