

Dissident Philosophers

Voices Against the Political Current of the Academy

Edited by
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Learning All the Wrong Lessons

Dan Demetriou (University of Minnesota, Morris)

In 2013, I taught a course on sex ethics for the first time. The best student in the course, a queer activist and trans ally philosophy and gender studies double-major, gave a very illuminating presentation on the mainstream gender studies views of sex and gender. That presentation first acquainted me with the “genderbread person,” which distinguished sex, gender, and gender expression, each represented by a spectrum. I also learned about terms such as “cisgender,” “nonbinary,” and “genderqueer” and was informed that you weren’t supposed to say things such as “sex change operation” or “transsexual.” This now sounds quaint, but in 2013 very few faculty were familiar with basic trans concepts and conventions.¹

While this student was presenting, an idea came to me. So, with help from him, we wrote a paper up and presented it at my university’s new gender and women’s studies works-in-progress series. Roughly the thought went as follows:

Accept the (then) gender studies orthodoxy that sex and gender fall along continua. Gender studies scholars are focused on the underrepresented center: the intersex people in the middle of the sex continuum and the “gender neutral” people in the middle of the gender spectrum (who may or may not now prefer to be called “nonbinary”). But what about people at the tips? That is, on the sex spectrum (figure 7.1), there are presumably only a small percentage of hypermale people in the population, followed by a lot of normally male-bodied people, then a small percentage of intersex people in the middle, then a lot of normally female-bodied people, and then a small percentage of hyperfemale people at the other extreme. Similar things can be said of gender (as observed in figure 7.2).

My very simple idea was that if transgenderism is (roughly) people wanting to transition to points significantly nearer the *opposite* pole, why wouldn’t you be in some sense “trans” if you wanted to “transition” to a point on the sex or gender

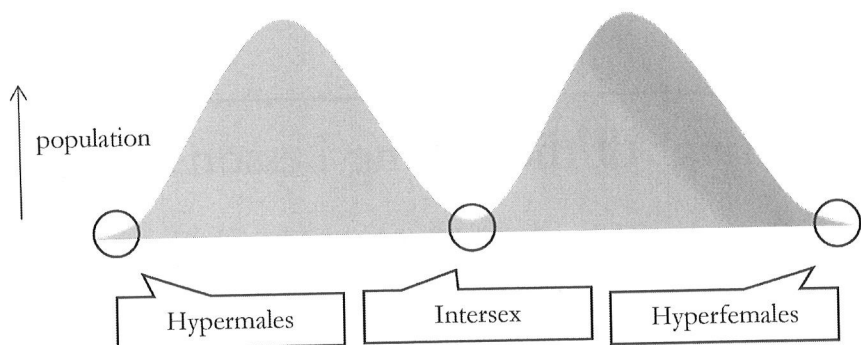


Figure 7.1. Hypersex on the Sex Spectrum

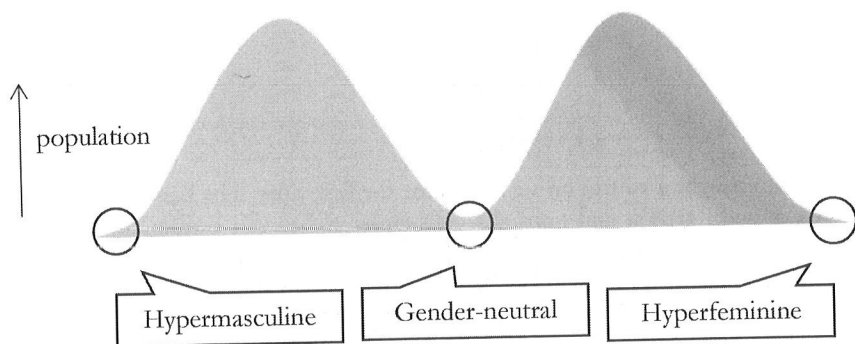


Figure 7.2. Hypergender on the Gender Spectrum

spectrum equally far away toward the *nearer* pole? For instance, what if an average man wished to be significantly more male-bodied or masculine—why wouldn't he be trans, or something metaphysically and morally (if not socially) analogous? Thus, in figure 7.3, a slightly effeminate man, Wes, would be considered trans if he transitioned to Zoe. If that's right, then if he made an equally significant transition to Chad, we wondered, why wouldn't he be transgender, too—or at least the ontological and moral equivalent of a transgender person?

We then got political. We noted that progressives seem very accepting of those who, like Zoe, transition *across* the gender divide, but tend to be dismissive of those who, like Chad, “exaggerate” their present gender or sex. Males who lift and take steroids, get into weapons, or take up MMA and so on are generally looked at with suspicion by feminists and progressives for following scripts of “toxic masculinity.” There is even a psychological malady called “hypermasculinity disorder” that defines hypermasculinity partly in terms of “rapey” behavior and sexist attitudes.² How, we wondered aloud, could progressives say they're champions of gender freedom while at the same time disparaging a position on the gender spectrum, and by extension those who wish to transition there?

