

"THE EXCLUSION OF TRANS WOMEN FROM WOMEN'S SPACES IS JUST LIKE RACIAL SEGREGATION DURING THE JIM CROW ERA."

Dec 22, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: [GENDERARGUMENTS.COM](https://genderarguments.com)

This historically illiterate, offensive comparison ignores literally dozens of relevant differences between sex segregation as it exists today and racial segregation as it existed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the United States. But the most obvious one would be this: [Male people pose a unique threat to female people](#) that Black people absolutely do not pose to white people. Any cheap comparison between the fears women have about trans-identified males in their spaces and the fears white people have about Black people in their spaces relies on the assumption that Black people are disproportionately dangerous in the way male people are – a hateful and bizarre claim that we should all condemn.

More broadly, feminists and anti-racists both have long realized that not all "segregation" is equal; as Marilyn Fry said, "It is nothing extraordinary for a master to bar his slaves from the manor, but it is a revolutionary act for slaves to bar their master from their hut." Black people and female people comprise two intersecting social classes that experience abuse and exploitation at the hands of white people and male people, and therefore have the right to exclude their oppressors from particular spaces. This means that female-only spaces where male people are excluded should be compared, not with Jim Crow segregation, but rather with the existence of Black-only spaces where *white people* are excluded – and such spaces are not only justified, but often essential.

SEX-BASED DEFINITIONS OF 'MAN' AND 'WOMAN' REDUCE PEOPLE TO THEIR GENITALS OR REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS."

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For some reason, this is one of the most common tropes transgender advocates rely on to defend their idea of gender as a personal identity. But the problem with this line is obvious: Asserting that a group of people share a particular feature doesn't reduce them to that feature. In essentially any other situation, this would be self-evident. After all, no one thinks it 'reduces Black people to their melanin' when we acknowledge that they have dark skin, or that it 'reduces blind people to their eyes' when we acknowledge they can't see. Similarly, general statements like *Women have uteruses* or *Men have penises* don't "reduce" anyone to anything. All they do is acknowledge that uteruses are a shared characteristic of women and penises are a shared characteristic of men. Those who have a knee-jerk reaction to these sorts of acknowledgments may want to examine why it is that they see the mention of female body parts as uniquely "reductive," and whether this might be a result of patriarchal socialization that sees association with women's bodies as inherently dehumanizing.

“HUMAN RIGHTS AREN'T UP FOR DEBATE!”

Dec 22, 2021

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This objection is fundamentally misleading. There is, of course, a sense in which it's true that human rights aren't up for debate; under most common conceptions, an individual's rights are not determined by what any other person (or the individual themselves) believes about the world, and rights can't be abrogated just because we wish they didn't exist. However, there's a clear distinction to be made between the *actual existence* of a particular human right, and the process by which we *determine* whether or not that right exists – and in that process, debate absolutely does play a central role. After all, how could a society come to any conclusions about what rights do and don't exist *without* debate? The only alternative would be divine revelation or personal intuition, neither of which have great track records in the human rights realm.

In other words, transgender activists and others who use this slogan are attempting to conflate a *metaphysical* claim about rights (that they depend on human opinions for their veracity) with an *epistemological* claim about rights (that no one can ever challenge another's assertion about their rights). This becomes obvious when you consider a situation where someone asserts some particularly bizarre right – say, the right to free ice cream on demand. If you responded by saying that, no, they were not allowed to demand such a thing, would *My human rights are not up for debate!* be a convincing rebuttal? Of course not. You would likely respond by *agreeing* that human rights are objective, and, from that position, arguing that they did not, in fact, possess the right they claimed. You wouldn't be “stripping their right to free ice cream away” – you would merely be asserting that they were mistaken about possessing that right to begin with.

Radical feminists and other critics of transgender theory hold a similar position. With very, very few exceptions, no one seriously argues that transgender people ought to have their

rights limited, violated, or removed. Instead, they simply argue that some rights transgender people claim – for example, the right to change legal documents in light of one’s self-conception or the right to compel other’s speech – are not, in fact, human rights at all. They may also argue that human beings *do* possess some rights that the demands of transgender activists violate, like the right to freedom of speech or sex segregation. The answers to these questions can *only* be answered through reasoned debate; simple assertions will only ever lead to a stalemate in which male priorities often take center stage.

