



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 15, 2018

“Transgenderism” Is Delusion, Says Think-tank Philosopher

“Transgenderism” amounts to just playing “pretend,” argues philosopher Ryan T. Anderson in a recent essay, since sex change is biologically impossible.

Writing at *Public Discourse*, Dr. Anderson says that contrary to activists’ claims, sex can’t be “reassigned” because it wasn’t “assigned at birth” in the first place. It is a physical reality observable prenatally, the denial of which is indicative of psychological problems and often leads to further psychological distress.



“Modern science shows that our sexual organization begins with our DNA and development in the womb, and that sex differences manifest themselves in many bodily systems and organs, all the way down to the molecular level,” writes Anderson in his March 5 [article](#), which was adapted from his new book, [When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment](#).

“Cosmetic surgery and cross-sex hormones can’t change us into the opposite sex,” Anderson, a Heritage Foundation senior fellow, further explains. “They can affect appearances. They can stunt or damage some outward expressions of our reproductive organization. But they can’t transform it. They can’t turn us from one sex into the other.” They merely amount to the donning of “counterfeit sexual garb,” as Johns Hopkins University (JHU) psychiatrist Dr. Paul McHugh put it.

And at issue is counterfeit science. Quoting JHU School of Medicine psychiatrist Dr. Lawrence Mayer, Anderson relates, “Scientifically speaking, transgender men are not biological men and transgender women are not biological women. The claims to the contrary are not supported by a scintilla of scientific evidence.”

Quite true. Some decades ago, what’s now called “gender dysphoria” — the strong and persistent sense you’re a member of one sex stuck in the body of the other — was recognized as a psychological problem requiring a psychological solution. Even longer ago it might have been, some would say far more correctly, identified as a spiritual problem. Now there’s a different claim: It’s a biological phenomenon often requiring a biological fix (surgery).

Yet claims of biological phenomena demand biological proof. This is never presented by “transgender” activists. Let’s say, for example, I tell a psychiatrist that I’ve been certain for as long as I can remember that deep down I’m a woman, that I must have a “female brain,” as the claim goes. How will he confirm that a biological matter is at issue?

He can’t. There is no brain-scan, genetic, blood, urine or any other body-chemistry test for “biologically induced gender dysphoria,” which exists in the same way the Yeti does. The physician will make his diagnosis based only on feelings — strong feelings of “cross-gender identification” lasting for at least six months. And on this basis alone he may ultimately recommend the patient undergo body-rending sex-



mutilation surgery.

It's as if you went to a cardiologist and said, "Doc, I'm certain I have heart disease! I can just feel it!" and he replied, without performing any diagnostic tests, "Oh, have the feelings been strong and persistent? Have they lasted for at least six months? Alright, then, I'll cut open your chest and perform a bypass!" It's quackery.

Speaking of which, Anderson quotes Duke University professor Dr. Deanna Adkins, M.D. as actually having stated in federal court, "From a medical perspective, the appropriate determinant of sex is gender identity"; she further claimed that the traditional conception of the sexes is "an extremely outdated view of biological sex." (Question: Is there *non*-biological sex? What would it be?)

Anderson points out that this denies the basic male-female division in nature and thus renders the concepts of maleness and femaleness incomprehensible. Yet Adkins' fanciful claims reflect a now common sexual-"devolutionary" notion: that "gender," if not sex itself, is a "spectrum," and a person can occupy any point on it. (In reality, the term "gender" has been co-opted; not long ago it was mainly used to describe word categories.) This thinking has spawned scores of "genders," whose number increases like the national debt ([NYC's government recognizes](#) 31 "genders"; [Tinder, 37](#); and [Facebook, 71](#)). Examples are "cisgender," "gender queer," "nonbinary," "neutrois," "aporagender," and "agender."

That the number and terminology keep changing, that the boundaries are undefined, reflects the undefined science. Nonetheless, to buttress their theory activists will point to "intersex" individuals — hermaphrodites — and conditions such as Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome. But this is a phony argument.

Such problems are abnormalities and the "exceptions that prove the rule." Why, following the activists' logic, we'd have to dispense with the notion of normality altogether. For example, let's say you had to describe human beings to a space alien; your description would include that they're creatures with four limbs, 10 fingers and 10 toes. In reality, though, not everyone is born this way; occasionally there's a person with 12 fingers or fewer than four limbs. Does this change the norm for human beings? What these activists are attempting to do is turn reality on its head, implicitly claiming that the exception disproves the rule.

But we should ask Dr. Adkins et al. a question: If they wanted to mate golden retrievers, would they go to a breeder and say, "Give me a male and female, the pick of the litter?" Or, believing such distinctions an "outdated view of biological sex," would they state, "Just gimme' any two that look good! I'll put 'em together and see what happens!"

Were they scientists breeding rhinos, snow leopards, whooping cranes, giant pandas, or any other endangered species, they'd have no trouble identifying males and females. Yet these people — staunch evolutionists virtually one and all who'll claim man is "just another animal" — suddenly find that the concept of "sex" somehow doesn't apply in his case. Curious.

In reality, "gender dysphoria" is merely the latest abnormal condition granted most-favored ideological status. But what of other conditions defined by psychologists, such as "species dysphoria," the belief that one is an animal trapped in a human body? Below is a video of a Norwegian woman who claims she's a feline.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWeBunPiIzo>

Then there's Body Integrity Identity Disorder, the acute sense that one or more body parts (e.g., eyes,



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 15, 2018

legs) don't belong on/in your body. Below is one of many videos about a woman thus afflicted.

If anyone says it would be lunacy to cater to the above "identities," note that there's as much proof that they reflect biological reality as there is that gender dysphoria does — namely, *none*. All these conditions are defined by (disordered) *feelings*.

And feelings, now, are supposed to be reality. Anderson quotes Dr. Michelle Cretella, the president of the American College of Pediatricians, as pointing out that one "of the chief functions of the brain is to perceive physical reality. Thoughts that are in accordance with physical reality are normal. Thoughts that deviate from physical reality are abnormal — as well as potentially harmful to the individual or to others." Yet this gets at the deeper problem: The very concept of objective reality has been under attack for quite a while now.

There was a time when the denial of reality — whether refusing to recognize one's own sex, species or something else — was readily understood to be a problem. Delusions weren't fashionable and reality was paramount. Since then, however, the rise of moral relativism, nihilism and the notion that it's impossible to really "know" anything, anyway, because everything is filtered through our "senses," have served to de-emphasize and discredit reality. In fact, it's not uncommon now to hear that "objective truth doesn't exist."

Given this mentality, that "things are only as we think them, or everything is relative to a reality that is not there," as G.K. Chesterton amusingly put it, it's no surprise that feelings have been made the ultimate arbiter. Having denied the objective, what but the subjective does modern man have left?

This is evident in a video (below; forward to 1:20) in which commentator Steven Crowder interviews a college student named Thomas on the matter of "transgenderism." The young man meant well, but it was clear he'd been conditioned to prioritize feelings over reality. In fact, in his effort to be sensitive to people's "identities," it never even seemed to occur to him that objective reality actually matters.

Dr. Anderson also warns that so-called "sex change" is "psychologically unhelpful" (e.g., those having sexual-mutilation surgery have high rates of suicide). Yet he also calls it "philosophically misguided," and this gets at that deeper problem: today's larger denial of the objective. Philosophical disorders can beget psychological disorders — and the justification of them. After all, if people scoff at reality itself, is it surprising that they do the same with the part of reality known as sex?



Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative,
non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



Subscribe

What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.