The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of concentric circles and swirling lines in various colors including purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red. The lines are thick and textured, resembling hand-drawn or painted strokes. A semi-transparent rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text.

Identity, sexuality
and the search for
intimacy –
Navigating by a
Better Story

What headlines have you been noticing in the areas of identity, gender & sexuality.

What trends do you think they reveal?

What assumptions are they built on?



Sam Smith comes out as non-binary: 'I'm not male or female'

18 March 2019



Game of Thrones' Sophie Turner: 'I love a soul, not a gender'

27 March 2019



Getting married to yourself may not be quite as daft as it sounds

On the face of it, pledging one's troth to oneself is at worst egomaniacal, at best a little silly and sad. The word sologamy also carries a suspicion of logical impossibility.

And yet, as our story today reveals, many of those embracing the institution of self-marriage — the practice is, to no one's great surprise, popular in Brighton and San Francisco — are perfectly sane individuals. What's more, they are also happy. Which cannot always be said of those in more conventional unions containing twice as many participants.

Where is the harm, after all, in choosing to sanc-

tify and celebrate your single status with due ceremonial including dress, reception, presents, speeches, elderly uncles dancing to Abba and a (gratifyingly half-price) honeymoon? Many who choose the quaint option of marrying someone other than themselves admit that their main motivation is to have a party for their friends and family. Why should the absence of an actual partner mean missing out on the fun?

As for the longer haul, the advantages are obvious. No bickering or blame-calling about putting out the bins. No forgetting birthdays or anniversaries. No festering resentments about who said

what to whom five years ago. No in-laws. No arguments over custody of the remote control, the car keys or indeed — if the worst comes to the worst — the children or the CD collection.

We raise two quibbles. One is that the vows, which involve pledging to "love thyself, cherish thyself and pleasure thyself" will surely prove both too narcissistic and too, ahem, onanistic for most tastes. The second is that the trend thus far seems to have found favour overwhelmingly with women. Come on, chaps. No need to be shy. If marriage in the 21st century can be between one person and herself, why leave himself on the shelf?

Solo brides putting the 'I' into aisle

Will Pavia, Lucy Bannerman

cardinal, she said, and asked her if she promised to "love thyself, cherish thyself and pleasure thyself".

Sisters doing it for themselves

● The Pinky Promise

so popular, it was picked up by a

● Swedish comedian Emma Kryckare

sprung up there in the late 1990s, but she also knew of ceremonies performed in the 1970s. "There is an African tribe that had it as part of their culture," he said. "This friend did it for us. There were about 14 people in our backyard...."

Divorce selfies

The new way to
announce a split

HILSTON

Saying no to children

42 per cent of
childless women
are in professional
or managerial
occupations
compared with
30 per cent of
mothers

Office for National
Statistics (ONS) study,
2009

One in five British
women will reach
the menopause
without having
had children
(ONS study, 2011)

40 per cent of
female university
graduates aged 35
are childless and
30 per cent will
stay that way
Institute of Education,
London

Women born in
1965 are twice as
likely not to have
children as those
born 20 years
earlier
ONS 2011

Boys can have periods too, primary pupils are taught

Greg Hurst Social Affairs Editor

Teachers are being encouraged to tell primary school children that boys can have periods to avoid upsetting trans-

and that bins for tampons and other period products should be provided in male and female school lavatories.

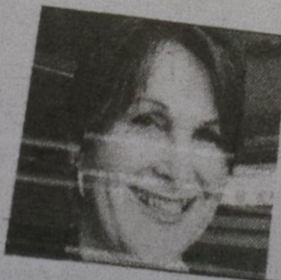
Stephanie Davies-Arai, from the campaign group Transgender Trend, said: "This is deliberately misleading

important for all genders to be learn and talk about menstr together." It added: "Our approach is the fact that some people have periods are trans or non-binary. Figures on the number of people in the UK will be for the first time in the r

Transwoman given 12 hours to delete 'hateful' gender tweets

PA
Lucy Bannerman

A transsexual woman who was told by Twitter she was breaking its rules on hateful conduct for tweeting that "sex and gender are not the same" has caused the social media platform of Orwellian



Kristina Harrison
accused Twitter of
"absurd" behaviour

Ms Harrison has refused to delete tweets while she appeals to Twitter to reconsider its decision.

A Twitter spokeswoman said "misgendering" — failing to use son's preferred pronoun — and "naming" — using their pre-transition name — violated the site's policy on hateful conduct. She declined to explain why Ms Harrison's tweets

to a group including a

Navratilova trades volleys with trans athlete in Twitter row

Lucy Bannerman, Gabriella Swerling

She won Wimbledon nine times and is widely regarded as one of the greatest tennis players of all time, so most

logical males should be allowed to compete against women if they identify as female. Critics say it gives male-to-female transgender athletes an unfair physical advantage and, in some cases, could threaten their safety.

