

IEA Perspectives 3

TRANSGENDER IDEOLOGY

A new threat to liberal values

Marc Glendening
August 2023



About IEA publications

The IEA publishes scores of papers, books, blogs and more each and every year – covering a variety of stimulating and varied topics.

To that end, our publications will, in the main, be categorised under the following headings, from May 2023 onwards.

Hobart Editions

Papers or books likely to make a lasting contribution to free market debate, either on policy matters or on more academic grounds

IEA Foundations

Primers or introductions to free market concepts, ideas and thinkers

IEA Perspectives

Majoring on current policy-focused issues

IEA Briefings

Short, punchy reports on contemporary issues

IEA Special Editions

Spotlighting lecture transcripts, celebrated writers and more

Much of our work is freely available on the IEA website. To access this vast resource, just scan the QR code below – it will take you directly to the IEA's Research home page.



Contents

About the author	4
Summary	6
Introduction	7
Pre-political transsexuals and transvestites	11
Political transgenderism	12
'Biologically based' transgenderism	15
Our future under transgender ideology	17
Conclusion	21
Reference list	23

Marc Glendening is Head of Cultural Affairs at the IEA. His Parallax Views series of YouTube discussions are focused on contemporary issues affecting cultural liberty. Before coming to the IEA, he worked for Policy Exchange focusing on freedom of speech related issues and the political implications of human rights law. In 2011 he co-founded as political director of the cross-party Democracy Movement, the People's Pledge. This campaigned for a referendum on the question of EU membership and included politicians and others with contrary views on Brexit. Marc is a co-founder of the Sohemian Society which is dedicated to the history and liberal values of Soho.

Summary

- Transgender ideology and the rights of trans people to dress or present themselves as they wish must be distinguished. One can challenge the former while affirming the latter.
- Proposed laws facilitating gender self-identification have serious implications for single sex spaces, sports, and for the internal functions of businesses and private organisations. They therefore warrant serious discussion and debate.
- Many supporters of transgender ideology do not aim to win the debate but rather to prevent debate from occurring.
- Supporters of transgender ideology in organisations including Mermaids and Stonewall have claimed that gender critical views such as denying the ability of people to change sex through an act of gender self-identification, constitute 'hate speech' and as such should be prosecuted.
- Even under existing laws people with gender critical views have been subject to police investigation.
- Transgender ideology must be seen as a product of a broader postmodernist approach which views the concept of objective truth as both a fiction and a tool of oppression.
- Maintaining free speech in this area, as in others, is essential if we are to defend a liberal society based on rationality rather than coercion.

Introduction

Within the past decade, Britain, together with other English-speaking nations, has seen the emergence of a transgender- ideological movement. This tendency has sought to go far beyond establishing the right of individuals to assert a sex-related identity of their choice. Such an entitlement should not be, and never has been, denied. Rather, the objective of the campaign has become the imposition on other individuals of a wide-ranging series of obligations. Even the rights of females and institutions to deny access to biological males self-identifying as women to certain types of space and activities traditionally reserved for females is under threat.

Furthermore, as a result of transgender ideology, the possibilities for open debate, and even our right to free speech, are being undermined. Ideologically motivated redefinitions of commonplace words compromise our shared language and capacity to conceptualise the world rationally and represent this linguistically. It is contended that arguing against transgender ideology should be prevented on principle. In this way, the movement undermines the basic requirements of an open society.

In 2004, the Gender Recognition Act made provision for the granting of a 'gender recognition certificate' to persons who would, from that point on, be legally recognised as the gender they had selected, regardless of their biological sex. The Equality Act 2010 then prohibited discrimination on grounds of 'gender reassignment'. This is defined not in terms of the completion of a sex-change operation but in terms of a person proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone a process for reassignment of sex (Equality Act s.7(1)).