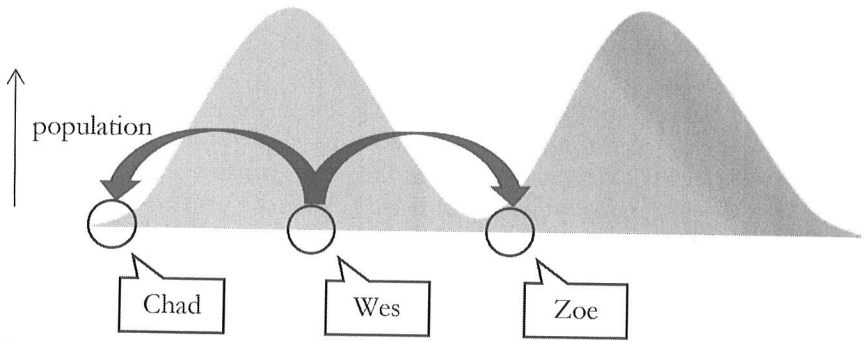


Figure 7.3. Two Types of Gender Transition

We also criticized conservatives, whom we saw as inconsistent by criticizing trans people while at the same time celebrating and encouraging behavior that looks a lot like gender exaggeration. Many of the same Christian conservatives, for example, who boldly proclaim that “God doesn’t make mistakes” and declaim against the unnaturalness of transgenderism see nothing wrong with makeup, shaved legs, high heels, and a host of other female-exaggerating displays, and they usually promote a culture that spurs boys and men to ever-more masculine performance.³ A perfect example of the latter is the *Captain America* superhero story, whose protagonist, Steve Rogers, has a heart of a lion but a weakling’s body. Rogers is “transformed” into a super-soldier with a hypermale body to match his highly thumotic spirit thanks to a special “serum.” Given the gender spectrum model above, it’s hard not to see this mainstream piece of Americana pop culture as a transgender parable.

We went through the presentation and our audience . . . just stared at us; there was no applause. Then we received a couple good questions (the best were about whether we ignored the social realities of gender transitioning, which are far more dramatic for trans people than gender exaggerators), received our thanks when time was up, and then . . . again nothing: no applause. The audience just gathered their things and left, with a few audience members conversing with us in the hall. (Where was “please clap” Jeb Bush when we needed him?)

Around this time I was on the job market to see whether I could find a better position, and managed to land an on-campus visit at fairly well-to-do small private liberal arts college. The philosophy faculty there liked my work on honor, being themselves somewhat conservative—a very rare alignment of stars. In informal conversation at the American Philosophical Association I was asked whether I’d be satisfied with a salary \$25,000 higher than what I was currently making, not counting many other perks not offered by my humble public liberal arts college, and they flew my wife down with me to sell her on the place. Realistically, all I had to do was show up at the job talk, be friendly, and talk about honor. But I was writing this paper at the time, and I wanted to share something my future colleagues hadn’t heard before. As anyone with common sense could have predicted, my talk was an unmitigated

disaster. A feminist student in the audience started crying. The faces of the conservative faculty in the audience grew stony. I was largely ignored in the dinner afterward, and I didn't get the job.

Dispirited professionally but not intellectually, I sent the paper to journals. At that time, nothing challenging the mainstream trans paradigm was to be found on philosophy's major database, philpapers.org. I didn't realize that philosophers *probably had noticed* that transgenderism existed and *probably had interesting things to say about it* but *weren't for some reason*. Arrogantly, I figured I was just ahead of the curve, and, naively, I assumed philosophy was a functional field of study. So, I submitted the paper to journals. I got, I think, something like five desk rejections and two referee reports. The reports were the worst hatchet jobs I have ever seen: outright misrepresentation to the editor of what we said, many complaints that our terminology wasn't in keeping with the way trans people talk about themselves (good luck to anyone trying to keep up with the rapidly shifting idioms of trans discourse), and finally a note to the editors that "This was an upsetting paper to read. I think that it will be personally offensive to a lot of trans people, and I think that the authors should consider why (and whether they should change or abandon the project)."

A prominent trans referee groused about it on her social media before I received this report, and I groused on social media about the report she gave me. This led to a post about ideological policing on *Daily Nous*, a major philosophy industry blog, about my complaints. The discussion there seemed to vindicate my sense that the idea was interesting enough to warrant publication, and my comments (despite being written on my cell phone with sporadic electricity, as I was in rural Cameroon at the time) were fairly well received.⁴ Colorado's David Boonin, who disagrees with me on most things but actually likes provocative ideas, was gracious enough to publish a blog-post version of these ideas on his *What's Wrong?* blog.⁵ This remains the only "published" version of this work, although the essay is still available on philpapers.org.⁶

This little drama exemplifies the nature of my dissidence, which is not an expression of an already developed ideology contrary to the progressive consensus—I never thought of myself as "conservative" and have never been Christian. Rather, my dissidence usually begins with a naïve curiosity about some realm of inquiry that is *supposed* to leave one with progressive attitudes but ends with my reaching a position which, be it rightist/conservative or (as in this case) not, nonetheless irritates progressives.

Since much has transpired on trans issues since that time, the paper would need to be substantially revised before being sent out again. I would now take stock of Ray Blanchard's work on autogynephilia, which adds important wrinkles.⁷ Blanchard and some others, such as psychologist J. Michael Bailey, argue persuasively that the majority of male-to-female trans women are autogynephiles, or men who are sexually aroused by the prospect of their bodies as female.⁸ Autogynephilia theory is an explosive subject in its own right since, if true, the majority of trans women do not have a feminine psychological identity but are rather using their transitions to act

out a sexual paraphilia.⁹ On the other side of things, there is good reason to suppose that many trans females interested in transitioning are not really gender dysphoric in the sense of having a strong masculine self-identity, but rather are suffering from Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria (ROGD), galvanized by the prospect of transitioning because of a variety of issues, including borderline personality disorder, social contagion, social awkwardness, and (the threat of continued) sexual abuse.¹⁰ Since the hidden explanations for transitioning are many and complex, drawing analogies to gender exaggeration is likewise complicated. Generally, I would argue today that *if* one recognizes a right to transitioning without negative judgment either medically or morally, one should do the same vis-à-vis exaggeration. Likewise, *if* autogynephiles deserve access to hormone treatments because of their paraphilia, then male exaggerators deserve access to anabolic-androgenic steroids even if they don't have an identity mismatch between their scrawny selves and muscular self-image, simply because *they* feel sexier as hypermale-bodied or are so highly sexually narcissistic as to be aroused by *their* bodies as more male.¹¹

Note the “ifs”: having said all this, since about 2017 I have grown more skeptical of the transgender cause.