“NO ONE WOULD EVER TRANSITION JUST TO GET A SCHOLARSHIP, WIN A RACE, OR OTHERWISE GAIN SOME UNFAIR ADVANTAGE OVER WOMEN.”

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This objection is responding to a strawman – few, if any, critics of transgender theory believe that men regularly transition exclusively as part of a cynical ploy to access resources or activities normally reserved for women. It seems reasonable to assume that the majority of transgender people sincerely believe the claims they make about their gender and sex, and see access to sex-specific accommodations and activities as a logical consequence of those beliefs rather than the motivation behind them.

However, just because someone sincerely believes they're entitled to something doesn't mean their entitlement can't be irrational, problematic, or harmful. In fact, some of the most destructive behavior in our culture arises *precisely because* people are acting out of a deep-seated conviction generated by their foundational assumptions about the world – no one considers it particularly comforting to hear that, for example, religious fanatics who want to ban abortion are doing it because they really, truly believe that life begins at conception. Transgender activists who point out that no one would ever transition purely for personal gain are similarly missing the point. A male person's earnest belief in their right to violate common-sense sex segregation policies and appropriate women's resources is merely evidence of oblivious entitlement, which is hardly better than naked self-interest. What ultimately matters is the harm these actions bring to women; the internal motivations of those who choose to harm them are ultimately irrelevant.

“SCANS SHOW THAT TRANSGENDER PEOPLE’S BRAINS MATCH THE SEX THEY IDENTIFY WITH.”

Dec 22, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: GENDERARGUMENTS.COM

Many transgender activists attempt to validate the transgender identity by relying on the outdated and unscientific notion of “brain sex.” This often includes arguments about trans-identified males having “female brains” and vice versa. But as Lise Eliot’s work has shown, [the very idea of distinct male and female brains is unsupported by the data](#), and it’s unclear how meaningful a neurological model of transgender identity can be without them. Of course, our understanding of the brain is limited in general, and new discoveries are always possible. But even *if* a direct neurological correlate to transgender identity was discovered, it would merely *explain* a person’s self-conception, as opposed to *justifying* or *validating* it. Identifying *why* someone holds a particular belief can often be very helpful, but the truth or falsehood of that belief is always another question.

Consider, as analogy, a disorder like anorexia. Brain scans can indeed [find unique markers](#) that indicate someone is suffering from anorexia – although, as with gender identity, it’s unclear whether these markers are the cause of the person’s perceptions or merely a result of them. But either way, ask yourself: Even if anorexia *did* have a neurological base, does that mean the anorexic person’s feelings about themselves must be *true*? Of course not! A person’s neurobiology might *explain* why they perceive themselves as overweight, even when they aren’t, but it doesn’t give us any reason to *validate* those perceptions. The same is true of transgender identity and its possible neurological correlates; just because a particular feature in the brain may *cause* a male person to consider themselves female doesn’t, by itself, give any support to the claim that they *are* female.

The notion of identifiable “brain sex” also has worrisome implications for transgender activists themselves. If womanhood or manhood really is a result of a particular

neurological structure, then it should be possible, at least in theory, to determine someone's "true gender" with a brain scan. Would transgender activists accept that sort of objective test? How would they handle someone who claimed to be transgender, but nonetheless had a "male brain" to go with his male body? The assertion of an objective biological basis for transgender identity necessarily conflicts with an emphasis on self-identification, and transgender activists should stop using obviously inconsistent arguments to make a point.

“BIOLOGICAL SEX ISN’T IMPORTANT IN DAILY LIFE – MOST OF US DON’T EVEN KNOW WHAT CHROMOSOMES WE HAVE.”

