

## Gender Unicorn vs Gender Elephant vs Gender Bonobo

# Oh No! Genderology Wars!

### Dan Mayo

It was bound to happen. Not long after Gender Unicorn became a well-established sex-ed teaching tool, Gender Elephant has appeared on the scene to challenge Gender Unicorn's hegemony. Unicorn's failing?

Not sufficiently diverse and inclusive! A failing which is, as one says today, problematic.

Gender Unicorn, as my well-informed readers will know, demonstrates the "spectrum" of gender identity amongst *Homo sapiens*. He holds up a cheery rainbow colour spectrum when lecturing. One might wonder why a mythical member of the equid family gets to illustrate gender issues to young humans rather than, let's say, a primate cousin, but no matter. The essential message of Unicorn is that he is not "binary normative."

You can choose to self-identify as any category on the spectrum. You aren't handcuffed, if you'll pardon the bondage image, to just male or female. And you aren't compelled to remain in your first-choice category, which would be an oppressive restriction on your gender-fluidity rights. The underlying notion is that sex and gender are not the same thing. Sex itself, some say, is a transphobic category. How humans could have got the sex idea so wrong for so long is not rigorously elucidated.

So, enter Gender Elephant, who is even more spectrummy than old-fashioned Gender Unicorn,

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and purportedly adds yet more possible genders with which you could self-identify. Although Elephant is a bit vague for my liking on what exactly these new categories are – it's something about who you are attracted to physically and/or who

you are attracted to emotionally. Some gender extremists claim there could be dozens of genders. However, lack of data, clarity or coherence is not an obstacle to the proponents of the new discipline of genderology. Diversity is our strength after all, so yet more diversity surely makes us stronger. If only Charles Atlas knew.

At present the odds are murky on whether newcomer Elephant will displace well-established Unicorn. This new discipline of genderology is a minefield of uncertainty and now schism. Elephant had better be careful though, as rumour has it that a Gingerbread Gender Person is now in development, willing to take on all gender comers and promising to be even more inclusive. One thing's for sure, the French saying "*vive la difference*" will have a much wider meaning.

### Gender Bonobo

Well, I wish to propose an entirely new mascot for what used to be called sex-ed, now gender-ed: enter Gender Bonobo!

The bonobo chimp has much to recommend himself over Unicorn or Elephant. First off he is a close primate cousin, far more biologically relevant to *Homo sapiens*' sex life than a horned equid or a huge proboscid. But that might bring some science to bear on the issue, something Unicorn and Elephant are both a bit sketchy on.

Second, Bonobo could serve not only as a teaching tool but perhaps even a role model. Bonobo troops are gently matriarchal, surely a progressive social arrangement. Compared to the common chimp species, which is violent and patriarchal, bonobos are pacifists. They settle disputes and tensions with sexual encounters. "Make love not war" was their slogan long before hippie culture.