In large part, my trans skepticism is a reaction to excesses in transgender activism. Transgender activists often insist that everyone must affirm that trans people *really are* their adopted gender as opposed to having a right to be treated (in part or in whole) *as if* they are their adopted gender. An accommodating position held by many philosophers in private conversation holds that our moral requirements of respect are discharged by as-if treatment. But many trans advocates wish to silence private individuals and academics who argue against the possibility of *actually* transitioning, even to the extent of criminalizing such speech on social media or banning expression of contrary views in classrooms.¹²

I also object to what appears to be trans marketing. I was much more tolerant of transgenderism when I saw it as an extremely rare condition and lifestyle. But clearly it is not: in just a few years, we have reached the point where, according to the Centers for Disease Control, 2 percent of young Americans are identifying as trans,¹³ and it seems reasonable to expect that the average classroom will soon have at least one trans student. I doubt such a large segment of our population struggles with undiagnosed gender identity disorders. Anecdotal evidence from de-transitioners and former therapists for young transitioners is mounting that transgenderism is seen (and sold) as a panacea for a host of troubles young people face, some normal but some distinctly modern.¹⁴ The hype around transgenderism has led many gay, autistic, or awkward young people uncertain of how to perform their gender to identify as trans or nonbinary, usually scuttling their chances at reproducing or even mating.

Thus, my *modus ponens* of 2014 or so . . .

1. If transgenderism is morally unproblematic, so is gender exaggeration.
2. Transgenderism is morally unproblematic.
3. So, gender exaggeration is morally unproblematic.

... is something I cannot endorse any longer, because I now doubt the second premise. I now am sympathetic to these two propositions:

4. If transgenderism is morally unproblematic, so is gender exaggeration.
5. But the converse doesn't hold: if gender exaggeration is unproblematic, then transgenderism may nonetheless be problematic.

Of course, scale and cultural particulars matter. But, overall, it seems to me that gender exaggeration will usually not be as harmful to a person's sexual and reproductive prospects (and thus their emotional well-being) as transitioning will: heavy steroid use and injection of synthol to get artificial muscles is dangerous, as are extreme male risk-taking performances and displays. *Mutatis mutandis* for female gender exaggeration in the form of breast and (nowadays) butt implants, extreme diets, and so forth. But the negative outcomes for gender exaggerators seem dwarfed by the negative mental and physical outcomes of hormone treatment, misdiagnosed dysphoria, and gender reassignment surgery—especially for young people.¹⁵

I still teach my sex ethics class. It's been an emotionally exhausting experience, mostly because of the insight it offers into the sexual unhappiness of my students. In 2013, I would have described myself as basically libertarian and (I agonize to say) "sex positive." Now I hold liberal sex ethics, which considers sex a private matter morally governed by the norms of mere consent, in utter contempt, as I do much of my own thinking about sex up to this point. I now sympathize with a wholly secular movement—more "traditional" than "conservative"—on the right that sees the last century's experiments with sexual liberation as a civilization-threatening failure. These gender-troubled days will pass. But their replacement will not be the moderate equilibrium that, I guess, the silent majority of philosophers today desire: one in which a tiny percentage of gender dysphorics are allowed to live as their preferred gender, with exceptions for sport or certain spaces (such as waxing parlors)¹⁶ where institutions or practitioners may discriminate on the basis of biological sex. I predict instead that the most tolerant societies will grow increasingly intolerant as they feel themselves threatened, and this will result in a multigenerational rightward shift, a central aspect of which will be socially enforced gender roles that are patriarchal and pronatalist. Why I think this is so brings me to another instance in which I learned the wrong lessons . . .

In northern Ethiopia I encountered a people called the Afar. Stubbornly traditional, their lifeways, except for their adoption of Islam, have changed little over the millennia. Theirs is also an infamously low-trust society, with a reputation for decorating their huts with the scrotums of conquered enemies or trespassers.¹⁷ Although all live in the hardscrabble of this singularly resource-poor area of sub-Saharan Africa, the ones I met eked out a particularly precarious existence in Africa's version of Death Valley, the Danakil Depression, where the continent is pulling itself apart in three directions.

The Afar of the Danakil are hammered by an unrelenting tropical sun on an anvil of desert scrub peppered with sulfurous springs, endless salt plains, salt lakes, and

active volcanoes. The Afar men I met in the Danakil spend most of their energies mining the plains by chopping salt into squares, which they load upon their camel trains and sell in cities over a hundred miles away. I tried my hand at chopping salt and was exhausted after a couple minutes, but even the much harder Afar take frequent breaks, with only about a third working at any time. Through an interpreter I chatted with them about their views on honor and manhood, but the questions I wanted to ask were more practical: Why didn't they work under an awning? Why did they reject Ethiopia's offer to build a railway out to the salt plains, so they could move more salt? Why did they abjure any modern convenience or tool? My experiences in Africa had by then discouraged me from asking such questions: I didn't want to play the part of the improving, meddling, complicating white person.

Afar women have a very hard lot. They do most of the herding, build the huts and fences, and of course do all the cooking, cleaning, and childcare. As a polygamous culture in a climate that must make full use of women's reproductive careers, female child marriage is typical. When I was there, a fifty-something-year-old man was marrying a fourteen-year-old girl: she was estimated to be his sixth or seventh wife (some had, of course, died) and she has probably given him his sixtieth child by now. The groom was once himself a simple salt miner, but for whatever reason—charisma? looks?—his ambition of getting a government administrative job and pension was achieved when the local authorities realized he had so many sons that his clan was deemed a potentially destabilizing threat, and they gave him the largely no-show government position he coveted.