The Equality and Human Rights Commission further declares that this includes the case of a person who is ‘proposing to undergo’ such a process.¹

The Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill would have, if it had not been blocked by the UK government, enabled those sixteen and over wishing to legally change their gender identity to do so, only a matter of months after having adopted their new identity. The widespread opposition to this proposed statute, extending to majority support for the UK government’s intervention to block it because of its implications in terms of the operation of the Equality Act for the rest of the UK, is evidence of a major disjuncture between elite and popular opinion on this matter.²

The transgender ideology movement has, while promulgating its own beliefs successfully across the public realm, sought to suppress the right of sceptics to challenge these views and expose their flaws. This has taken the form of a campaign of ‘cancel culture’, involving attempts to physically prevent opponents from speaking publicly as well as campaigns that have had the effect of imposing various other penalties, including loss of employment and livelihood.³ In the 2020 Labour leadership contest, two candidates, Lisa Nandy and Rebecca Long-Bailey, together with Dawn Butler, who was running for deputy leader, signed a pledge card produced by the Labour Campaign for Trans Rights. This committed them to seek the expulsion of ‘transphobes’ from the Labour Party. In the light of the various other aspects of the transgender ideology movement, it seems likely that a ‘transphobe’ is no more than someone who disagrees with the ideologues. The campaign also denounced Women’s Place UK and other ‘gender-critical’ organisations as ‘trans-exclusionist hate groups’.⁴

Amongst those who have been subjected to denigration for holding a different view is another Labour MP – Rosie Duffield, MP for Canterbury. The well-documented campaign against her from within her own party has included demands that the party whip be withdrawn from her in Parliament and that she be deselected as a candidate.

1 ‘Gender reassignment discrimination’, *Equality and Human Rights Commission* (<https://tinyurl.com/ym2px77b>) Accessed: 9 June 2023.

2 Nicoll, V. ‘Nicola Sturgeon’s gender reforms panned by Scots voters in exclusive Express poll’, *Scottish Daily Express*, 5 Feb 2023 (<https://tinyurl.com/3urbv548>).

3 Tanno, S. ‘Balaclava-clad trans activists barricade women’s group into Bristol pub’, *Daily Telegraph*, 19 June 2022 (<https://tinyurl.com/2p8hb4j7>).

4 Weaver, M. ‘Labour leadership contenders split over trans group pledge card’, *The Guardian*, 13 Feb 2020 (<https://tinyurl.com/2p8k4x7w>).

One example of her alleged transphobia was a refusal to recognise the some-of-the-time female-identifying comedian and aspiring politician Eddie Izzard as a woman.⁵

In addition, there has been a legal dimension to the drive to restrict the expression of transgender-critical views. The Conservative MP Alicia Kearns has been running a campaign to persuade the government to ban so-called conversion therapy concerning people who are thinking about transitioning. She has said that this measure is the ‘one national law I have wanted to bring in since I was elected’.⁶ Such therapy is designed to help individuals cease identifying with a sex status that is at variance with their actual biological sex. Prohibition of this kind of therapy has been a longstanding demand of Stonewall and other pro-trans campaigning groups. But such a law would risk discouraging or deterring entirely conventional and often effective open-ended, judgementally neutral and exploratory therapy.⁷ Indeed, some clinicians have raised concerns that the political pressure not to discuss alternatives to transition effectively amounts to conversion therapy for children who might otherwise not go down the road of medically induced sexual reassignment.⁸

An infamous aspect of these developments has been the police entering individuals on ‘Non-Crime Hate Incident’ databases for expressing views perceived to be ‘hostile’ in relation to transgenderism. Amongst reasons for entering individuals’ names on this database are their expressing views said to exhibit ‘unfriendliness’.⁹ It has been reported that 120,000 such ‘non-crime hate incidents’ have been recorded by police.¹⁰ Conflating the vaguely defined, abstract concept of ‘hatefulness’ with the making of even mildly stated transgender-critical views has become the conventional way to try to limit their articulation. And then, in 2019, Thames Valley Police announced that they would prosecute, under the Public Order Act,

5 Baska, M. ‘Labour urged to remove whip from Rosie Duffield over “transphobic views”’, *Pink News*, 27 Oct 2022 (<https://tinyurl.com/rfrmvep6>).