Dec 22, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: GENDERARGUMENTS.COM

This objection, like many others transgender activists rely on, is superficially true – most of us haven’t had our chromosomes directly identified with a karyotype. But just because we don’t have a direct experience of our chromosomes themselves doesn’t mean biological sex is some great mystery! The vast majority of human beings – easily over 99.9% – can correct ascertain what chromosomes they *do* have by observing the unambiguous primary and secondary sex characteristics that *result* from those chromosomes. And these resulting characteristics *are* absolutely important in daily life; sex is one of the first things human beings recognize in others, and [our ability to correctly determine sex](#) from even the most subtle biological differences is quite impressive.

In this sense, our sex is a bit like our skin color. Do most people take the time to have their melanin levels scientifically measured? No. Does that mean our skin color is irrelevant, or that we can never truly know what it is? Of course not! Sex is the same way – while its *biological basis* might not be immediately obvious, its *physical manifestation* is extremely clear. Pretending that sex is irrelevant or inconsequential purely because we can’t examine our own chromosomes at will is just bizarre.

It’s also worth noting that transgender activists *themselves* acknowledge the social importance of biological sex whenever they complain about transphobia; after all, if biological sex was truly unimportant (or impossible to determine), male people would be able to identify as women and vice versa with no serious problems. The fact that trans-identified males are consistently treated as men and trans-identified females are

consistently treated as women – despite their personal identification or the way they present themselves – demonstrates by itself that sex is both immediately obvious and socially relevant in the vast majority of cases.

“DETRANSITIONERS WERE NEVER TRANS TO BEGIN WITH”

Jul 7, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: D.B., PHD

“Detransitioners were never trans to begin with because *real* transpeople don’t detransition.”

This is an example of the **No True Scotsman** fallacy. This occurs when someone modifies a generalization to protect it from counterexample by improperly excluding the counterexample from the modified generalization.

Suppose Person A claims that a transwoman was always a woman to begin with, even when his sex was ‘assigned’ male at birth. That person is assuming that gender is a fixed essence distinct from sex. If Person B tries to deny that gender is a fixed essence distinct from sex by pointing out that detransitioners exist, then Person A commits the **No True Scotsman** fallacy by redefining “transpeople” to exclude those who detransition. This is accomplished by the rhetorical addition “*real*.”

The name of this fallacy derives from an example put together by philosopher Bradley Dowden which goes as follows:

Person A: “No Scotsman puts sugar in his porridge.”

Person B: “But I know a Scotsman who puts sugar in his porridge.”

Person A: “Then he’s not a *true* Scotsman.”

The generalization about Scotsmen has been modified by the addition of the word “true” to protect from the counterexample. We might rewrite the original quotation to match the Scotsman example more closely:

Person A: "No transwoman was ever a man. Transwomen were always women."

Person B: "But I know a transwoman who detransitioned back to a man."

Person A: "Then he wasn't really a transwoman."

One response might be to note that if someone is really made a woman based on self-identification, then the most consistent belief to hold would be that a de-transitioner became a woman and then became a man. In other words, it would at least be consistent (though preposterous) to claim that when a person identifies as a woman, that person is a woman only for so long as s/he identifies as one, which means s/he could endlessly shift gender through the course of a lifetime (and, therefore, keep many persons busy updating Wikipedia—possibly even on an hourly basis.)

Ask your interlocutor if (s)he is willing to believe that a detransitioner became a woman and then un-became a woman. If your interlocutor insists that sex is distinct from gender and a person can have only one true gender but that it may take someone years to discover what that gender is, then you may ask if it's possible to be a gender without ever knowing that one is that gender. If it's possible to be a gender without knowing what gender one is, is it also, therefore, possible to believe that one is a gender that one is not? Could we have a biological male who believes he is a man but who is really a woman? Is it possible to be a biological male who believes he is a woman but who is really a man? If personal feelings and sex do not define gender, then what does? And if personal feelings decide gender, then why would detransition not amount to a change in gender? See also **6. Incommensurability** for a discussion of varieties of opinion on the relation between sex and gender among proponents of gender identity theory.

"YOU ARE DENYING THE EXISTENCE OF TRANS PEOPLE"

Jul 7, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: D.B., PHD

Person A: "Transwomen are not women."