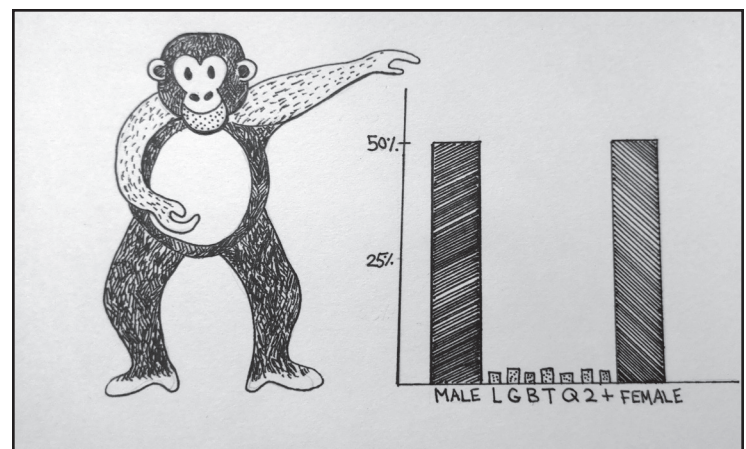
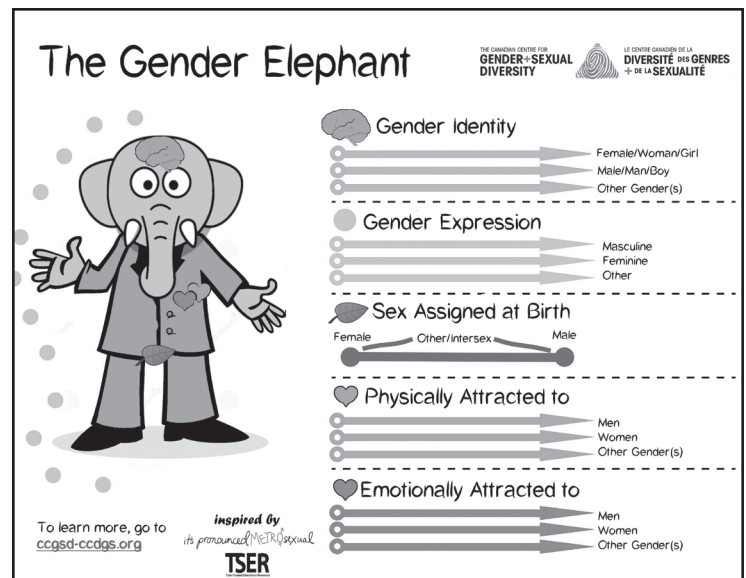
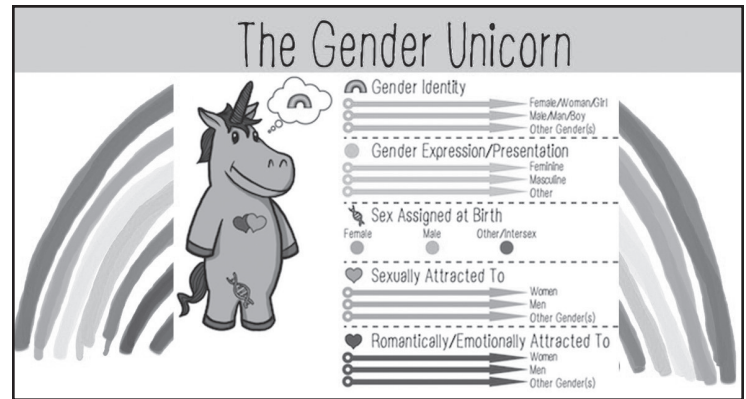
And there's not a hint of prejudice or discrimination in bonobo gender preferences. They'll have sex with anyone, almost anytime, no questions asked. Same-sexiness is totally okay. Thus all issues about how a particular bonobo may self-identify in the gender department are moot. No one minds nor worries about it. Gender Bonobo is, virtuously, not homophobic or transphobic. None of the problem of having-a-peak-at-your-genitals-and-giving-you-a-gender-normative-birth-label for Bonobo.

"Consent and boundary" issues may still need a bit of explaining to young humans, reminding them that while bonobos may be most admirable, not all behaviours cross the species boundary one for one.

Why wouldn't anatomically correct human dolls be better? (Oops, anatomy doesn't matter.) Aren't children with inquiring minds likely to wonder why their sex education is dominated by distant and even imaginary mammalian relatives instead of the actual species who supposedly needs the education and is attending class? However, these questions might be too logical for the present crop of social-justice totalitarians who develop school curricula these days.

### Statistics anyone?

The graphic accompanying Gender Bonobo is also a big improvement on Unicorn



Top: The Gender Unicorn (from TransStudent.org)

Middle: The Gender Elephant (credit on image)

Bottom: The Gender Bonobo (provided by author)

and Elephant's rainbow. It's not a spectrum but a bar graph of statistical distribution. The graph shows that about 96% of humans stack up in a roughly equal, bi-modal distribution of males and females. There's a sprinkling of non-binary types in between, mostly gays, lesbians and two-spirits, plus a few outliers of transgenders, transitioning genders, not sures, and absolutely-no-sex-please types.