6 Perry, S. ‘Tory MP Alicia Kearns says conversion therapy ban could be hijacked to attack trans rights’, *Pink News*, 2 Feb 2023 (<https://tinyurl.com/yc34urdn>).

7 ‘Thoughtful Therapist’ website (<https://tinyurl.com/28m4y429>) Accessed: 9 June 2023.

8 ‘It feels like conversion therapy for gay children, say clinicians’, *The Times*, 8 April 2019 (<https://tinyurl.com/56ax3ma6>).

9 ‘Major investigation and public protection: Responding to hate’, *College of Policing Hate Crime Guidance*, 2020 (<https://tinyurl.com/2nhx3wyt>).

10 Fahey, R. ‘Police have recorded 120,000 cases of “non-crime” hate incidents - despite accepting they are not illegal - as judge warns of chilling effect on free speech as he slams “Gestapo” police who quizzed businessman over “transphobic tweets”’, *Mail Online*, 15 February 2020 (<https://tinyurl.com/5n6d8hu5>).

individuals who distributed materials reproducing the English Oxford Dictionary's description of what constitutes a woman.¹¹

In the light of these kinds of occurrences, it seems that the transgender movement is successfully forcing on us changes in language and logic. The rest of this paper looks at the roots of this ideology and warns of the severe implications for our society of its dominance: the triumph and imposition of an overtly anti-rationalist mindset.

¹¹ French, A. 'Posting transphobic stickers is a public order offence', *Oxford Mail*, 12 Oct 2019 (<https://tinyurl.com/4ucd7wrw>).

Pre-political transsexuals and transvestites

The terms 'transsexual' and 'transvestite' denoted persons who consciously wished to defy traditional assumptions concerning behavioural and visual traits associated with the two sexes. While transvestites donned the clothing and sought the physical appearance of the opposite sex, some transsexuals wished to be more deeply seen and accepted by others as the opposite sex. This latter group included the very small number of people who underwent surgery and drug treatment to modify their physical appearance in order to try to more resemble the other sex. This then tendency was not accompanied by a desire to give rise to a political movement, nor to deny free speech to others.

Political transgenderism

The politicisation of transgenderism began to gain momentum from the 1980s onwards and was accompanied by a drive to find expression through various forms of legal and state intervention. Those within or supporting the movement who articulated an underlying theory tended to employ an offshoot of Frankfurt School-derived Critical Theory. This became known as Queer Theory, and its adoption is well documented in Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay's book *Cynical Theories* (2020: Ch. 4).

This approach, in keeping with post-war New Left ideology, starts from the premise that there are oppressor categories who, through their supposed cultural dominance, sustain their position of 'privilege' ideologically. Communication is said to be the principal means by which the various marginalised 'outsider' groups identified through theory are kept suppressed. Language, from this perspective, is not principally a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge as well as opinion, but rather the means by which power is exercised. What we think we know about reality is said to be 'socially constructed' and designed to serve established interests and ways of life.

Judith Butler (1990: 19), one of the principal exponents of this point of view, argued that "'being" a sex or a gender is fundamentally impossible'. There is no fixed biological female essence, she asserts, merely a 'discursive formation' that gives rise to an 'impersonation' of womanhood directed at an audience. Identifying as a woman is a 'performance' whose origins lie in the way society is allegedly structured with the intent of keeping females subordinate. We are assigned a sex at birth, Butler claims.

This is a view later endorsed by the Labour politician Dawn Butler. Speaking on morning television in 2020, she said: 'A child is born without sex.'¹²

The meaning, therefore, attached to female and male biological characteristics is socially determined and results in the persons so defined being directed to fulfilling certain sexual roles, including reproduction, and occupying positions of dominance and subordination as a result. Judith Butler writes: 'The category of woman can and does change... securing greater freedoms for women requires that we rethink the category of "woman" to include those new possibilities.'¹³

This approach leads to the assertion that how people are perceived by society in general determines their gender and sexual status:

Gender is an assignment that does not just happen once: it is ongoing. We are assigned a sex at birth and then a slew of expectations follow which continue to "assign" gender to us. The powers that do that are part of an apparatus of gender that assigns and reassigns norms to bodies, organises them socially, but also animates them in directions contrary to those norms.¹⁴

This kind of view explains why political transgender ideology attaches such central importance to society at large being *required* to recognise a person's self-identification, regardless of the actual material body the individual inhabits. Only through the manufacturing of a new consensus about what constitutes gender/sex will the inner 'lived experience' of trans people, the sense of, as has sometimes been said, having been born in the 'wrong body' become corrected.