Person B: "You don't think transpeople exist? There are tons of people with gender dysphoria."

Person A: "Well yes, they exist, but—"

Person B: "So then you believe transpeople exist. Therefore, transwomen are women and transmen are men."

This is a great example of **Equivocation**. Equivocation occurs when the same term changes meaning throughout the course of an argument to reach a dubious conclusion. Equivocation can be an effective rhetorical strategy since it can fluster an opponent by simply confusing him/her. Equivocation is made even easier when a term is poorly defined, vague or encompasses several meanings to begin with.

In the case of the example above, Person B is using the word "transpeople" to mean "individuals with gender dysphoria," which is an undeniable psychological condition. Person B then changes the meaning of "transpeople" to "individuals whose gender identity is what they say it is," which is a much stronger assertion of fact.

To counter equivocation, it is usually best to simply note that it has happened and insist that meaning be kept consistent.

"WE SHOULDN'T LISTEN TO 'TERFS' BECAUSE THEY ARE A MINORITY "

Jul 7, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: D.B., PHD

This is an example of **Argumentum Ad Populum (Appeal to the People)**. This one has a lot of different name variants, including "argument from consensus," "common belief fallacy," and "bandwagon fallacy." The appeal to the people fallacy wrongly asserts that something must be true because a lot of people or the majority of people believe it. So if one assumes that people who deny gender identity theory are wrong because most people believe in gender identity theory, then (s)he is committing the **Appeal to the People** fallacy. As history has proven time and again, yesterday's conventional wisdom can be today's bigotry. It's possible, of course, for a person with a minority belief to be right while the majority is wrong. It's also possible for everyone to be wrong or for everyone to be right. Even if everyone believed the world was flat, the world would still be round. If one person believed the world was round while everyone else believed it was flat, the person who believed the world was round would be eccentric but (s)he would still be correct.

The best response to **Appeal to the People** is to note how often popular opinion or conventional wisdom has been factually correct or unjust. Give examples of sexist or racist beliefs throughout history that were once conventional thinking, for example. Insist that what matters is truth itself, not what most people think it is. Most people could be right, but they could also be wrong. Note how many historical figures were marginalized for beliefs that were later accepted as true.

But, also, you may want to check out [WOLF's polling](#) to see just how "minority" this opinion truly is!

"IF YOU DON'T AGREE YOU ARE CONSERVATIVE/A BIGOT/ETC."

Jul 7, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: D.B., PHD

"If you aren't woke, then you're conservative!"

Or "If you won't let transwomen use the bathroom, you're a bigot!" or "If you don't like prostitution you're anti-sex!"

This is a classic case of **False Dichotomy**. By allowing everything that exists to fit into one of only two categories, an opponent can eliminate nuance and castigate an enemy as an extremist. The idea is to pretend alternatives to either category do not exist.

The best response to false dichotomy is usually to just point out that a false dichotomy has been used. You can attempt to introduce nuance by emphasizing how your viewpoint conflicts with aspects of both sides to demand the creation of a third category. One can insist that denying gender identity theory does not mean that one hates trans-identified individuals and believes they should be abused. One could remark that she is not opposed to non-abusive sex, such as what takes place when two people are in love, while condemning abusive sex, such as what takes place in prostitution. This doesn't make someone against sex anymore than someone who is against being fed feces is against eating.

"You're the same as bigoted right-wingers because you both don't want transwomen to play sports!"

This is a classic case of **the Association Fallacy** (specifically, *guilt by association*, as opposed to *honor by association*). See also **9. False Dichotomy**.

In the guilt by association fallacy, one entity becomes embroiled in the negative qualities and judgments assigned to another simply by bearing one similarity to it or even just being in proximity to it. For example, if a person has a negative view of Donald Trump and

Donald Trump states that trans-identified males should not compete against females in women's sports, then that person commits the association fallacy when (s)he assigns anyone who shares Trump's opinion the same negative qualities and judgments she would assign to Trump (e.g. that the person is a right wing bigot, that she is uncivil, etc.) A person also commits this fallacy if (s)he assumes that radical feminists want to kill trans people because they believe sex is binary and another political group (which does want to kill trans people) also believes sex is binary. Another instance would be the claim that radical feminists hate sex because a puritanical Baptist group opposes prostitution and radical feminists also oppose prostitution.