Bisexuals are an interesting category which may be a bit bigger than they now self-identify, no doubt on the advice of their divorce lawyers. But nothing new here of course. Years ago the politically incorrect lads at my local harness-racing track used to say bi-guys were double-gaited, they both trotted and paced.

### **No Otherkins**

I have resisted including otherkins in my graph, as any human being not self-identifying as human is a step too far. There are lengths of diversity where even I will not tread. My faithful readers might wish to learn that the leading type of otherkins are people who say they are cats. Which goes to show the power of YouTube given that cat videos are the number one category of YouTube postings. Not that I'm suggesting otherkins are crazy of course. They could be faking. Or maybe there was a glitch in their reincarnation teleporter. Who knows?

None of this is to say that the small percentage of non-binaries should not have full equal rights in the legal and constitutional sense. Education, employment, housing, public services – everyone gets the same treatment no matter how you self-identify. Special treatment is another matter. However, the intricacies of gender-appropriate pronouns, gender-neutral bathrooms and gender re-assignment surgery are beyond the scope of this article and my research budget.

### **Ultra-violet or infra-red gender coming?**

One failing of Elephant's and Unicorn's spectrum graphic of different colours is that it misleadingly implies that different genders

are equal categories. It also leads to the conundrum arising from Elephant's "insufficiently diverse" criticism of Unicorn. To get more diversity do you have to go to the ultra-violet or infra-red ends of the light spectrum? Might we even contemplate gamma-ray or radio-wave genders, though I confess that mental image is a bit scary. Guarding your daughters might be good advice if genderology progresses that far.

Statistical distribution solves this brain teaser. If, let's say with more research, new genders are discovered or self-identified then you simply plot those results on the graph, with more dots between the large male and female columns.

However, a potentially fatal flaw in all self-identification models, spectrummy or statistical, is that error creeping in from fakers, poseurs, ephemerists, the confused or suggestible. Genderology has no solution for this flaw. Generally it has a low-resolution, anti-intellectual, anti-scientific odour.

### **Loose definitions but not loose morals**

Another failing of Elephant is the mushy categories "attracted to." These terms are ill-defined and not even weighted. I myself am attracted to handsome R&B pop-singer Bruno Mars but wouldn't want to sleep with him. But if I answered Elephant's question honestly about "attracted to," I could find myself falling into gender-fluidity confusion. Bruno Mars' music videos would be off limits until I had some counselling to discover my true self. Mind you, the proponents of genderology would be happy – more jobs for all.

Unicorn and Elephant both seem a bit moralistic on the range of allowable self-identification. For instance a man who self-identifies as a harem breeder wanting multiple wives (not mentioning any religions here!) is apparently not welcome on the spectrum. He wouldn't even rate a letter on LGBTQ acronym, which is a good thing. If genderologists are too slack about allowing new categories, we'll soon run out of letters.



## What happened to biology?

One tenet of the new genderology is that biology doesn't really matter or is at any rate not determinative. Whether your private parts match your self-identified gender is not, strictly speaking, relevant. So, for instance, your normatively male self could identify as female but not have to worry if you keep your penis. If that causes consternation with male dates then, alas, they have a binary-normative phobia that needs counselling (more jobs for all). Even a Y chromosome is apparently a weak clue to one's true gender identity.

Bonobo does not tie himself into such self-imposed knots as he doesn't mind what naughty bits you have, or how you self-identify, as long as you're willing to get it on at a moment's notice. No fighting or patriarchy involved.

## Where will it all end?

I am not optimistic that genderology will have a happy ending, so to speak. To put a stop to this misguided fad, the 'scholars' at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) who develop school curricula would have to be de-funded. Probably the 'gender studies' departments at universities too. But the small minority of ideologues who have grabbed control of the cultural steering wheel will fiercely resist letting go.

My beloved Gender Bonobo will probably not make it, much like his real-life counterpart. Bonobos are down to about 20,000 individuals in the wild, and still declining, due to habitat destruction and the bush-meat trade. Now that's something that should carry a serious trigger warning. •

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