



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on February 17, 2014

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Westerners in Wonderland and the Death of Reality

“If I had a world of my own, everything would be nonsense. Nothing would be what it is, because everything would be what it isn’t. And contrary wise, what is, it wouldn’t be. And what it wouldn’t be, it would. You see?” said Lewis Carroll in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass* (Alice). A world of one’s own — such a thing can sound very appealing. No more dealing with uncomfortable or inconvenient truths, such as that love and money aren’t always returned, hatred and heartache often are, and busting budgets really does lead to bankruptcy.



And there are creatures who do have a world of their own, at least in a metaphorical sense — they’re called infants. Most developmental psychologists agree that babies are solipsistic, which, psychologist Dr. John R. Morss tells us (quoting famed child psychologist Jean Piaget), refers to “a state in which the subject treats the world as an extension of itself. For Piaget, ‘the baby experiences the universe as himself.’ ... Thinking in the infant ‘resembles sort of a perpetual waking dream.’” Young children have other reality-perception deficiencies, too, such as the inability to grasp that volume doesn’t change just because shape does (as when water is poured from a short, wide glass into a tall, thin one). But as the child develops cognitively and gains experience with the world, he learns more about reality — he gets in closer touch with it. This includes the realization that there is much beyond the self and the rejection of solipsism.

But cognitive development is no guarantee that people will accept all that cognition can apprehend. After all, the concept of solipsism itself wasn’t developed by a child psychologist to explain children, but by Greek pre-Socratic sophist Gorgias (c. 483-375 B.C.) to perhaps confuse adults. Serving in that capacity, it has a lot of help from fellow “isms,” such as nihilism, nominalism, idealism, existentialism — and especially today’s popular delusion, relativism. And all these half-baked infantile philosophies have one thing in common: a denial of some aspect of reality. This fatal flaw running through all modern philosophy is why G.K. Chesterton wrote in his 1933 book *St. Thomas Aquinas*:

Since the modern world began in the sixteenth century, nobody’s system of philosophy has really corresponded to everybody’s sense of reality; to what, if left to themselves, common men would call common sense. Each started with a paradox; a peculiar point of view demanding the sacrifice of what they would call a sane point of view. That is the one thing common to Hobbes and Hegel, to Kant and Bergson, to Berkeley and William James. A man had to believe something that no normal man would believe, if it were suddenly propounded to his simplicity; as that law is above right, or right is outside reason, or things are only as we think them, or everything is relative to a reality that is not there. The modern philosopher claims, like a sort of confidence man, that if once we will grant him this, the



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rest will be easy; he will straighten out the world, if once he is allowed to give this one twist to the mind.

Unfortunately, minds have been given that twist, and now uncommon men are multiplying while common sense is diminishing.

***“Who in the world am I? Ah, that’s the great puzzle.”
— Lewis Carroll in Alice***

A few weeks ago I turned on the radio in my car, and columnist Mark Steyn, acting as a guest host on the *Rush Limbaugh Show*, was fielding a call from a woman whose son had a problem that has recently gotten a lot of press and political attention. When the boy was three years old, she related, he started saying that he really was a girl inside. At one point she even saw him pushing down his genitalia and asking if all little girls had such things, which prompted her to take him to a pediatrician. This physician in turn directed her to a psychiatrist or two, whose diagnosis was predictable (that is, if you’re acquainted with Wonderland): The boy had “Gender Identity Disorder” (GID). The mother, a self-professed conservative Christian, was so convinced that she had become an apologist for GID. She referred to her son, now six years old, as “her” and “she” and, if I remember correctly, as her “daughter.” She said that the diagnosis wasn’t made lightly; the individual had to have strong, unremitting feelings that his body was the wrong sex, feelings that lasted for more than a year. Many no doubt found her testimonial quite convincing.