Charleston, South Carolina, who was born male but identifies as female. Navratilova apologised for causing any offence and said she would "keep quiet", adding: "All I want is fairness."

However, Dr McKinnon was

Martina Navratilova
@Martina

Replying to @GaelleforSafety @charlesmcinnis and 2 others

Clearly that can't be right. You can't just proclaim yourself a female and be able to compete against women. There must be

Follow

She added: "You don't hit a tennis ball with your penis or vagina. If you do, you're doing it wrong." Navratilova replied: "Rachel — you might be an expert on all things trans, but you are one nasty human being. You didn't engage, you bullied. I regret nothing."

Trans ideologists are spreading cod science

Those who defend controversial charity's right to a £500,000 lottery grant should really listen to what it is preaching

Janice
Turner



@VICTORIAPECKHAM

Are you a Princess Barbie jelly-baby who likes frilly dresses, high heels and takes ages to get ready? Or a GI Joe jelly-baby who wears boots and functional clothing? Did you know that your preference for pink sparkles or muddy sports isn't down to societal

on TV or creationists in schools; the same people who are tweeting #Istandwithmermaids because the Big Lottery Fund is reviewing, in the light of an outcry, its decision to award them a £500,000 grant.

On tape the Mermaids trainer tells us that humans don't come in two sexes, male and female, sperm and ovum: "Most people still think that way," she says airily. "But what we know now, thanks to advances in science, is that the human race has up to 42 different sets of chromosomes."

Biological sex is on a spectrum, she says, like skin tone and (seriously) bra size. A person's "gender identity jelly baby" has nothing to do with how we are raised: it is inside you at birth. You know you are a man

toys, books, movies, adverts, a sexist society. A pink and blue gendered world is taken as natural, immutable.

So it is odd to hear a Ted Talk given by the Mermaids chief executive Susie Green about how when her "effeminate" young son gravitated to Barbies and princess costumes, her husband threw all his "girl toys" away and told him to play with Action Man. Depressed and withdrawn, he told his mother "God had made a mistake", so Ms Green took him to Thailand aged 16 for

Young people need loving support through maelstrom of puberty

function. (Susie Green is on tape laughing that her trans-daughter's penis was so small, because she'd been on puberty blockers, that the surgeon constructing her vagina had "not much to work with".)

The Big Lottery Fund should be asking why Mermaids is so out of step with NHS best practice. Why, for example, does GIDS (the Gender Identity Development Service) not recommend Mermaids on its website? Indeed, its clinicians are in perpetual conflict with the charity. The NHS protocol for children is "watchful waiting" but Mermaids pushes for the US "affirmation" model in which any child who declares that they are trans must be treated as such without examining any possible underlying issues, such as frequently undiagnosed autism,

has prescribed cross-gender hormones for children as young as 12, who has a criminal conviction for running an unregistered practice, a £12,000 fine, and is under review by the General Medical Council.

Most seriously, the Big Lottery Fund should wonder why a High Court judge told a mother, found to be forcing her four-year-old son to live as a girl against his wishes, not to contact Mermaids further after the charity had vigorously supported the woman's delusions.

There is no question that young people, confused by the heavily gendered world in which they are raised, need loving support through the maelstrom of puberty. Mermaids itself as the principal source of compassion and has won the reverence of celebrities. But as the Kids Company controversy pro-

Even asking questions is now 'transphobic'

Ianice Turner



VICTORIA PECKHAM

A surgeon friend told James Caspian that in one year he'd performed two reverse gender reassignment operations on patients who'd swapped gender when changed their minds. "This is new," he said. "Someone should

few years ago his patient profile changed from mainly adult men to younger women, many with complex mental health problems including social anxiety, self-harm, depression and undiagnosed autism. Some had been sexually abused as children. Many were lesbians, often fearful of coming out. But they saw changing gender as a panacea.

He'd read accounts by US women who, after having mastectomies and taking testosterone, had reverted to living as female. He feared that as the number of women patients increased so would regrets. "But I want to stress I didn't know the answer. I just wanted to find out."

He outlined his detransition thesis to a friend at Bath Spa. It must go

online attacks? Because, says Caspian, it concerns the issue of "gatekeeping" by medical professionals. In previous eras, trans people endured cruel, unpermitted battles before doctors permitted them treatment.