My companions and I said goodbye to the Danakil by reaching out of our truck windows and passing out nuts we brought to give small children we'd come across. However, older kids materialized out of the Martian landscape, and the children in front were roughly pushed aside by older boys who snatched at our bags. To prevent the younger children from getting trampled, I threw handfuls of nuts on the ground far from the truck, as if I were feeding geese at a park. Although hardly dignified from my perspective, at least the smaller children were able to get some of the nuts, which they stuffed into their mouths. We drove away and were pursued by youngsters for a couple hundred yards, who bounded after us by leaping from razor-sharp volcanic rock to rock in bare feet.

From there I returned to my then home in the Swedish countryside, where I was spending my sabbatical with my family. In contrast to those lean and desperate Afar children, the kids at my children's school were feted with daily lunches in the form of lavish buffets of nutritious, locally prepared fare: plenty of fish and meat and fresh vegetables, much of it organic. At mealtimes the impeccably behaved children ate quietly, returned their plates to the counter, wiped their tables clean, and placed their chairs upside down on the lunch table. After school they would be picked up in the ceaseless drizzle by their beautiful, smartly dressed, Volvo-driving parents to be carted off to some sort of lesson: music or horseback riding, perhaps.

The infallibly polite smiles the Swedes shared among themselves and especially to my family belied the political turmoil in Sweden at the time. Sweden was still in

shock from a massive influx of migrants from Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia. This land of recently nine million was practically and morally unprepared for the onslaught of about a million migrants their generous welfare policies would attract in just a few years.¹⁸ When I was there, the government was housing refugees in hotel rooms costing hundreds of dollars per night as migration services struggled to find permanent housing.¹⁹ School systems that had experienced very little ethnic or religious diversity suddenly had students from Afghanistan and Somalia to deal with. The ethnically homogenous Sweden had a culture built upon a host of very Nordic behavioral assumptions and thus did not—and still does not—know how to cope with the troublingly high percentage of low-trust, clannish, ethnocentric migrants²⁰ who adhere to profoundly segregated gender roles,²¹ exploit social services as a matter of duty,²² and view Swedish sartorial and sexual norms as a signal that Swedish women are appropriate targets of sexual assault.²³

One thing many outsiders marvel at is how naïve Swedes were revealed to be by the migration crisis. Manipulating Swedish immigration officials in this highest of high-trust cultures does not appear to be very challenging. For instance, migrants regularly toss their papers and lie to immigration officials about their home situation and even country of origin to be counted as a “refugee” as opposed to what they usually are: economic migrants. If their refugee status is denied, most avoid deportation by simply ignoring letters instructing them to show up at deportation centers.²⁴ Unaccompanied minors are fast-tracked and given preferential treatment, but dozens of embarrassing reports—complete with pictures of grizzled grown men with five o’clock shadows wedged in among bright-eyed teenage Swedes—eventually forced the government to medically assess the real age of these supposed minors, finding that 85 percent of questionable cases—6,628 in one round of testing—were adults (readers owe it to themselves to search out some images of Swedish migrant “teens” to fully grasp the vulnerabilities of a high-trust society).²⁵ Swedes, whose own ministers have told them they lack a culture,²⁶ have had to grapple with child marriages;²⁷ polygamy;²⁸ and gender-segregated schools, buses,²⁹ and pools.³⁰ It should be apparent to everyone now that the Swedes have a culture after all—whether they can maintain it is the question.

My attitudes toward mass migration into Europe, especially by Muslim populations, had been negative for some time, but the mass sexual assault of over a thousand women at the 2015–2016 New Year’s Eve celebrations in Cologne and other German cities, combined with the suppression of these reports by the German press and government, solidified my impression that Europe was not just dying but also committing suicide.³¹ Meanwhile, Trump was assuming office and the media, academia, and many of my colleagues were in full meltdown over the change in administration. It is widely appreciated now that one of Trump’s most effective weapons is the visceral hatred of him, which causes his opponents to reflexively endorse whatever he is opposed to. In this case, because of Trump’s (supposed) hardline stance on illegal immigration, American and indeed most European media saturated the airwaves with pro-migrant messaging. Being pro-illegal migrants had become essential to

being anti-Trump, and stances on illegal immigration for which Clinton or Obama paid lip service just a few years prior were now deemed “fascist.”³² My university was taking unprecedented political stands to countersignal the new administration and affirm the vital need for immigrants. Even Superbowl ads pushed the meme that immigrants were “the best of us” and that Americans were incapable of creating and sustaining a competitive civilization without the contribution of this invaluable human resource of migrants from the third world. The message was, to my mind, plainly demoralizing, gaslighting, and subversive. So, one afternoon I gave myself permission to post something on my Facebook not one whit more inflammatory than what my leftist friends and colleagues were posting in the opposite direction.

100% of illegal immigrants lower confidence in the rule of law and add people and workers and students we don't need. They on average have IQs lower than natives and low skills. They are harmful to an economy about to automate, especially when it's a welfare state. Look up the tragedy of the commons if you don't understand the dangers of open access to a shared resource.

And refugees are way worse, as most adhere to a religious-political cult with repulsive values at war with the west [sic] from its inception. No country who has taken in the current crop of refugees has made it work. No school with many refugees or illegals is a good school. None of their neighborhoods are safe. Not everyone has an extra \$100k to avoid them.