Boys will be girls? Our society is increasingly accepting a diagnosis of “Gender Identity Disorder” — and allowing children to live as members of the opposite sex, as is done with Coy Mathis — based on nothing but those most mercurial of things: feelings. (*Photo credit: AP Images*)

And many are already convinced, as young children allowed to live as members of the opposite sex are an increasingly common phenomenon. There is German Tim Petras, who now is known as “Kim” and is believed to be the world’s youngest “transsexual” after starting “hormone replacement therapy” at age 12 and having a euphemistically named “Gender Reassignment Surgery” at age 16. There was the 2012 story of then five-year-old Briton Zach Avery, who has been living as a girl — dresses, make-up, and the



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works — since he was four. And whereas such a person would have at one time been recommended for psychiatric treatment, now everyone else is expected to change. Some schools will put the rest of the children through “sensitivity training” so that they’ll know the doubleplusgood way to act around the newly minted victim-group member. And as the *Telegraph* wrote about Avery’s case, “Zach’s school — Purfleet Primary in Essex — has even turned their toilet block gender-neutral to support him. Theresa [Zach’s mother] added: ‘They have changed the toilets for Key Stage 1 pupils into Unisex instead of male/female and they address him as a girl, which is what he wants.’” The media follow suit, too, as it’s now de rigueur for reporters to use pronouns pertaining to what a person fancies his sex to be rather than what it actually is. And bathrooms? We’re now hearing many stories about boys being allowed to use the girls’ bathroom in schools; in fact, California (Wonderland Central) just went so far as to enact a law mandating that students must be allowed to pick the bathrooms and sports teams with which they “identify.”

Now, this is a startling amount of social change in a very short period of time. And what is it based on? The woman who called the *Rush Limbaugh Show* had brought her son to an endocrinologist, who reported that the boy was normal. And this is the norm. While the “experts” told Zach Avery’s mother that “his brain was telling him he was a girl,” a GID diagnosis isn’t made based on a brain scan. It isn’t made based on a chromosome test. It isn’t, in fact, made based on any physical signs, symptoms, or tests whatsoever.

It is made based on feelings.

Now, I’m not interested here and now in arguing about the validity of biologically determined GID (BDGID); for argument’s sake, let’s assume it is a real phenomenon. My point here is simply this: The basis on which the BDGID diagnosis is made is unscientific, illogical, and pure bunk. After all, would we apply its standard to medicine in general? Would a cardiologist say, “Oh, you feel you have heart disease? The feelings have been strong, unremitting and present for longer than a year? Okay, I’ll cut open your chest and perform a bypass”? Such a physician would be committing gross malpractice, would be stripped of his license and rightly lose his scrub shirt in a lawsuit. Should it be any different in psychiatry?

And then there are the different standards within psychiatry. That is to say, GID isn’t the only disorder involving an unrelenting feeling that your body doesn’t match how your mind tells you it should be. There is also BIID (Body Integrity Identity Disorder), the sense that a body part, such as a leg or arm, doesn’t belong on one’s body. Just as with GID patients, BIID sufferers have strong, unremitting feelings. Just as with GID patients, they’re certain they can’t be happy with their body in its present state. Just as with male GID children, who may threaten to cut off their “willie,” BIID sufferers sometimes try to self-amputate. Unlike GID patients, however, only a couple of rare doctors have been willing to act upon BIID feelings and perform professional amputations.

But why be hesitant? Are some feelings more equal than others? If emotions can be the ultimate arbiter, not only should BIID be taken just as seriously as GID, so should “species dysphoria,” the feeling that you are an animal stuck in a human body. For that matter, we shouldn’t scoff at people who insist they’re Napoleon or the Queen of England if that is whom they identify with. How far down this rabbit hole do we want to go?

But we’ve been down it before. Approximately 50 years ago, “Gender Neutrality” theory was all the



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rage. Quite the opposite of today's fashionable idea that "gender" can be whatever the individual feels it is, it stated that it could be however society conditioned it to be. So when this theory's father, Dr. John Money, told Ronald and Janet Reimer that their son Bruce could, after a botched circumcision, be raised successfully as a girl, they followed his prescription. The results were disastrous and, no doubt, led to Bruce's committing suicide as an adult.