Campaigners have succeeded in making this process simpler and more humane. But lately trans activists have argued that any requirement for psychological counselling is insulting. The mere fact they "self-identify" as the opposite gender is proof enough. Detransition therefore is heresy. It suggests some "gatekeeping" is

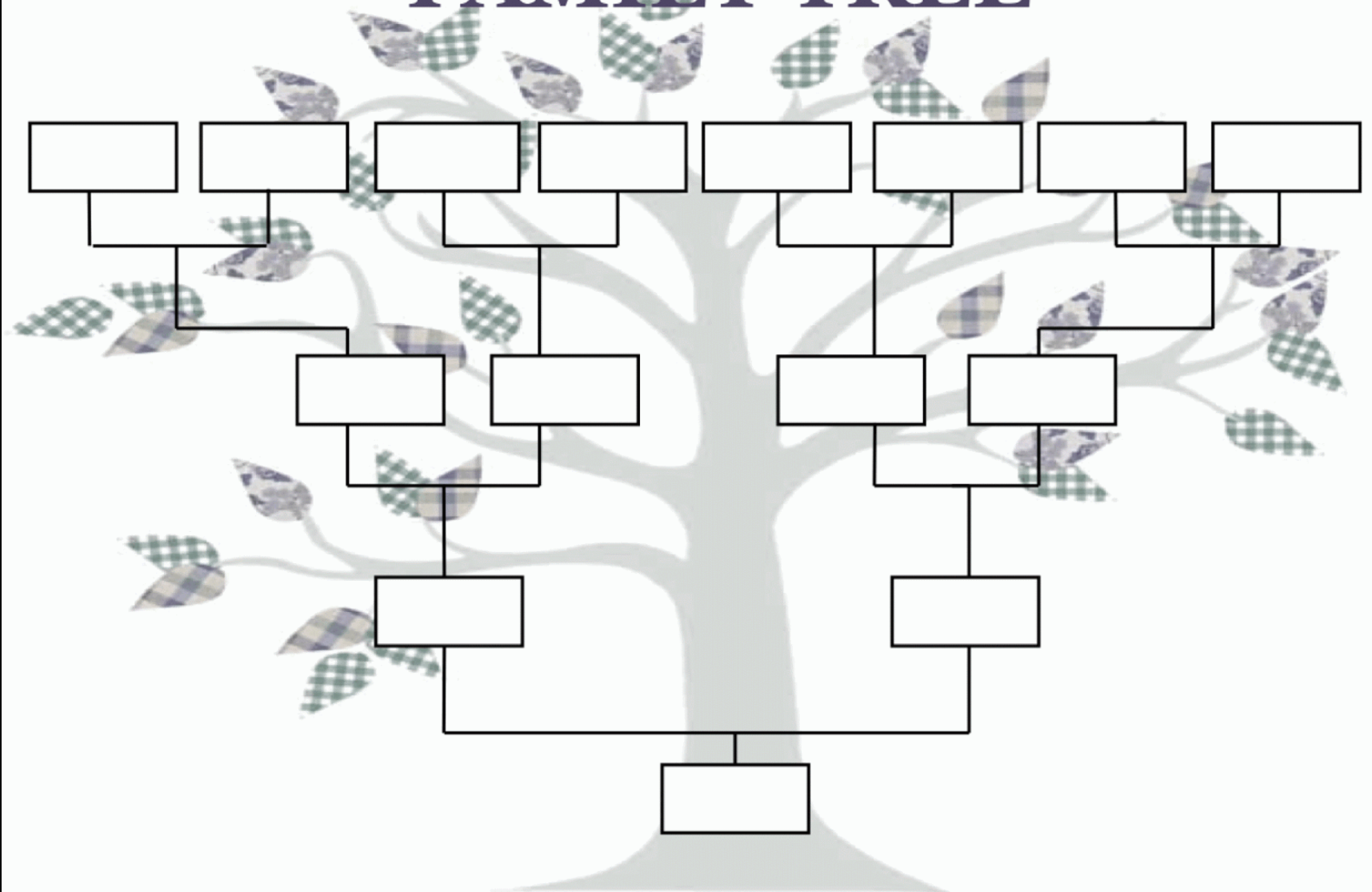
There is mass hysteria about being trapped in the wrong body

event organised by the London think tank Opus entitled "Attacks on Thinking in the Age of LGBTQIAP+" was, ironically, cancelled this week after an online petition and threats of disruption. Since I've been writing about this subject, I've been contacted by doctors, psychotherapists and concerned transgender people themselves, desperate to speak out on the trans phenomenon but terrified to do so for fear of abuse or even losing their jobs.