What an insult to our kids, our educators, to suggest for a moment that a 20 yr old, raised in rubble and taught to hate you, gays, Christians, Jews, women's rights, and western liberalism would be as good an American as your kid. Truly, let's save a trillion and scrap the education system if we can't produce better average children than the average refugee.

I quote the post in full because it changed my life forever. Quite beyond the offense it caused among some of my friended colleagues, it was screenshotted and sent around to faculty and students who I wasn't connected to on social media (all my Facebook settings were on “private” and I don't “friend” students until they graduate). Within twenty-four hours I was receiving emails from professors I didn't know personally about how I was a fascist and how disappointed they were to have me as a colleague. Some of the more righteous professors at my university held a teach-in about it and issues relating to Trump, immigration, racism, and white nationalism. A few students and faculty called for my firing. Within forty-eight hours the post was being discussed in Minnesota's largest newspapers. Various national outlets picked up on the story. All of this while I was thousands of miles away in the quiet Swedish countryside, with little information about who was saying what about me.

Although I could have done better, I held my ground pretty well. I knew enough to know that one never apologizes to progressive outrage mobs. I referred requests for comments to something I wrote on my professional website doubling-down on my position. The *Daily Nous* ran a piece about it—a gratefully balanced one, too—and its resulting discussion was not the bloodbath I expected.³³ The climax came when I was contacted by Tucker Carlson's producer inviting me on the show and asking

where to send the limo so I could be taken to a studio for the interview. Carlson is the one journalist I felt I should talk to. I explained to his producer that I was in rural Sweden and that I'd have to Skype in. So, the next day, at about 3:30 a. m. local time, with every underpowered lamp in our house pointing in my direction, I stared into the blank screen of my laptop responding to unrehearsed questions from Carlson to an audience of about 2.5 million people. The whole experience was surreal.

After the interview I was deluged with emails, friend requests, and follows on social media. There are many Americans who feel betrayed by academia and I was encouraged to be a renegade America-first academic. I knew, however, that I am not cut out for punditry, and prefer remaining what I am: a low-agreeable professor whose status is too meager to justify reciting progressive dogma I don't believe. Days later, an Uzbek asylum-seeker hijacked a truck and ran down as many "infidel" (as he put it) Swedes as he could on a busy pedestrian street in Stockholm. Five people died in the attack, one of them an eleven-year-old girl who was literally cut in half: pictures of *her* corpse, unlike the corpse of a Turkish (not Syrian) migrant boy who washed ashore on a Greek beach, or the corpses of migrants at the US southern border, were not featured on mainstream news outlets.³⁴ I was once more contacted by Carlson's producer, asking me to come on again and comment on Sweden's self-inflicted domestic terrorism problem. Although I was livid about the attack and knew that too few voices out there were willing to protest Europe's suicidal migration policies, I realized it wasn't my place to comment publicly on Swedish problems, and it would insult the memory of that poor girl for me, an American, to jaw about it on a news show.

What seemed to offend people most about my post was the comments about IQ. The bit about IQ was interpreted as a comment not on the observed "phenotypic" IQ gaps between those in receiving countries and their migrants³⁵ but about the intellectual potential of populations. How confident one should be about the long-term human capital of migrants probably has a lot to do with from where the migrants hail.³⁶ In any event, I meant the gap as important given the looming inevitability of automation, and even then meant it is only really significant because progressive welfare policies, when combined with mass migration, would mean that an even higher percentage of the American population would be dependents of the state. Only later did I discover the work of economist Garret Jones, who argues that mass migration from countries with a low mean IQ will have seriously harmful effects on first world institutions.³⁷

The internet is forever, so my views will probably be indelibly associated with those expressed in that post. Of course, I've grown a great deal since early 2017, as has any thoughtful person. For instance, I wouldn't today criticize Islam for being a "hate cult," since any ideology currently in play seems plenty "hateful": the problem with Islam isn't that it's hateful—it's who it hates and why.

I also care much less about the IQ of immigrants now, for the mean intelligence of this or that wave of migrants is a distraction from more serious practical and moral concerns. As I see things now, peoples benefit very little from mass migration into

their lands of *any* sort, be it low-IQ or high. After all, what does a growing GDP of a “country” matter to a people if the country is no longer theirs? A population’s true interest lies in maintaining its homeland for itself and its children, finding *its own* solutions to *its own* problems, and mining the resources of its genius, as opposed to drifting about in a superficial society designed to accommodate ever-higher levels of ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. Just as we wouldn’t adopt strangers’ children, no matter how brilliant, to “improve” our families, I think we shouldn’t import migrants, no matter how great they may be, to improve our countries. If intelligence, some personality trait, or other psychological phenotype is important, we should create environments that select for those traits among ourselves.³⁸

Consistency on this point calls me to reflect on my own family’s immigration to the United States. My grandparents immigrated in the 1910s, like so many millions of southern and eastern Europeans. Sponsored by Greeks who came to America before them (a process now called “chain migration”), my grandfathers worked in the steel mills of Youngstown, Ohio, and my grandmothers raised responsible children who fought for America in the Second World War. My grandparents, true to stereotype, had a picture of FDR in their home. They voted Democrat, as did their children for some decades. They swallowed the flattering rhetoric of America being “a nation of immigrants” and a nation “built by immigrants” and so forth. I was raised with these tropes too. But now I see them as false and offensive. As progressives remind us whenever taking a break from trying to mesmerize us into accepting more migrants, America is *not* a nation of immigrants: this land was conquered, and conquerors are not immigrants. Native Americans are not immigrants. And, importantly, black Americans are not an immigrant community. *Why* were my grandparents allowed into this country, after all? Not for humanitarian reasons, but rather because industrialists wanted more and cheaper labor for their mills. My grandparents relieved the “labor shortage” that would have resulted in massive opportunities for poor white, and especially poor black, Americans. True, many millions of black Americans did move into the industrial north during the Great Migration, but how much better off would they have been without competition in the labor market from Greeks, Italians, and Poles?³⁹ How much cheaper would their housing have been? How much more cultural attention would have been devoted to them if other minority demographics weren’t competing with them for a fixed amount of political power? Thus, I cannot help but condemn the wave of mass migration that allowed my grandparents to migrate to America, just as I condemn this one.