The Association Fallacy can be enhanced by the rhetorical strategy of frequently mentioning two entities together in order to condition the reader into equating them. For example, a writer could repeatedly place the term 'radical feminists' near the term 'radical right wing' in an article about resistance to self-ID laws. This creates the habit of associating radical feminists with the alt-right. The association fallacy occurred in [the Atlantic article "The Secret Internet of TERFs" by Kaitlyn Tiffany](#). It was also dissected in a rebuttal to this article on [Ovarit](#).

“INDIVIDUAL TRANS PEOPLE ARE NOT OPPRESSING WOMEN”

Jul 7, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: D.B., PHD

“You are saying that individual trans people are oppressing you but they are not. This person and that person are not doing anything to you.”

This is a classic case of **False Substitution**. This occurs when one person deliberately replaces the terms under discussion to create a different argument than the one you intended. This is one type of **Straw Man** argument.

To respond, you might note that when gender critical feminists critique gender, they are critiquing an abstract concept and its social effects. They are not accusing specific individuals of harming them. Clarify that what you are attacking is an ideology, not an individual or group of individuals.

"BUT TRANSWOMEN ARE ALSO VICTIMS OF MALE VIOLENCE"

Jul 7, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: D.B., PHD

This is simply **Deflection** or **What-about-ism**? Any type of response that goes "But trans people have experienced x, y, and z types of oppression" in response to a discussion about women's oppression is simply an attempt to distract. It aims to substitute a new (and, by implication, more important) concern for the one that is currently being discussed.

One possible response is to simply insist on a return to the original topic. You can mention that your argument is not about whether trans people are oppressed or vulnerable, but about whether females are. Ask them why they believe one issue should be discussed and not the other.

You might also ask if they believe that the rights of TIM are mutually exclusive with the rights of biological females and why? You might also ask why trans-identified males (a much smaller population than the population of biological females) should be prioritized over biological females? Finally, you could ask if men who identify as men in men's prisons should also be transferred to women's prisons to avoid rape by other men?

“MEN SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED IN WOMEN’S SPACES, BUT TRANSWOMEN ARE NOT MEN”

Jul 7, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: D.B., PHD

Person A: “I’m worried about men harming women. They shouldn’t share women’s spaces.”

Person B: “I’m not saying men should be allowed in women’s spaces. Women aren’t at risk of being attacked by men if trans-women enter their restrooms because trans-women are women.”

This is an example of **Incommensurability**. This isn’t a fallacy, but it can constitute an instance of willful obtuseness as a rhetorical strategy. Incommensurability occurs when good faith argument and compromise are rendered impossible by incommensurable premises. In other words, if two people can’t agree on fundamental definitions or assumptions then they cannot engage in productive dialogue. One person can blockade discussion by refusing to hold enough definitions and/or assumptions in common with their interlocutor to make reasonable conversation possible.

Person A has defined woman to mean “adult human female” and Person B has defined “woman” to mean any individual identifying as a woman. Person A and Person B cannot have a good faith discussion because Person B is being willfully obtuse about the point Person A is making and blockading good faith discussion by refusing to share terminology.

When this situation occurs one strategy is to be clear and assertive about the meaning of terms. One could instead substitute the term “biological males” and “biological females” for “man” and “woman.” Rhetorically this can put one at a disadvantage since it could be taken to imply a concession that gender is distinct from sex (i.e. that the term “man” is not equivalent to the term “biological male” and that a person could be a man without being male). However, this strategy does have the advantage of clarifying if one’s interlocutor

believes that sex and gender are different since some adherents of gender identity theory appear to believe that sex itself can be changed, while others appear to believe biological sex cannot change but gender can such that sex may be incongruous with gender. If one's interlocutor believes that biological sex is immutable, while gender changes, then one may be able to achieve some compromise by insisting that the term "sex" rather than "gender" be used in the conversation. If one's interlocutor believes that biological sex can be changed then the best strategy would be to ask that person to define the meaning of "sex" and possibly to use the (laborious) phrase "individuals-with-a-penis" (or variants) if you really must to discuss the issue of segregated spaces.

