

Article

Why the Transgender–Transracial Analogy Holds Up

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Abstract: Rebecca Tuvel’s “In Defense of Transracialism” argues that many of the reasons commonly offered for accepting transgender self-identification also support (at least some) forms of transracial self-identification (Tuvel, 2017). The paper provoked intense backlash, but the philosophical question it raised has not gone away: If we accept transgender identity claims, what principled grounds remain for rejecting transracial ones? In this article I defend the structural stability of Tuvel’s analogy by examining prominent responses to her paper, especially those by Dembroff and Payton, Sealey, and Botts, and by asking a consistency question: Do the premises of each objection apply to race but not gender, or to gender but not race? I argue that they typically do not. Appeals to intergenerational inheritance, to having lived the relevant oppression, to entrenched social meanings, to collective harms, and to privileged crossing can be made with equal coherence against transgender identities. This does not show that transracial identity claims are always legitimate or should always receive social uptake. It shows that the familiar objections, as stated, do not secure a non-question-begging asymmetry between the two cases. If we want to deny transracial claims while affirming transgender ones, we need a better account of the difference.

Keywords: transracialism; transgender; race; gender; social identity; conceptual engineering; identity claims

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1. Introduction

In March 2017 *Hypatia* published Rebecca Tuvel’s “In Defense of Transracialism” (Tuvel, 2017). Tuvel’s paper is best read as a parity argument: If we think it can be appropriate to accept a person’s self-identification as a gender different from their natal sex, then, absent

a relevant difference, we have at least some reason to accept racial self-identification as well. Tuvel's conclusion is cautious; she claims that we have reason to allow racial self-identification coupled with a sincere effort to change one's race, and that we may have more reason to accept racial transition than gender transition (Tuvel, 2017, p. 275).

Tuvel's paper became the centre of a highly public controversy. An open letter calling for retraction circulated widely (Vigo, 2017), and *Hypatia's* board issued a public statement (Weinberg, 2017). I am not interested here in re-litigating that episode. My interest is the philosophical problem it threw into relief. Philosophers regularly affirm transgender identity claims while denying that transracial identity claims could ever merit comparable recognition. If Tuvel's analogy is to be rejected, it must be rejected by identifying a genuine disanalogy—something that makes the transgender case relevantly different from the transracial case.

Earlier discussions of the broader “analogy thesis” between race and gender, including Heyes (2006) and Brubaker (2016), situate these questions within debates about self-transformation and unsettled identities. My focus here is narrower: I examine whether prominent post-Tuvel objections succeed in generating the asymmetry they require. As the argument is conditional, it is compatible with either accepting both transgender and transracial identities or rejecting both; it rules out only the combination of affirming the former while dismissing the latter without identifying a principled disanalogy.

I take it that a minimal standard of argumentative responsibility in this domain is straightforward. If I object to transracial identity claims on the grounds that transracial claimants lack the right kind of experience, or that racial categories have a particular social meaning, or that transracial self-identification harms members of an oppressed group, then I must explain why the same style of reasoning does not undermine transgender identity claims. Otherwise I am not providing an argument against transracial identity claims in particular; I am providing a more general sceptical argument that threatens both. This article works through several influential objections to transracial identity claims and shows that, as they are typically framed, they do not yield the needed asymmetry.

My aim is therefore modest but important. I do not claim that race and gender are identical, or that they play the same political role, or that every assertion of a transracial identity is sincere or ethically defensible. What I claim is that prominent attempts to break the transgender–transracial analogy fail on their own terms. If we want to endorse transgender identities while rejecting transracial ones, we need arguments that do more than restate the conclusion that transracial identity claims are unacceptable.

2. The Parity Test and the Scope of the Analogy

Tuvel's analogy is often criticised as if it were a claim that race and gender are the same kind of thing. That is not required. Analogical arguments can be narrower: If self-identification plus transition-related practices are treated as sufficient for membership in a gender category, then similar treatment may be warranted for racial categories unless we can identify a relevant difference that blocks the inference.