We are taught to see conquering as evil, but immigration as neutral or even as a good. I no longer see why. Except for Native Americans,⁴⁰ everyone got to America by conquering, settling, immigrating, or being brought here as slaves. Only the last category is unimpeachable. Why should settlers and true immigrants (who I see as arrivals in an already settled land) be looked at as any better than conquerors? If an Anglo carjacks a Native’s car, is the Swede settler any better for buying it off the Anglo, conducting the transaction over the prostrate body of the Native? Or the Greek immigrant for buying the car after that? Any less violence on the part of the

immigrant is balanced by his opportunism: the conqueror at least fought for what he has, whereas the immigrant in many cases flees the call to improve his homeland and pursues personal gain in a land pacified and made prosperous by a strange people who, in the greatest of ironies, he often looks down upon and hopes his children won't marry into. Again, my family, and I personally, figure poorly in these calculations. Like so many immigrant families, my grandparents preferred Greek ways to American ones, did their best to discourage their children from marrying non-Greeks, and left their children with a schizophrenic identity, neither Greek nor American. Likewise, I moved my family to rural Minnesota, a land I have no connection to, to pursue *my* career ambitions. My children have no extended family here, I don't want them to marry anyone from the small town I have moved into, nor do I belong in rural Minnesota. I am happy to take my paycheck, though. I enjoy my cushy job as a professor. I appreciate the safety and peace of rural Minnesota, which is far more functional than my hometown of Youngstown, which I left rather than improved. Not until recently did I appreciate the moral superiority of those who bloom where they're planted and better their local communities and homelands.

Thus, what had begun as a concern for institutions and security has been replaced by a focus on home and identity. Obviously, I like functional institutions. I sincerely believe mass migration jeopardizes our institutions, not just because of human capital concerns but even more so because of the loss of trust that comes from ethnic and religious diversity.⁴¹ When Sweden stops recording the ethnic demographics of criminals to hide the truth about migrant criminality,⁴² when British police turn a blind eye to nineteen thousand white British girls systematically targeted, raped, and groomed by Pakistani pimps,⁴³ when our own armed forces—so operationally effective overseas—somehow cannot protect our own borders, the pretense of maintaining our institutions under mass migration evaporates. We have traded national identity and *thus* sovereignty for lower labor costs and convenience under the assumption that our institutions, at least, are resilient enough to withstand mass migration. But what we appear to be seeing right now is that it is impossible to maintain a society with functional institutions without also maintaining a baseline of fraternity.

John Stuart Mill, who, it should be remembered, argued against mass migration from less civilized to more civilized lands,⁴⁴ defined a nation as people not necessarily united by ethnicity but by common political history⁴⁵—as I understand it, a group of people who have survived war and poverty and have emerged from these privations with a unique identity and high levels of ingroup trust, making it easier for them to transact with each other and leaving them with a sense of mutual obligation to aid. The migrations into receiving countries such as Sweden, the United Kingdom, or the United States over the past few decades make it a trivial truth that the current residents of these countries no longer compose respective “nations,” in even Mill's expansive sense. Thus, it may surprise some readers, as it has surprised me, that I find myself, if anything, more empathetic to people in many developing countries *because* of what is happening in my own. We have been told for some time by historians that colonialist governments hobbled Africa's future by leaving Africans with artificial

“states” that don’t map onto traditional tribal territories or organic allegiances.⁴⁶ Similar rationales against mass migration to the *West* are deemed racist and xenophobic for reasons that escape me—maybe progressive thinkers think more highly of whites?—but the original insight remains true enough, and we can experience for ourselves the civilizational drag that comes from living in lands divided by incompatible political, ethnic, and religious groups. How couldn’t “populist nationalists,” then, watching their own lands being settled by foreigners, not have keener sympathy for those Africans or Middle Easterners whose lands have similarly been colonized? Or feel a strange mix of guilt and fellowship with the Native peoples of this land? Only after becoming a “xenophobic nativist” could I start to really appreciate how a proud people can be brought low by having their homelands taken and their culture erased. I now recognize the importance of tribalism, and the weaknesses of individualist, high-trust societies in a mobile world. I’m even starting to see the advantages that come from living in an *undesirable* place, and contemplating the upsides of deliberate poverty, which makes at least a people’s territory a less attractive target for migrants. Maybe this is the answer to the unasked questions I had for those Afar miners, who will be obstinately chopping their salt in Afarland long after the American epoch has ended.

NOTES

1. The genderbread person has been radically updated since this time. See “All Resources for the Genderbread Person,” Genderbread.org, accessed Feb 15, 2020, <https://www.genderbread.org/resources>.

2. Mosher, Donald, “Hypermasculinity Inventory,” in *Handbook of Sexuality-Related Measures*, ed. Clive M. Davis et al. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998): 472–74.

3. See for instance, Mead, Christina, “What the Catholic Church Wants the Transgender Community to Know,” *Life Teen* blog, accessed February 15, 2020, <https://lifeteen.com/blog/catholic-church-wants-transgender-community-know/>.

4. Weinberg, Justin, “Allegations of Ideological Policing via Refereeing,” *Daily Nous* blog, July 5, 2016, <http://dailynous.com/2016/07/05/allegations-ideological-policing-via-refereeing/>.