“YOU’RE REDUCING PEOPLE TO THEIR BIOLOGY”

Jul 7, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: D.B., PHD

Ah, the all-too-common **Accusation of Reductionism**. Reductionism is when a complex entity is defined as *nothing but* one or more of its parts, aspects, or functions. A person reduces X to Y when a person treats X as nothing more than Y or believes that one has wholly accounted for what X is by saying it is or does Y.

However, merely noting that a person is male does not entail that someone is reducing him to his sex. Likewise, noting that a person is female does not entail that someone is reducing her to her sex. A man doesn’t reduce a woman to a sex object simply by being sexually attracted to her. A boyfriend does not reduce his girlfriend to a sex object by wanting to make love to her. A man reduces a woman to a sex object if he views her as *nothing other than* a thing existing for sex. Those who wish to **Straw Man** feminists by claiming they hate men or sex frequently fail to comprehend this distinction. To give another example outside the realm of sexual politics, the fact that I say I am made of atoms does not mean that I think I am *nothing but* a ball of atoms. I don’t have to deny that I’m made of atoms to claim that I’m more than a clump of atoms and entitled to ethical treatment etc. To say that I’m made of atoms is just an empirical fact. To say that I’m *nothing more* than a ball of atoms would be a metaphysical claim. It would mean that I have a reductionist ontology (“ontology” is a fancy word for the philosophy of what is/being).

What’s interesting about the accusation of reductionism is that it reveals that the speaker acknowledges biological sex. Some adherents of gender identity theory appear to believe that sex itself can be changed, while others appear to believe biological sex cannot change but gender can such that sex may be incongruous with gender. You might note to them upfront that they are implicitly acknowledging your statement of biological fact

in their very accusation. After all, how could you reduce a transwoman to being male if that person were not, in fact, male?

You could also respond to someone accusing you of reductionism by saying that a description does not entail reductionism. Calling a person “male” does not reduce him to his sex anymore than observing that I am right-handed reduces me to my hand. You might also mention that the terms and phrases we use depend on context. Referring to a student as a “left-hander” would be extremely relevant when seating her/him at a desk for a test, while referring to the same student as a “left-hander” when discussing how good of a conversationalist she is would be bizarre. Therefore, you won’t necessarily refer to the same thing or person with the same word depending on the question you are answering or the issue you are addressing. If you are talking about filing taxes, it will be highly relevant to talk about whether a person is married or unmarried, but it would be uncouth to refer to your professor as an “unmarried woman.” There are contexts in which you might refer to a woman as a mother and contexts in which you would refer to her as a sister, as a mammal, as a dog-owner, as right-handed, as a coin collector, or as a janitor, etc.

Furthermore, the same term can take on a different meaning in a different context. If a member of INCEL refers to women as “females” the term is derogatory because he’s using it specifically to dehumanize women. His language conveys an animalistic view of women as sexual objects, not as equal persons worthy of intersubjective relationship. When a feminist uses the term “female” in a discussion of women’s sports, the term takes on an entirely different meaning. She’s not viewing women animalistically, she’s bringing up the relevance of biology to fairness in sports.

You might also ask the person accusing you of reductionism if (s)he believes it is likewise reductionist to refer to women as “menstruators,” “birthing bodies,” “chest-feeders,” etc. as many trans rights activists have proposed we do. You can add reasons why you believe those terms feel reductionistic. For example, you could say that the phrase “menstruating woman” does not feel objectifying while “menstruator” does because in the first instance menstruation is a thing happening to a person while in the second instance the person becomes menstruation—she is identified with a physical event rather than being treated as a person who is experiencing a physical event.

“BE INCLUSIVE! LET TRANS GIRLS PLAY SPORTS!”