The relevant difference must not be merely verbal. It is not enough to say that race is about ancestry while gender is about identity if what about means is precisely what is under dispute. Nor is it enough to say transracial claims are offensive if the argument relies on the assumption that transracial claims are always offensive. What is needed is a principled account of the different conditions under which category membership should

be socially recognised, and that account must survive a parity test: It must not, without further argument, extend to transgender identity claims as well.

To count as a relevant disanalogy, a proposed difference must do three things. First, it must identify a social function we have reason to preserve in our classificatory practices (for example, tracking unjust social positioning, allocating reparative resources, or underwriting forms of solidarity). Second, it must specify a condition for recognition that does not simply restate the contested conclusion (for example, it cannot treat being offensive or being impossible as premises). Third, it must explain why that condition does not also exclude many standard transgender cases once we attend to the ways gender categories are also shaped by assignment, socialisation, and oppression.

Two clarifications follow. I am not claiming that race and gender are the same kind of social kind, nor that their histories of domination are interchangeable. And I am not claiming that social recognition is owed in every context to every identity claim that presents itself as trans. The point is conditional and diagnostic: If we accept certain forms of self-identification and transition-related practice as sufficient in the gender case, then we need a non-circular account of why similar considerations are ruled out in the race case; otherwise we have not isolated an objection to transracial identities in particular.

In what follows I focus on three influential sources of resistance to Tuvel's analogy. First, Dembroff and Payton propose a conceptual-engineering approach that aims to redesign racial classification to track intergenerationally inherited injustice (Dembroff & Payton, 2020). Second, Sealey presses objections rooted in experience, social meaning, and harms to Black communities (Sealey, 2018). Third, Botts advances methodological and political objections, including the idea that transracial self-identification amounts to an illicit exercise of privilege (Botts, 2018). Each author is responding to a particular example (Rachel Dolezal/Sayegh Diallo) and to a particular racial context (Blackness in the United States). I will respect that focus while still asking whether the form of objection generalises in a way that threatens transgender identity claims.

This way of framing the dispute fits naturally with social-constructionist and ameliorative approaches to gender and race, according to which categories are answerable not only to descriptive facts but also to the normative purposes they serve (Haslanger, 2000; Jenkins, 2016). Dembroff and Payton make this explicit by treating racial classification as a site of conceptual engineering. The parity test I use here is best understood as a constraint on that engineering: Any proposed redesign of racial categories that is used to block transracial claims must be paired with an explanation of why an analogous redesign of gender categories is not also warranted, or else the proposal will generalise into a broader scepticism about trans identities.

3. Dembroff and Payton: Conceptual Engineering and Intergenerational Inequality

A direct line of attack against Tuvel's analogy is to identify a disanalogy between transracial and transgender identity. This is the approach of Robin Dembroff and Dee Payton. In their *Boston Review* article, they write that there is a "deeply important asymmetry" between Jenner's claim to be a woman and Diallo's (Dolezal's) claim to be Black, and that transgender identities deserve social uptake whereas so-called transracial identifications as Black almost always do not (Dembroff & Payton, 2020). They also explicitly situate their project as ameliorative: Their central concern "isn't

whether individuals like Diallo and Krug are in fact Black given our present rules of racial classification, but whether they should be.”¹

Although they briefly note that they focus “only on Blackness” and do not assume their considerations apply to all race classifications, it becomes apparent that their argument relies heavily on the specific history of Blackness in the United States (Dembroff & Payton, 2020). They emphasise that being Black in the United States is not simply a matter of internal identification; it is also a matter of how one’s community and ancestors have been treated by people, institutions, and governments. Given this, they argue that race classification should track, as accurately as possible, intergenerationally inherited inequalities, because we need tools for identifying those entitled to reparations for racial wrongs (Dembroff & Payton, 2020).

Even if we grant the political urgency of that goal, the disanalogy they draw depends on a strong claim: That gender inequality does not accumulate intergenerationally in the way racial inequality does. I will not contest that claim here because my point is methodological. Even if it is correct, it does not follow that inherited inequality is the relevant axis for deciding whether transgender identities deserve social uptake while transracial identities do not. Inherited inequality might be one important function of racial categories, but it is not the only function of our classificatory practices, and it is not the only reason we track sex.