5. Demetriou, Dan, “What’s Wrong with Hypermasculinity?” *What’s Wrong* blog, October 12, 2015, <https://whatswrongcvsp.com/2015/10/12/whats-wrong-with-hypermasculinity/>.

6. Demetriou, Dan, and Michael Prideaux, “Gender Exaggeration as Trans,” October 28, 2014, <https://philpapers.org/rec/DEMGEA>.

7. Blanchard, Ray, “The Concept of Autogynephilia and the Typology of Male Gender Dysphoria,” *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 177(10) (1998): 616–23.

8. Bailey, Michael, *The Man Who Would Be Queen: The Science of Gender-Bending and Transsexualism* (Washington, DC: Joseph Henry Press, 2003).

9. Bailey, J. Michael, and Ray Blanchard, “Gender Dysphoria Is Not One Thing,” *4thwavenow Blog*, December 7, 2017, <https://4thwavenow.com>.

10. Littman, Lisa, “Parent Reports of Adolescents and Young Adults Perceived to Show Signs of a Rapid Onset of Gender Dysphoria,” *PLoS ONE* 13(8) (2018): e0202330. Note that “gender dysphoria” is sometimes spoken of as a psychological mismatch between one’s

psychology and one's body, and sometimes as a mere wish to transition. Sometimes proponents of ROGD use "gender dysphoria" in the latter sense. For a more thorough, popular discussion of this sad phenomenon, see Shrier, Abigail, *Irreversible Damage* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2020).

11. Indeed, recent research suggests these feelings are more common than most of us would suppose: see Alexander, Scott, "Autogenderphilia Is Common and Not Especially Related to Transgender" (sic), *Slate Star Codex* blog, February 10, 2020, https://slatestarcodex.com/2020/02/10/autogenderphilia-is-common-and-not-especially-related-to-transgender/?fbclid=IwAR13IYB_g_foAHH4V9AEHYB1pjYeF_PbHLBkCSRUGXXU34qLzU3SezmvAW8.

12. Luckily, the tide seems to be turning. See Byrne, Alex, "Are Women Adult Human Females?" *Philosophical Studies* 177 (2020): 3783–803; and Bogardus, Tomas, "Evaluating Arguments for the Sex/Gender Distinction," *Philosophia* 48 (2020): 873–92.

13. Johns, Michele M., et al., "Transgender Identity and Experiences of Violence Victimization, Substance Use, Suicide Risk, and Sexual Risk Behaviors among High School Students—19 States and Large Urban School Districts, 2017," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 68 (2019): 67–71.

14. Evans, Marcus, "Why I Resigned from Tavistock: Trans-Identified Children Need Therapy, Not Just 'Affirmation' and Drugs," *Quillette*, January 17, 2020, <https://quillette.com/2020/01/17/why-i-resigned-from-tavistock-trans-identified-children-need-therapy-not-just-affirmation-and-drugs/>. There is also a detransition subreddit that provides important anecdotal insight into the complexity of trans psychology: <https://www.reddit.com/r/detrans/>.

15. In this regard I note the recent ruling against the Tavistock Center, in which the English court found "that children under the age of 16 considering gender reassignment are unlikely to be mature enough to give informed consent to be prescribed puberty-blocking drugs, in effect curtailing medical intervention for under-16s with gender dysphoria." Brooks, Libby, "Puberty Blockers Ruling: Curbing Trans Rights or a Victory for Common Sense?" *The Guardian*, December 3, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/dec/03/puberty-blockers-ruling-curbng-trans-rights-or-a-victory-for-common-sense->.

16. Regarding waxing parlors, see, for example, Mangione, Kendra, "Trans Activist Files Another Human Rights Complaint over Waxing Refusal," *CTV News Vancouver*, January 7, 2020, <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/trans-activist-files-another-human-rights-complaint-over-waxing-refusal-1.4757496>.

17. Jeffrey, James, "Ethiopia's Remote Afar: An Ancient Way of Life Continues in a Modernising Country," *Inter Press Service*, March 2019, <http://www.ipsnews.net/2019/03/ethiopias-remote-afar-ancient-way-life-continues-modernising-country/>.

18. Jürgensen, Agnete Lundetræ, "Immigration to Sweden from 2008 to 2018," *Statista*, February 11, 2020, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/523293/immigration-to-sweden/>.

19. Nordenstam, Sven, "Housing Refugees Is Big Business for Swedish Pop Tycoon," *Reuters*, September 24, 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-swedenbusiness/housing-refugees-is-big-business-for-swedish-pop-tycoon-idUSKCN0RO1HV20150924>.

20. Panshiri, Mustafa, "How Sweden's Blind Altruism Is Harming Migrants," *Quillette*, March 4, 2019, <https://quillette.com/2019/03/04/how-swedens-blind-altruism-is-harming-migrants/>.

21. "Swedish PM Condemns Gender Segregated School Bus," *Local SE*, April 4, 2017, <https://www.thelocal.se/20170404/stockholm-school-segregated-boys-and-girls-on-the-bus>.

22. Tomlinson, Chris, "Former Insurance Directors Warn Migrants Can Abuse Welfare System Easily," *Breitbart*, January 10, 2020, <https://www.breitbart.com/europe/2020/01/10/former-insurance-directors-warn-migrants-can-abuse-welfare-system-easily/#>.

23. “When University of Oslo Professor Unni Wilkan reported a few days before 9/11 that 65% of rapes in Norway were committed by Muslim men, she saw fit to add that ‘Norwegian women must take their share of responsibility for these rapes’ because Muslim men found Western dress too provocative to stand: ‘Norwegian women must realize that we live in a multicultural society and adapt to it.’” Schulman, Alex, “Stockholm Syndrome: Radical Islam and the European Response,” *Human Rights Review* 10(469) (2009), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12142-009-0118-2>.

