



(Some thoughts on kinda recent stories about schools' involvement in students' gender identities and the "Tough on Crime" brigade's latest fearmongering. Enjoy!)

#1) Cuckoo Commentator Claims it's Immoral For Schools to "Hide" Students' Gender Identities From Parents.

In a recent article, NewsWeek's Sarah Parshall bleated about schools acting "immorally when they choose to not tell parents what they know about their students' gender identities and insist on accommodating students by using their requested pronouns, new names, preferred bathrooms, etc." Now, my take on this story needs some unpacking, because my ideas on transgenderism are not as black and white as many people would like. For instance, while I fully support anyone who sincerely feels he or she was "born into the wrong body," I also wonder whether the recent surge in trans identification isn't largely a cultural (and temporary) phenomenon, a bit like a fad or a new form of rebellion. I'm also sure it's not that simple. In addition, I think our obsession with gender/transgender may be counterproductive. Couldn't such a focus be at odds with the progress we've made in understanding and endorsing a non-binary spectrum of gender? I have friends who'd disagree vehemently, but these are all provocations for another time.

About THIS story, I'd say first that what is truly "immoral" is not public educators minding their own business, but rather the perverse preoccupation of public schools with relating every detail of their students' on-campus lives to their parents. Should schools tell parents if they believe their child is gay? How about if the offspring of vegetarian parents occasionally eats a burger for lunch, or if a kid is dabbling in various religions, or getting into punk rock or (god forbid) politics? My feeling is that ~~schools~~ schools should generally butt out of all aspects of their students' lives that they aren't invited into, and should keep their observations and speculations to themselves if they don't involve academics. But, as schools do NOT mind their business these days, they at least are certainly not acting "immorally" in those rare instances when they actually choose to respect a modicum of some young person's privacy.

Second, then: what about this so-called "accommodation" of students' preferences for names, pronouns, bathrooms, etc.? Well, to me it's abundantly clear ~~that~~ teachers

ABSOLUTELY should call kids by whatever names they say they prefer. Everyone on earth should be doing that; it's a no-brainer. As for pronouns... ugh. Another "no-brainer" but of a very different sort, and I fear the subject is hopelessly mired in stupidity. Please

understand, I'm absolutely NOT defending or advocating some traditional "two-genders-and-thats-that" view — far from it, but I am defending English grammar. For sure, if a boy wants to be called "she" and "her", or a girl prefers "he" and "him", by all means let those people be themselves! Respect their preferences, their self-identities. Why not? But, for god's sake, were also talking

about SCHOOLS here, so PLEASE do not call any single person a "they"! Students are individuals, cis-gender or transgender or anything in between or outside the box altogether... still individuals, not agglomerations, and "they" is quite simply a plural pronoun. It has enough of its own work to do without pulling the weight of lazy linguists as well. Among our vast pantheon of worthless

institutions, schools above all should not become accomplices in the maiming of the English language. Instead, let's ~~adopt~~ adopt a new, neutral pronoun. Absolutely! And many contenders already exist. Or, more economically, we could just expand ~~our~~ use of the already familiar and perfectly serviceable

"it", if folks would just abandon its pejorative connotation (we've done that quite successfully with the ex-sit "guar") and get on board with genuine gender neutrality. I'm not being cheeky here... just ask any ~~German-speaker~~ German-speaker about Der, Die, and Das, Baby! It

In any event, I think the semantic ~~separation~~ separation of he vs. she is about as useful and worthy of preservation as the plainly deleterious "racial" division of "black" vs. "white". (Please see Grammy, "You're a Racist!", September 2020) While there's occasionally some practical value

in a he/she dichotomy (e.g. certain medical issues), do we usually really need to know whether people are male or female any more than we need to know the color of their skin? It seems to

this is not, and should not, be of any importance 99% of the time. Third and finally... bathrooms. Schools obviously should ~~NOT~~ notify parents of which bathrooms their kids prefer, because there absolutely should not be sex-segregated bathrooms in the first place. Why are we still so psychologically invested in maintaining this utterly

valueless and silly separation? Eliminator apartheid is a vestige of our historical obsession

with sex and gender, serving no purpose other than to inculcate children with essentialized divisions and calcify those beliefs in adults. So, I say... enough with that; let's have unisex bathrooms ONLY, and decry anything else as exactly what it is — discrimination. Why not? (If you can provide an answer to that question which is not thoroughly choked with baseless ~~sexual~~ ^{sexual} presumption, I'll be impressed.)

#2) Tough on Crime Crusaders are Blaming \$0 Bail Policies for Imaginary Increases in Crime.

Recent fearmongering about Los Angeles' new \$0 bail policy is rehashing all the tired old tropes, from "There must be consequences!" to "Liberals care more about criminals than victims!" To be clear, I also don't favor \$0 bail (please see my Oct. 2018 and July 2020 posts, "0 Bail Fail" and "California's Fabulously Progressive New Get Out of Jail Free Card"), but my objection is to the thousands of people who will remain in pretrial caging when they'd otherwise have bailed out, as prosecutors and judges now get to play the "danger assessment" game (actually just assessing the political impact of any particular release). That said, I find it sickening that the power players who actually benefit the most from \$0 bail, e.g. prosecutors, police chiefs, judges, etc, continue reviving the same old lies to exploit public panic and appear "tough on crime." If any of these assholes really believe that people who leave jail without paying are "free to commit crimes", then why aren't they crying about the thousands of people who also get out (and always have gotten out) after paying the astronomical state-issued ransoms? In both cases, equal in every way, an accused criminal is out of jail before trial, yet no one seems worried about those who cough up the extortionist bail money causing an "uptick", much less a crime wave. In reality, everyone who's arrested and charged still faces the same court processes whether they pay bail or are released for free. The only meaningful difference is that many legally innocent poorer people won't have to sit in a cage for lack of a few hundred bucks anymore (the original tragedy), while countless others who are arrested for politically problematic charges will be stuck now, whether they could've afforded bail or not. All released arrestees still have to attend court hearings and trials, and nearly all will still be convicted (as over 90% of all defendants are), so they all face the same outcomes and punishments whether they stay in jail or get out, pay through the nose or are released for free. This is why \$0 bail does nothing to

"increase crime", and ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ any ~~cases~~ ^{event} the panicky rhetoric over "increased crime" is a load of crap anyway, a cynical abuse of statistics or even just outright lies, as fluctuating crime rates are inevitable while the overall trend is that "crime" is far less prevalent today than it was in the 80's and 90's; a downward trajectory that's been in place for 30 years now. Pigs and politicians intentionally stoke a fear of crime to maintain and increase their power — always have and always will for as long as we allow either of those parasitic classes to exist. It's as simple as that.

Again, I do not like the \$0 bail schemes myself, but only because they put WAY too much power into the hands of prosecutors. Until we abolish jail entirely, we should work on a combination of radically expanded "Own Recognizance" release ("OR", or \$0 bail), along with fundamentally revised bail schedules that set bails within reach for regular people, not just the super wealth and property owners. Let's eliminate the insane six and seven figure ransoms that prosecutors routinely inflict on their victims, and once that shameful, overt extortion has been reduced to just another embarrassing chapter of our punitive history, we can ~~then~~ gut the predatory, bottom-feeding bail-bond industry as well. That's a reform that might actually matter, perhaps even the beginning of something that genuinely resembles justice.