Dembroff and Payton’s focus on intergenerational inequality arguably distracts them from other important motivations for tracking disparity. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 9.6% of aircraft pilots and flight engineers, and 6.9% of aircraft mechanics and service technicians, are women (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). These women may not experience the specific form of intergenerationally inherited inequality Dembroff and Payton have in mind, but that does not entail that it is unimportant to track and address the disparity, especially if it reflects inequality of opportunity.

An even more significant disparity emerges in crime statistics. In the United States, between December 2024 and 2025, offenders arrested for criminal sexual conduct and all other violent crimes were overwhelmingly male. (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2025). One reason we track sex in this context is to determine whether intervention is necessary and what form it should take, e.g., who interventions should be predominantly targeted at, and how resources should be allocated. In these contexts, inherited inequality is irrelevant to both the tracking that needs to take place and the interventions that might follow.

It is also clear that category reallocation can matter in precisely these contexts. In fields where one sex is dominant, “small numbers of misallocated cases can have a large effect on research findings in any sub-group analysis” (Sullivan, 2021, p. 640). This is a general methodological point: Even if transgender inclusion is morally required, we may still need ways of recording sex-related variables for specific research and policy purposes. If that is right, then it is not clear why a reparations-focused worry about misclassification

¹ For related criticisms of Dembroff and Payton’s reparations-centred proposal, see Tuvel (2021) on separating respectful recognition of a person’s self-identity (“private race”) from policy instruments tied to ancestry (“documentary race”), and Case (2022) and Lamey (2025) on how Black immigration already forces this separation in practice. I use the same basic point for a narrower purpose: not to defend any particular distributive scheme, but to show that, once classificatory aims are permitted to come apart, the purported race/sex asymmetry has not yet been established.

in race should be treated as a decisive argument against transracial identity claims while similar misclassification worries in sex are treated as administratively manageable.

Indeed, Dembroff and Payton's own concerns about reparations could be addressed, at least in principle, by separating classificatory aims.² One could implement a method of allowing an individual to record their natal/ancestral race in addition to the race they identify as socially, much like how official forms sometimes record both natal sex and gender identity (Sullivan, 2021). This would preserve a reparations-tracking tool while leaving room for social identities that may not align neatly with ancestry.

At this point, however, further problems arise for Dembroff and Payton's proposal. It is not the case that everyone can accurately identify their own racial ancestry. Consequently, many people will be unaware of how to identify their origins, and thus unaware of whether they are entitled to reparations for racial wrongs. The U.S. Census Bureau's guidance for "Black or African American" asks respondents to consider whether they have "origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa" (United States Census Bureau, 2021). But the Census does not (and likely cannot) verify that ancestry in any comprehensive way. Dembroff and Payton, in effect, treat the problem as if the veracity of ancestry claims can be administratively assumed, while simultaneously arguing that social self-identification should not be trusted.

Further, Dembroff and Payton do not attempt to quantify the strength of the link between an individual's origins and intergenerational inequality. A person could correctly identify as Black in a genealogical sense while being far removed, both socially and historically, from the intergenerationally accumulated inequality the reparations-focused concept is meant to track. It is unclear, for example, whether a person with one Black great-grandparent and otherwise known White ancestry has a sufficiently direct link to intergenerationally accrued inequality to count as Black on Dembroff and Payton's account. If the account is meant to serve reparations, it must specify where thresholds lie; if it cannot specify them, it cannot do what it sets out to do.

Their focus on Blackness in the United States also generates puzzling implications. Consider a Black person born, and whose family has lived for generations, in a nation with a high degree of racial equality relative to the U.S. context. Would Dembroff and Payton consider it acceptable for this person to self-identify as Black in the United States? If yes, then Blackness is not being used to track intergenerationally accrued U.S.-specific inequality. If no, it is completely unclear what race the person should identify as upon moving to the United States. Either way, the proposal reveals the difficulty of making racial classification serve a single political function.³

None of this is meant to deny the importance of reparations or of accurately tracking racialised injustice. It is meant to show that Dembroff and Payton's conceptual

² Tuvel (2021) explicitly recommends separating recognition of a person's self-identified race ("private race") from administrative categories designed to serve specific distributive purposes ("documentary race"). My point generalises the manoeuvre: once we accept that both race and sex/gender are used for multiple, partly independent purposes, no single purpose (e.g., tracking reparations eligibility) can do the disanalogy-work Dembroff and Payton require.