Jul 7, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: D.B., PHD

This is a case of **False Mutual Exclusion**. When people wrongly assert that X is mutually exclusive with Y when, in fact, it is possible to have both. The quotation above assumes that disallowing biological males to compete with biological females in women’s sports is mutually exclusive with allowing trans-identified males to participate in sports.

One possible response to this is to assert that you are not asking for trans-identified males to be excluded from sports but asking for them to be placed on sex-appropriate sports teams. This ensures fairness in athletic competition. The ability of trans-identified males to participate in sports is not mutually exclusive with the ability of females to participate in sports. One can also note that if trans-identified males are allowed to compete against biological females in women’s sports, this would be exclusionary towards biological females, since males have inherent biological differences from females that position them at a significant advantage in all athletic activities in which those biological differences are relevant. Thus, the few sports in which competition between men and women is fair are those in which those biological differences are not relevant, such as shooting and riding. However cumbersome and awkward, if you maintain the phrasing above you may prevent someone from claiming that you are saying men are superior to women, which is a common **Straw Man** argument.

If “inclusivity” in sports means enabling the greatest number of people to participate in sports and to enjoy the benefits that follow from athletic excellence, then that goal is best achieved by allowing only same-sex athletes to compete against one another. The inclusion of trans-identified males (“trans-women”) in sports is not increased by allowing them to compete in women’s sports since they can compete in men’s sports. Yet, the exclusion of females (“cis-women”) is increased by allowing trans-identified males to compete with them in women’s sports. Therefore, to maximize inclusivity trans-identified

males should not be allowed to compete against biological females. You might even suggest creating a third category for trans-identified individuals to compete against each other.

“PREDATORY MEN CAN ALREADY ACCESS WOMEN’S SPACES”

Jul 7, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: D.B., PHD

“But male prison guards are already harming female inmates...”

Or “But predatory men can already go into women’s spaces if they try.”

These are instances of what I might term the **Fallacy of Complacency**. This type of argument assumes that we should do nothing about a problem or allow a problem to worsen simply because the problem already exists or is perceived to be inevitable. The fallacy of complacency also appears in arguments in favor of the legalization of prostitution when people argue that prostitution should be legalized because it is going to happen anyway.

The fact that a problem already exists does not justify allowing an aggravation of the problem. It also does not justify allowing additional problems to occur. Just because male prison guards have assaulted incarcerated females does not mean that we should also now allow biological males to be incarcerated with biological females. One possible response is to insist that if women are already at risk, they should not be put at even greater risk. Likewise, just because women are illegally commodified and sexually abused does not mean they should suddenly be legally commodified and legally abused.

"NOT ALL TRANSWOMEN"

Jul 7, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: D.B., PHD

Person A: "We shouldn't allow biological males into women's prisons because women could be raped."

Person B: "But not all transwomen are rapists!"

This statement is a great example of a **Straw Man**. A straw man argument is when an opponent responds to you as though you had made a different argument from the one you are actually making so that it will be easier to refute you. In other words, your opponent makes your argument weaker than it is on purpose or because (s)he has misinterpreted you. In the example above, it's implied that the speaker has interpreted the statement "It is possible for males who identify as women to rape women in women's prisons" to be "males who identify as women will rape women in women's prisons." By interpreting the gender-critical feminist to be making a sweeping declaration about all trans-identified males, the gender theorist can refute her with just one counterexample of a TIM who behaves well in a women's prison.

Not only is there a tremendous difference between the statement "all men are rapists" and "some men are rapists" but there is also a difference between the statement "some men are rapists" and "it's possible for men to rape women." To put it another way, we don't need it to be true that there are *any* cases of rape in a women's prison to make an argument against a male being transferred to a women's prison. The fact that a man, in virtue of his biology, *could* rape a woman is sufficient argument against it. Those who argue for sex-segregated spaces don't need to prove that any one man has raped a woman in women's prisons. They only need to show that it becomes a possibility for a woman to be raped. Just because I walk down a dark alley in the middle of the night and

don't get assaulted doesn't mean that it is just as safe to walk down dark alleys in the middle of the night as it is to be in a crowded office at noon.