In this way, transgender ideology fuses a qualitatively *different type* of concept based upon qualities that exist objectively in time and space with an abstract idea derived from a subjective intuition. This is unscientific nonsense and inappropriate to a society that wishes to be based upon reason and logic. One type of physical entity cannot simultaneously be another type of entity.

12 O'Neill, B. 'Dawn Butler's transgender madness', *The Spectator*, 18 Feb 2020 (<https://tinyurl.com/2p8476vj>). Ms Butler is also known for her view that 90% of giraffes are gay: <https://tinyurl.com/ykv86a22>

13 Quoted in Gleeson, J. 'Judith Butler: "We need to rethink the category of woman"', *The Guardian*, 7 Sept 2021 (<https://tinyurl.com/3xftrw3c>).

14 Judith Butler interview, *The Guardian*, 7 September 2021 (<https://tinyurl.com/2pynapjp>).

Transgenderism, in its politicised version, is thus not just a drive for self-identification. In a free society, people can, of course, present themselves however they wish, no matter how eccentric this may appear to others. Rather, it is the requirement that society prioritises and gives recognition to these forms of self-perception. It is a demand that others subordinate their own powers of judgement to that of the ideology.

An inner contradiction regarding this approach presents itself: if our perceptions of reality are indeed shaped by existing ideologically dominant power systems, how is it then that individuals whose self-image is fundamentally at odds with how they are perceived by society at large can come to such an understanding of themselves in the first place? And if trans people are able to do so, if inner perception has this capacity, then surely the views of the transgender-sceptical majority should be utterly irrelevant to the inner-derived 'truth' a trans-identifying person has come to appreciate? This position would straightforwardly take us back to the old liberal and entirely defensible position that we can all identify however we want; we just can't enforce it upon others.

Transgender ideology, then, aims to achieve what it professes to detest and oppose; it is a quest to grasp and utilise social power. All within the society must therefore be made to comply with the assertions of the approved identity group and its demand for validation. It is a conception of freedom for the favoured category of persons that requires the imposition of a *specific* set of social conditions.

'Biologically based' transgenderism

Some within the political transgender movement, as Joanna Williams (2020: 8) has noted, have sought to augment the justification for gender self-identity by arguing that there is, after all, a biological basis to a transgender identity: the claim, in essence, is that there exist different female and male brains.

This seeks to build upon scientific theories which state that just as, on average, there are physical differences between men and women, on average there can also be shown to be cognitive differences between the sexes. The idea is that a trans-identifying male perhaps has more of a 'woman's brain'. As Williams argues, the distinguishing features between male and female brains reflect a continuum, as with height and weight, not a sharp dividing line. Women and men do not have a 'gendered essence' in the sense of predetermined psychologies, modes of perception and beliefs. There is no evidence to suggest that people professing to be transgender have brains that are *physically* structured in a way which is at variance with their natal sex.¹⁵

This is possibly why an entirely different epistemological base – the revelation of an inner 'truth' that cannot be contradicted – is preferred by many adhering to transgender ideology. This may also help to explain the refusal, in principle, of Stonewall and other similar groups to debate this issue. Another aspect of the trans phenomenon has been the growing number of young people experiencing 'gender dysphoria'. Many of those claiming to experience this do feel genuine emotional pain. However, as

¹⁵ 'False assumptions behind youth gender transitions', *Society for Evidence Based Gender Medicine*, 30 December 2022 (<https://tinyurl.com/4hfx7zww>).