Are the insane running the asylum? As happened with homosexuality in 1973, activists want "Gender Identity Disorder" reclassified so that it won't be viewed as a disorder. This may mean that psychologists will soon consider it normal human variation. (*Photo credit: AP Images*)

Not surprisingly, when yesterday's traditionalists doubted "Gender Neutrality" theory, they were called backward and unscientific. This is just what they're called for questioning BDGID today by its proponents, who cite the Reimer case as a lesson vindicating their theory. But this is a swing of the pendulum past perspicacity and to the polar. The real lesson is this: Be cautious about shedding age-old wisdom in favor of theories that are younger than you are.

And who is unscientific here, anyway? Given that all we really have as evidence of BDGID are feelings, is it reasonable to say that they could never — in not even *one out of a thousand cases* — be the result of a purely psychological phenomenon? That would be a radical position. If it's possible in one case, however, it's possible in two or three or 30, or in 50 percent of them. And at that point you'd have to acknowledge that you have no way of knowing which cases have an inborn basis and which don't. This is obviously, mind you, part of the reason why BDGID proponents will bristle at even the mere suggestion that a case could be psychological. Yet the very same people would generally allow that BIID could be so. Why the inconsistency? They feel differently about fashionable feelings than unfashionable feelings. And that is good enough in Wonderland.

Now, an interesting question could arise at this juncture: Why all this emphasis on feelings? It might be pointed out, after all, that feelings aren't good indicators of reality.

But what if reality didn't matter to you?

If we were to choose a flavor of ice cream, the color hamster to get as a pet, or from among non-obscene works of art as decoration, we'd surely be content to let our feelings reign. For these are not matters of Truth but taste; with no Eternal Law to guide us or even available to discern (Thou shalt not consume strawberry!), what can be the yardstick but what feels right? It's not as if we're talking about



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morality, which, determined by Truth, surely is different.

Ah, but what if you didn't believe in objective Truth?

How different would "morality" then be?

What then would you use as a yardstick for making "moral" decisions?

And if emotions are all we have, a three-year-old's feelings about what his "real" sex is take on extra weight.

This is why I devoted so much of this piece's beginning to a discussion of philosophy. It doesn't matter if you aren't a philosopher, if you can't define even two isms, or if the highest matters you contemplate are found on ESPN. How we think correlates to some brand of what we call "philosophy"; philosophy touches everything. And in the grip of modern philosophy's misguiding hand, moderns are starting to seem a bit touched.

"I'm not strange, weird, off, nor crazy, my reality is just different from yours."

— Lewis Carroll in Alice

Now, there is a funny thing about reality. Just as you learn about it as you grow up, you can refuse to do so as you grow ideological. This is called rationalization, when we lie to ourselves, tell ourselves that some aspect of reality isn't what it is but what we want it to be. Of course, the more this denial of reality occurs, the further out of touch with reality we become. And if we fall out of touch enough, it is in fact what we call being crazy.

And what we're seeing in the modern West — what all those confusing and confusion-born "isms" amount to — is a war against objective reality. This is what helps breed the Infantile Civilization, a place where far too many citizens haven't reached full adulthood. That is to say, becoming truly mature involves taking responsibility, which, of course, means accepting uncomfortable or inconvenient realities. We generally associate this with admitting personal error and fulfilling familial and employment duties, but it also involves admission of ideological, philosophical, and religious error and acceptance of morality's dictates. And to whatever extent a person denies reality, he remains a child.

This brings us to what can be the ultimate rationalization (assuming the individual has some inkling of what the Truth actually is): denial of God, of Truth. After all, a corollary of atheism is moral relativism, which is just another water-mudding "ism" that helps to obscure the true implications of this denial of the divine, which is that morality doesn't exist, only man's preference does. And then anything can be justified, from theft, lying, rape, and murder to genocide. As Fyodor Dostoevsky's Ivan Karamazov said, "Without God ... everything is permitted."