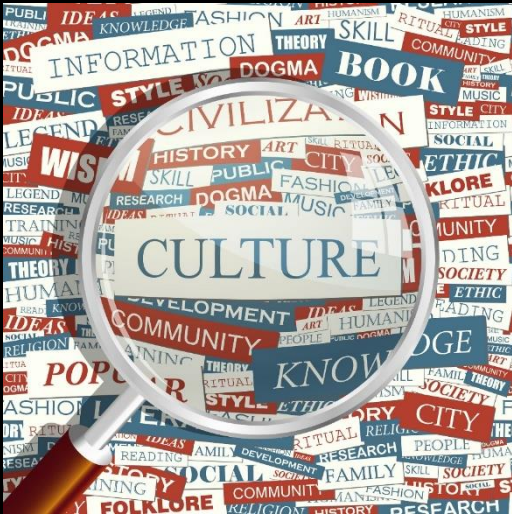
Caspian, who has left the field of gender counselling, is prepared to be the whistleblower. "We are seeing," he says, "what Jung called a 'collective complex.' He compares this mass hysteria about being trapped in the wrong body to the 'glass delusion', an odd medieval phenomenon where people believed

suddenly has a lot of non-binary girls," said one child gender expert, "but when I was growing up, that's where all the anorexics went." There is no blood test or pathogen to diagnose you as trans; it is solely a matter of interpreting human experience. With children, the dominant interpretation that is currently shouting down all others is that, say, a boy who enjoys "female" toys or clothes must really be a girl. And now trans activists are pushing for the American treatment strategy called "affirmation", where doctors cannot challenge a patient who declares they are trans. Trans activists are lobbying hard to change an NHS policy document called "memorandum of understanding" they want to extend a ban on gender "conversion therapy" to include gender identity. In other words, counsellors could no longer suggest that a patient's belief they are

FAMILY TREE



Trends in society



- Expressive individualism
- Sexualisation of society
- Popular culture embracing assumptions of lobbies
- Shaming of different opinions
- Decision making process
- Gen Z

1. Inappropriate response

- Recalibrating views



2. Two Challenges

- Plausible alternatives
- Sufficient pastoral responses



3. A bigger 'Yes'



Genesis narrative



²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Gen 1:26-28

Human Beings



- Have dignity
- Have limits
- Are embodied
- Are different
- Are relational

The Fall – explaining the brokenness



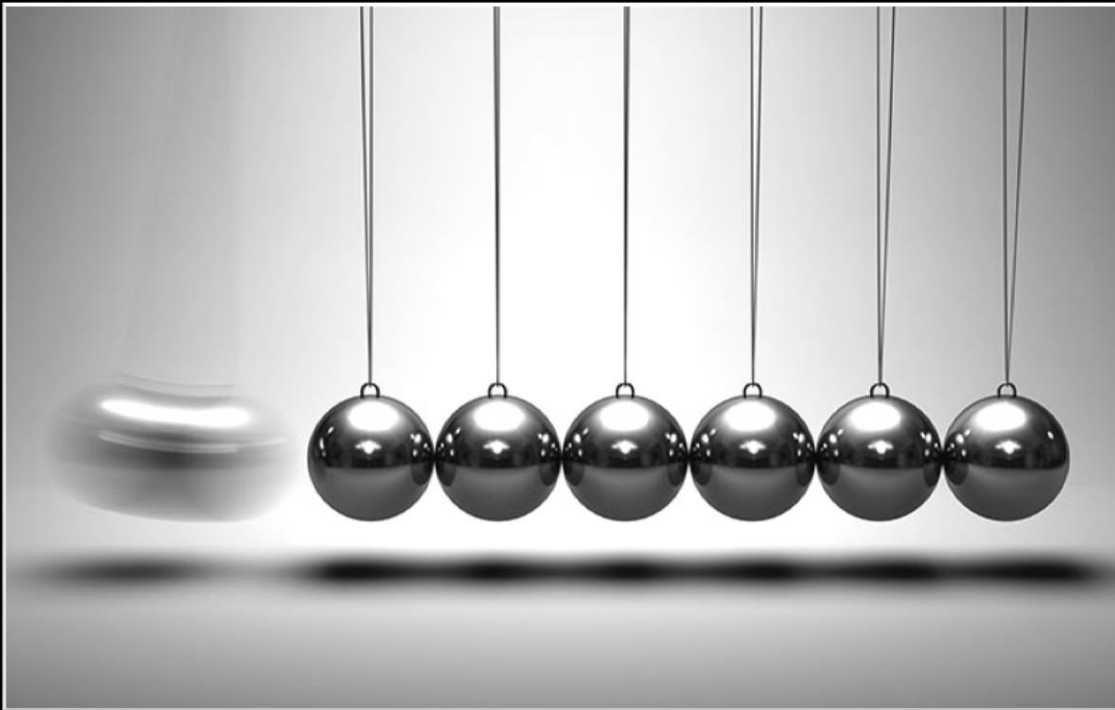
Christ – 'Yes' to God in the present



Glory— hope for the future



The consequences...



- Rediscover
- Re-inhabit
- Retell