Helen Joyce (2021: 71–90; 71–72), in her best-selling book *Trans*, has pointed out, such feelings do not equate to actually *being* a member of the opposite sex. Today:

the identity claims of gender-dysphoric children are taken at face value and even the possibility of desistance is denied... Doubters are treated as bigots who could not care less if gender-dysphoric children kill themselves, rather than as whistle-blowers looking out for children's interests.

As Joyce (2020: 72–77) documents, it is this outlook that has led to the prescription of puberty-blocking medication. Part of the intention is to arrest the natural physical development of young people with gender dysphoria. This, it is said, allows the person time to solidify their gender identity, possibly with a view to surgery. It is also this kind of thinking that led the Conservative government to endorse the teaching of 'gender identity' in schools, though it is left to schools to decide how best to do this.¹⁶

The potential harm of prescribing chemical-based treatments for those under the age of eighteen came most vividly to public attention in the case of *Bell v. Tavistock*. This involved the issue of whether it was lawful for the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust to provide puberty-blocking drugs to a patient who was sixteen at the time the treatment was undertaken. Kiera Bell was suffering from gender dysphoria but subsequently regretted having been encouraged to undertake the course of drugs provided by the Tavistock NHS Trust. Bell wanted clinics to be prevented hitherto from enabling teenagers to prepare for sex-change operations without a court order.¹⁷ Surely that is right.

¹⁶ 'Relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education' guidance, point 75. *Department for Education*, 2019 (<https://tinyurl.com/2p8uav9a>).

¹⁷ 'Transgender issues in the Court of Appeal: *Bell v. Tavistock* update', *Farrer & Co*, 27 Sept 2021 (<https://tinyurl.com/mw5x2c8h>).

Our future under transgender ideology

What might our future hold if transgender ideology continues its long march through the institutions of civil society and the state sector?

One potential repercussion could be the opening of the door to other preferential treatments for people who perceive themselves in all kinds of fantastical ways. Until its advent, the politics of identity had primarily focused on physical characteristics such as sex and ethnicity, as well as religious affiliation or sexual orientation. Transgender ideology potentially extends the scope even further to imagined states of being, such as being black when white, thin when fat, tall when short, young when old, or vice versa. Such characteristics could become the basis for the creation of entirely new protected characteristics in law, potentially greater regulation of speech, 'cancellations', and further disengagement of our society from objective reality. So far, this has not happened. One man's attempt to change his legal date of birth, to present himself on Tinder as 20 years younger than he was, amongst other reasons, failed and was met with hostility.¹⁸ And when a white-skinned woman, Rachel Dolezal, presented herself as being black, she was forced out of her then position as president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in her area. She was denounced by many within the organisation and the American New Left coalition as a 'faker'. Dolezal still maintains that she is black: 'for me it's been like a consistent, organic process of coming into who I am'.¹⁹ Once changing one's sex is considered to be something that it is

18 Charity, N. 'Emile Ratelband: Dutch pensioner, 69, who "identifies as 20 years younger" wants age legally changed to improve chances on Tinder', *Evening Standard*, 8 November 2018 (<https://tinyurl.com/yc5fcay2>).

19 McGreal, C. 'Rachel Dolezal: "I wasn't identifying as black to upset people. I was being me."', *The Guardian*, 13 December 2015 (<https://tinyurl.com/5a79w3my>).

legitimate to affirm, it is not entirely clear why asserting a different ethnicity from one's own should be considered out of bounds.

Helen Joyce has noted the way in which the postmodernist technique of 'deconstruction', as advanced by Jacques Derrida in relation to exposing and overturning the hidden power biases of established concepts and beliefs, is now being deployed as a means of 'dematerialising sex and reifying gender'. This theory's key idea is that contrasting categories of sex and gender are paired together in order to establish, or maintain, the supposed superiority of sex over gender identity (2021: 68–69). In addition, Joyce claims that Queer Theory has sought to overturn the binaries of what is considered to be normal and deviant, natural and socially constructed. Her argument is that deconstruction has been used to demolish the idea of naturally existing sexed categories. In doing so, the aim is to enable trans people, particularly men identifying as women, to access spaces and forms of interaction they are currently denied access to by virtue of their objective sex status. In so doing, it is facilitating the removal of distinct rights for women and also, potentially, the very conception of a distinct female sex. Transgender ideology, from her feminist perspective, is therefore seen as a highly regressive and dangerous movement.