And so it is across the board. If there is no divine plan and moral guiderails for man's sexuality, why can't one be a homosexual, adulterer, pedophile, or bestialist? If marriage is not ordained from on high but is just man's invention, why can't he reinvent or rescind it? What man hath joined, after all, he may put asunder. And if it's not so that "male and female He made them," and we're just a cosmic accident, then why can't man remake them? It then is only a matter of what men will do so: Dr. Money's society of psychological planners or the individual with his psychological preferences. To paraphrase Belgian



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author Émile Cammaerts, “When people cease to believe in God, it’s not that they start to believe in nothing. It’s that they’ll believe in anything.”

“Why, sometimes I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.”
— Lewis Carroll in Alice

This dislocation from reality helps explain much. Why should it surprise us that millions of people behave as if incessant spending and accumulation of debt won’t eventually collapse the economy? As for monetary policy, I know a seven-year-old who mentioned a while back that he had a great idea for eliminating poverty: Just print more of the green pieces of paper. And while he seemed satisfied with an explanation for why this was folly, there are millions of overgrown seven-year-olds who accept government as a legalized counterfeiting operation — to the recent tune of \$85 billion a month — and may even grease their rationalization’s skids with the euphemism “quantitative easing” (lesson: Beware babes with burly vocabularies). But, again, it’s no shock. If we’ve fallen so far out of touch with reality that we’ll accept that a person’s sex can be whatever he wants it to be — and that this is justifiable based on mere *feelings* — what will we not be able to rationalize? Most of our other fancies fall far below that in the hierarchy of lunacy.



Lord of the Flies today, fealty tomorrow: Philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville predicted nearly two centuries ago that Americans could fall victim to a paternalism that would seek to fix citizens “irrevocably in childhood.”

At this point, two things must be mentioned. First, this phenomenon is not unprecedented. Jonathan Swift wrote in 1720 that “reasoning will never make a man correct an ill opinion, which by reasoning he never acquired,” and Roman philosopher and statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero complained 2000 years ago about courts that were immune to facts. But the severity of this problem does vary, increasing commensurately with a society’s denial of objective reality.

Second, I don’t say there aren’t Machiavellian manipulators who encourage lunacy for lust of power; as Soviet defector Yuri Bezmenov explained decades ago, the communists targeted the West with such things as part of a “demoralization” process. But the fact remains that a people philosophically sound



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cannot fail, while a people thus corrupted may strive for a failure they have mistaken for success.

Almost 200 years ago, French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville theorized in *Democracy in America* that the United States would fall victim to a new kind of despotism, writing:

I am not afraid that they will find in their leaders tyrants, but rather tutors ... [constituting] an immense and tutelary power that ... would resemble paternal power if, like it, it had as a goal to prepare men for manhood; but on the contrary it seeks only to fix them irrevocably in childhood; it likes the citizens to enjoy themselves, provided that they think only about enjoying themselves. It works willingly for their happiness; but it wants to be the unique agent for it and the sole arbiter.

And it's easy to be this arbiter when your children live in Wonderland. They then can accept that the Constitution is a living document and that a fine can become a tax during the course of one case. They can believe that "from each according to his abilities, and to each according to his needs" enforced through government won't result in fewer people with abilities and more people with needs. They can fancy that cooling temperatures prove global warming. They can view as even-handed a multiculturalism stating that other countries have a right to their cultures — and that we have a right to them, too. And they can accept the tyranny of a minority, that exceptions can be the author of norms. They will be Marquis de Sade statisticians who take you from Joseph McCarthy to Josef Stalin in two generations. For fashionable stupidity always seems profound to a mind liberated from Truth and imprisoned in that smallest of worlds — the self.



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