24. Lifvendahl, Tove, “How Sweden Became an Example of How Not to Handle Immigration,” *Spectator*, September 6, 2016, <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2016/09/how-sweden-became-an-example-of-how-not-to-handle-immigration/>.

25. “Sweden Child Migrant Tests ‘Reveal Many Adults,’” *BBC*, December 5, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-42234585>.

26. “I cannot figure out what Swedish culture is. I think that’s what makes many Swedes jealous of immigrant groups. You have a culture, an identity, a history, something that brings you together. And what do we have? We have Midsummer’s Eve and such silly things,” famously said then–minister of democracy and integration Mona Sahlin to a Turkish youth organization. See “Mona Sahlin,” [wikiquote.org](https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Mona_Sahlin), last updated February 19, 2021, https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Mona_Sahlin.

27. Bogdan, Michael, “Some Critical Comments on the New Swedish Rules on Non-Recognition of Foreign Child Marriages,” *Journal of Private Individual Law* 15(2) (2019): 247–56, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17441048.2019.1645972>.

28. “Polygamy in Sweden: Two Wives, Two Houses,” <https://www.bitchute.com/video/PnGiq5g62zMI/>.

29. “Swedish PM Condemns Gender Segregated Schoolbus,” *op cit*.

30. Hofverberg, Elin, “Sweden: Separate Swimming Hours by Gender Justifiable,” *Global Legal Monitor*, January 12, 2017, <https://loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/sweden-separate-swimming-hours-by-gender-justifiable/>.

31. As a starting point, see the Wikipedia entry on the attacks: “2015–16 New Year’s Eve Sexual Assaults in Germany,” *Wikipedia*, accessed February 15, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015%E2%80%9316_New_Year%27s_Eve_sexual_assaults_in_Germany.

32. Many video montages on this point are available, such as “Flashback: Bill vs. Hillary on Immigration,” *Fox Business*, October 4, 2016, https://youtu.be/xc7xWs_GBAC.

33. Weinberg, Justin, “Philosopher’s Comments on Immigration Cause Stir on Campus,” *February 17, 2017*, <http://dailyous.com/2017/02/17/philosophers-comments-immigration-causes-stir-campus/>.

34. “2017 Stockholm Truck Attack,” *Wikipedia*, accessed February 15, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017_Stockholm_truck_attack.

35. Rindermann, Heiner, et al., “Survey of Expert Opinion on Intelligence: Causes of International Differences in Cognitive Ability Tests,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 7 (2016): 399, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4804158/>.

36. Jones, Garrett, “Do Immigrants Import Their Economic Destiny?” *Economics*, September 17, 2016, <https://economics.com/do-immigrants-import-their-economic-destiny-garrett-jones/>.

37. Jones, Garrett, *Hive Mind* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

38. Anomaly, Jonny, *Creating Future People: The Ethics of Genetic Enhancement* (New York: Routledge, 2020).

39. In an even greater betrayal, immigrant whites would all too often use unions to keep blacks out of industry, which would have been harder to do if labor shortages were dire.

40. Of course, every Native people of this land themselves must have conquered previous occupants over the long history of the populated North American continent.

41. As the authors of a recent review essay on social trust and diversity put it,

[a]t both the collective and individual levels, civic nationalism has a (weak) positive effect on social trust, whereas ethnic nationalism has a (stronger) negative effect. Furthermore, if one looks at the widely researched, and mainly negative, effects of ethnic and cultural diversity on levels of trust, having a civic national identity appears not to moderate these effects, whereas having an ethnic national identity exacerbates them. [citations removed]

Lenard, Patti Tamara, and David Miller, "Trust and National Identity," in *Oxford Handbook of Social and Political Trust*, ed. Eric Uslaner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018): 67.

42. Roden, Lee, "Why Sweden Doesn't Keep Stats on Ethnicity and Crime," *The Local SE*, May 8, 2018, <https://www.thelocal.se/20180508/why-sweden-doesnt-keep-stats-on-ethnic-background-and-crime>.

43. "Rotherham Child Sexual Exploitation Scandal," *Wikipedia*, accessed February 15, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rotherham_child_sexual_exploitation_scandal. The cover-up of official data on offender backgrounds continues as of this writing. See Dearden, Lizzie, "Grooming Gang Review Kept Secret as Home Office Claims Releasing Findings 'Not in Public Interest,'" *Independent*, February 22, 2020, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/grooming-gang-rotherham-review-home-office-findings-a9344896.html>.

44. Writes Mill,

The nationalities brought together under the same government, may be about equal in numbers and strength, or they may be very unequal. If unequal, the least numerous of the two may either be the superior in civilization, or the inferior. Supposing it to be superior, it may either, through that superiority, be able to acquire ascendancy over the other, or it may be overcome by brute strength, and reduced to subjection. This last is a sheer mischief to the human race, and one which civilized humanity with one accord should rise in arms to prevent. The absorption of Greece by Macedonia was one of the greatest misfortunes which ever happened to the world: that of any of the principal countries of Europe by Russia would be a similar one.

Representative Government, Chapter 16, in *The Collected works of John Stuart Mill* (Vol. 19), 1861, https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/234#Mill_0223-19_410.

45. *Ibid.*

46. "The bottom line in this paper is that the artificial borders bequeathed by colonizers are a significant hindrance to the political and economic development," concludes one widely cited study. Alesina, Alberto, et al., "Artificial States," *Journal of the European Economic Association* 9 (2011): 246–77.

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