In addition to the perspective some feminists advance, the libertarian self-styled 'objectivist' thinker Ayn Rand can also be deployed in this context. An objectivist approach views transgender ideology as seeking to separate human consciousness from the material world, including, in other words, the reality of our own physical bodies. It opens the door to an anything-goes, fantastical worldview. This is designed to assist the process of reinventing what it is to be human and a restructuring of society through the use of radical, postmodern-inspired theory – in other words, an updating of Maoist 'culture year zero'-like thinking.

Those who opt for this approach seek to achieve, via their supposed victim status, personal and political power. They can demand that their fellow human beings adhere to ever more detailed and intrusive demands. They can require workplaces to abandon human norms never previously subjected to such challenge. For example, Revenue and Customs in December 2022 posted an announcement informing employees who defined themselves as 'gender fluid/non-binary/multigender and/or transgender' that they could apply for a secondary pass or identity card in recognition of their wish to express their gender 'differently at different times'. A spokesman for the HMRC stated: 'This is not a new policy. It is

in place to help protect everyone's security and ensure all colleagues feel welcome in the workplace.²⁰

Challenging the claim that 'trans women are women' is said to be 'dehumanising', an attempt to 'erase' transgender persons. It is sometimes alleged that speech judged to be 'transphobic' has led to suicide.²¹ This portrayal of speech as potentially constituting a form of other-regarding harm is very much in keeping with the postmodernist theories which claim that language is the principal means through which social power and coercion are exercised.

The director of Stonewall, Nancy Kelley, has equated gender-critical views with expressions of antisemitism and urged legal intervention to prevent them in the name of providing greater protection to trans people. 'Those who deny trans people's existence, misgender them and advocate anti-trans discrimination echo the prejudice of racists and homophobes.'²² Stonewall defines 'transphobia' as 'the fear or dislike of someone based on the fact they are trans, including *denying their gender id entity or refusing to accept it*' [emphasis added].²³

The point here, it is to be emphasised again, is not to say that people should not live as they please. It is to point to the attempt to curtail open debate about how far the rest of society should fall into line with people's self-perception when it comes to such details as the use of shared private facilities, entry into sporting competitions, and even the scientific basis of the claims that are made. In this connection, a remark of Labour MP Nadia Whittome has become famous. Concerning the right to affirm a different position to her own on this matter, she said:

-
- 20 Livingstone, N. 'Critics sound the alarm over "security risk" as Whitehall offers secondary ID passes to gender-fluid staff whose identities and appearance "may change daily"', *Mail Online*, 18 December 2022 (<https://tinyurl.com/yb4mz87x>).
- 21 'An open letter from Mermaids on World Suicide Prevention Day', *mermaids* website, 10 Sept 2019 (<https://tinyurl.com/59hny6t9>).
- 22 Siddique, H. 'Stonewall is at centre of a toxic debate on trans rights and gender identity', *The Guardian*, 5 June 2021 (<https://tinyurl.com/2t5a25eu>).
- 23 Quoted from Stonewall website 'What is homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying?' (<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/what-homophobic-biphobic-and-transphobic-bullying>) Accessed: 5 May 2023.

We must not fetishise “debate” as though debate is itself an innocuous, neutral act. *The very act of debate...* is an effective rollback of assumed equality and a foot in the door for doubt and hatred [emphasis added].²⁴

The logic of this viewpoint is that the more censorship there is relating to this question, the more ‘social justice’ for trans people there will be.

