The Denial of Biological Sex

You may not realize it, but many of our academic and political institutions are now controlled by a group of science-deniers. They are the students of critical social justice, and they are telling us that ‘biological sex does not exist.’ It’s time we pay attention, for this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Let’s begin with our first case.

In 2016, during a live television panel on Canada’s famous broadcasting station, TVO, a gender studies professor from the University of Toronto named Nicholas Matte said:

“You heard it right: a professor from a state-funded university claiming that biological sex is not a valid concept. If you understand critical theory, and its foundational philosophy of postmodernism, then this should not come as a surprise. To prove that such a phenomenon has now reached the mainstream, I’m going to present 8 more cases of public figures denying biological sex.

We’ll start with Case 2, from queer theorist Judith Butler. “Precisely because female no longer appears to be a stable notion,” she writes, “its meaning is as troubled and unfixed as ‘woman.’”

Case 3. Biologist and gender studies professor Dr. Anne Fausto-Sterling writes in her infamous 1993 article ‘The Five Sexes’ that male and female are not accurate descriptions of biological sex. Here, Fausto-Sterling uses intersex, people with complex medical conditions, to argue that male and female are unreliable terms. Because intersex individuals have atypical bodies, they are the perfect target for the gender studies professor, who, rather than accepting intersex people as the natural variations of male and female, calls them Herms, Merms, and Ferms, which is hermaphrodites, male hermaphrodites, and female hermaphrodites. See? Now we have three new sexes. For Fausto-Sterling, the binary idea of male and female is ‘behind-the-times.’

Case 4. 2018. An anonymous molecular biologist, under the name ScienceVet, writes a thread on how we cannot clearly define male and female. “We can keep breaking down your biological sex into smaller and smaller differences in brain areas, hormone levels, signaling differences, genetic variances. There’s nothing stopping us from binning EVERY INDIVIDUAL into their own bin.”

Case 5. Teen Vogue, the pop-culture magazine for teens. Social justice activists claim that biological sex is not about what body you have, but rather, is about “political choices, social choices, and ideological choices.” And “It’s important we really break down what we are talking about when we talk about sex and gender and if there is something called ‘biological sex’ and what that means.”

Case 6. 2019. A lawyer from the American Civil Liberties Union, Chase Strangio, argues that biological sex cannot be easily identified. “There is no single biological trait that equates to one’s ‘biological sex.’” And, “That there are typical notions of embodied maleness and femaleness does not mean there is a coherent binary thing called ‘biological sex.’” Using this logic, he further argues that males who identify as women have, not male bodies but, females bodies. “Girls who are trans are NOT males, ‘biological males,’ and do not have male-bodies. Just stop.”

Case 7. Gender scholars attribute the origins of biological sex to, not biology, but to birth certificates. In an Australian feminist law journal, Lena Holzer tells us in her article, entitled *Sexually Dimorphic Bodies: A Production of Birth Certificates*, that registering your baby as male or female “actually produces and shapes bodies to develop in a way conformant with understandings of sexual dimorphism.”

Case 8. British Member of Parliament Dawn Butler claims, on national television, that babies are born without a sex. <Play clip>

And lastly, Case 9. In early 2019, a feminist named Maya Forstater was fired from her job for claiming that biological sex cannot be changed, and that there are only two sexes. Forstater was critical of the proposed reforms to the UK’s Gender Recognition Certificate, which would allow anyone to self-identify as a man or woman, and gain access to single sex spaces. After presenting her case at an employment tribunal later that year, the judge ruled Forstater’s opinion “not worthy of respect in a democratic society,” saying that such a belief that there are “only two sexes, male and female...is incompatible with the human rights of others that have been identified and defined by the European Court of Human Rights.”

To the Tribunal, saying *male and female are biological realities which cannot be changed* is not just scientifically incorrect, but an idea which is “not worthy of respect in a democratic society.”

There’s countless other examples of public figures denying biological sex, but that’s for another video. For now, you get the idea: from the writings of gender studies professors like Dr. Anne-Fausto-Sterling to the claims of politicians like Dawn Butler, biological sex is a non-existent category—a concept that must be rejected wholesale. This is not surprising of course, if you understand the ideology of these new science-deniers.

The fundamentals of critical social justice state that humans are born as blank slates, that culture and society construct sex, that actions can only be understood in the context of sociocultural forces, that words can be used as tools to shape reality, and that humans can be molded in preferential ways. Here an individual’s subjective perception reigns supreme, and the fight to restructure the category of sex through the use of language begins. As George Orwell once said: *If thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought.* If these new science-deniers can make you think your beliefs in biological sex are scientifically illiterate, and that disagreeing with their position makes you a hateful bigot, then their ideas have rhetorical power.

But, is this the world we wish to live in? In the past, we had flat-earthers, fundamentalists, and cultists, but none of them ever had an institutional hold over our universities, businesses, and governments. Are we willing to let these new science-deniers further solidify their ideas into our laws, our culture, and our kids’ education? If not, it’s time we pay close attention to what they’re saying.

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