It might help to emphasize to opponents that we are arguing that, in the case of sex-segregated prisons, it is not possible for a male inmate to rape a female inmate, while in the case of sex-integrated prisons it is. In other words, we oppose creating the *conditions for the possibility of rape*. In no way does admitting that a man has the unique ability to rape imply that all men rape. If we assumed someone is a rapist because he is a man, that would be sexist. Saying that a man's biology gives him the ability to rape a woman, while her biology makes her incapable of raping him, is not sexist.

“BOB IS A WOMAN BECAUSE HE WEARS MAKE-UP AND JEWELRY AND SHAVES HIS LEGS”

Jul 7, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: D.B., PHD

This is an example of **False Equivalency**. This fallacy occurs when an argument asserts or implies that one thing is identical to another simply because they share one trait. For example, assuming that feminine trans-identified males and feminine females are identical because they both wear make-up.

Of course, I'm using the phrase “feminine females” because not all females are feminine. You could respond by asking your opponent if unfeminine women are also women. In this case, it appears that the speaker believes being a woman amounts to being feminine. You could point out that if this were true, then one's definition of being a woman would exclude females who are non-feminine. You might then ask if a biological female who identifies as a woman (a 'cis-woman') but who does not in any way conform to femininity, is a man (proponents of gender identity theory appear to believe this when they argue that butch lesbians are in denial that they are men). Asking this question will press your interlocutor to reveal whether (s)he believes that gender identity is a matter of appearance or a matter of feeling/identity.

You might note that if (s)he believes that gender is strictly a matter of feeling, not appearance, then you could ask if it would be transphobic to tell someone that she is really a man because she isn't feminine. Wouldn't that be a case of 'misgendering' since it would be an instance of deciding for yourself what a person's gender is on the basis of what a person looks like rather than on the basis of their declared identification?

If your interlocutor then admits to you that gender is not decided by appearance but by feeling, you could then note that, according to her/his own definition, Bob would not be a woman simply because he was feminine but only if he also declared that he was a woman. This seems to be what some proponents of gender identity theory believe when they insist “I don't have to pass to be a woman.” You could then ask what 'woman' means

if it does not mean appearing feminine. Very likely you will then receive the response “a woman is someone who identifies as a woman” in which case see **1. Circularity**.

“A WOMAN IS ANYONE WHO IDENTIFIES AS A WOMAN”

Jul 7, 2021

ARGUMENT SUBMITTED BY: D.B., PHD

This is a textbook case of **Circularity**. It is also, perhaps, one of the most common claims made by proponents of gender identity theory. A close variant is “a woman is anyone who feels like a woman.” Circular definitions are vacuous since they use the term being defined to define the term. Circular arguments are arguments that assume the conclusion they are trying to prove in order to prove their conclusion. Thus, they give the appearance of persuasive demonstration when they have, in fact, demonstrated nothing. Circular arguments can be more rhetorically effective if a speaker paraphrases her/his conclusion when assuming it so that it is not immediately apparent that the premise and the conclusion are identical.

The repetition of mindless mantras like “transwomen are women” and “sex work is work” demonstrate circularity insofar they use term being defined to define the term, but they are also instances of a rhetorical strategy called the **Fallacy of Repetition** or, more jokingly, argument **Ad Nauseum**.

The **Fallacy of Repetition** does not always involve circularity. It also isn't really an argument. It's a will-to-power type rhetorical strategy in which argumentative victory is achieved by simply failing to acknowledge refutation or dissent until an opponent gives up from exhaustion or a sense of futility. The assertion is then assumed to be true because it lacks a sizeable resistance. Propaganda uses this strategy when it aims to establish itself as truth by simply flooding the consciousness rather than by appealing to reason. A good example of a non-circular repetition fallacy is the Party's famous mantra in George Orwell's *1984*: “War is peace, freedom is slavery, and ignorance is strength.” While the mantra isn't circular, it's rhetorical force comes from sheer repetitious domination.