Sir Keir Starmer intimated in late 2022 at the Pink News awards ceremony that his party will introduce new, tougher legislation to additionally punish alleged ‘hate’ crime concerning transgenderism: ‘It’s time for tougher hate crime laws so every LGBT+ crime is treated as an aggravated offence.’ This has led to speculation that ‘misgendering’ a person could lead to a criminal conviction.²⁵

The prohibition regarding free speech on this issue has wider implications for classical liberalism. If issues cannot be debated, and desired outcomes are merely imposed, then this self-evidently undermines liberal democracy. No one has voted for the NHS’s ‘Annex B’, which says trans-identifying males must be treated on women’s hospital wards.²⁶ The electorate has likewise not been consulted about the Department of Education’s decision to require that all our children should be subjected to lessons teaching them about transgenderism.²⁷ When Muslim parents attempted to peacefully demonstrate outside schools in Birmingham to express their displeasure about this, the city council took legal action to prevent this happening.²⁸

24 Whittome, N. @nadiawhittomeMP, 23 July 2020 (<https://tinyurl.com/ymdshhc4>).

25 Smith, J. ‘What Kier Starmer told Pink News is a sign of things to come’, *UnHerd*, 20 Oct 2022 (<https://tinyurl.com/3mtdkymc>).

26 ‘Delivering same-sex accommodation’, *NHS England*, September 2019 (<https://tinyurl.com/mr34bfwa>).

27 Relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education’ guidance, point 75. *Department for Education*, 2019 (<https://tinyurl.com/2p8uav9a>).

28 ‘LGBT teaching row: Birmingham primary school protests permanently banned’, *BBC News* website, 26 Nov 2019 (<https://tinyurl.com/4rbshxfn>).

Conclusion

In recent times there have been encouraging signs of a desire on the part of many not to be intimidated into silence. In addition to the spirited resistance that has been evident in Scotland in opposition to gender self-ID legislation, there has also been push-back south of the border. Most notably, perhaps, was the determination of the Oxford Union, supported by many academics and students, to refuse to be intimidated into disinviting Kathleen Stock from giving a talk.²⁹ Despite an attempt to also physically prevent the event from proceeding on the night, she could not be silenced. Lady Falkner, chairwoman of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, has advised ministers, despite considerable internal opposition, to amend the Equality Act so as to define 'sex' as a protected characteristic strictly in biological terms.³⁰

However, there is still widespread endorsement of political transgenderism on the part of the political, bureaucratic and big business mainstream. This needs to be challenged intellectually head on because of the profound danger it poses for liberal and rationalist values. It is not, as is commonly portrayed, a championing of the rights of individuals to lead their own lives as they so wish. Rather, transgender ideology is an ideological assault against the philosophical and pluralist political traditions of the Western world. This ideology is, together with broader New Left thinking, effectively a *transculturalism*; it is the desire to forcibly impose an ideologically restructured way of thinking and speaking collectively.

29 Draper, J. 'Trans rights protestor glues themselves to floor at Kathleen Stock's Oxford Union talk', *The Independent*, 31 May 2023 (<https://tinyurl.com/4htaumpm>).

30 'Clarifying the definition of "sex" in the Equality Act', *CIPD HR-Inform*, 6 April 2023 (<https://tinyurl.com/mr3zukxn>).

The movement seeks to sweep away conventionally determined beliefs concerning the nature of existence and to reject the view that language can reflect observable reality. This is a prerequisite for the making of a new order. If there is no recognition of our right as individuals to pursue and share with others what we believe to be objectively true, then there is no way for us to democratically and peaceably navigate how we should live as a political community. There is only the assertion of raw political power by one political perspective upon the rest. This is the goal to which transgender ideology, together with its closely associated doctrines, is now working.

Reference list

Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Joyce, H. (2021) *Trans: When Ideology Meets Reality*. London: Oneworld.

Pluckrose, H. and Lindsay, J. A. (2020) *Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything about Race, Gender, and Identity – and Why This Harms Everybody*. Los Angeles: Pitchstone.

Williams, J. (2020) *The Corrosive Impact of Transgender Ideology*. London: Civitas.

The Institute of Economic Affairs
2 Lord North Street
London SW1P 3LB
Tel 020 7799 8900
email iea@iea.org.uk



iea
Institute of
Economic Affairs