³ Case (2022) presses Dembroff and Payton's intergenerational-inequality framing by noting that many Black immigrants to the U.S. would not be eligible for reparations aimed at redressing U.S.-specific historic injustice, even though they are straightforwardly classified as Black. Lamey (2025) develops a closely related reply: the need to keep reparations-eligibility purpose-bound does not license a categorical rejection of transracial identity claims, and so cannot underwrite the required asymmetry.

engineering does not yet supply a principled disanalogy between transgender and transracial identity. At most, it suggests we may want different classificatory tools for different institutional purposes. That is compatible with recognising transgender identities and with recognising (some) transracial identities while still protecting the administrative and policy functions that reparations discourse requires.

4. Objections to Transracial Identities and Their Transgender Parallels

Tuvel anticipates four objections to her analogy: (1) the experience objection, (2) the social-understanding objection, (3) the harm objection, and (4) the privilege objection (Tuvel, 2017, p. 268). Many responses to her paper develop these objections rather than rejecting her framework. I consider them in turn, focusing on Sealey and Botts, and I ask in each case whether the objection, as formulated, threatens transgender identity claims as well.

4.1. The Experience Objection

On the experience objection, a person cannot legitimately claim membership in a racial group unless they have grown up with the relevant experience of racialisation. Sealey develops this objection against the Dolezal case. She grants that Dolezal may have faced negative treatment once she presented as Black, but she denies that this amounts to racialisation as Black in the relevant sense. What matters, Sealey argues, is a past history of being racialised as Black; without that history, Dolezal's present experience is better described as racist treatment for attempting to pass as Black rather than being racialised as Black (Sealey, 2018, pp. 22–23).

An immediate issue is that Sealey offers no account of time-scale. How far back must the past reach, and how much of it is required? A concrete problem arises once we consider how long Dolezal had already been living and presenting as Black. Contemporary media reporting suggests that, years before the 2015 controversy became public, Dolezal understood herself as Black and expected to be treated as such in the relevant social contexts (Nahrulla, 2015). By the time the controversy became public, she had been living in this way for several years.

If Sealey's point is that Dolezal cannot be racialised as Black at all, no matter how she is treated, then the objection becomes stipulative: It defines racialisation in a way that excludes anyone who was not racialised as Black from childhood. If, instead, Sealey's point is that Dolezal had not lived long enough as Black for her present experience to count as racialisation, then the objection requires a threshold. How many years are enough? Ten? Twenty? A lifetime? Without such a threshold, the argument does not show that transracial identity claims are disqualified in principle; it shows only that some people may not yet have accumulated the relevant experience.

Once the parallel with transgender identity is made explicit, the instability becomes clearer. A transgender woman who transitions in adulthood also lacks a childhood and adolescence of being gendered as a girl. If "having grown up with a woman's experience" is taken to be a necessary condition for being a woman, then many ordinary transgender cases are excluded by the same form of reasoning. This is precisely why transgender-inclusive philosophy has emphasised first-person authority and ameliorative

accounts of gender: They resist the idea that only those socialised in a particular way can count as members of the category (Bettcher, 2009; Jenkins, 2016).

Of course, many philosophers and activists reject that scepticism. They argue that gender identity, recognition, embodiment, and social role can be decisive even without a lifelong history of being gendered as such. However, if that is right, then the lack of early history cannot, by itself, be a categorical disqualifier in the transracial case either. At most, we might conclude that early history matters in certain contexts, or that it affects what kinds of authority a person has in speaking for a group.

To see the point more sharply, consider a case that is structurally available in the racial domain: A White child adopted and raised in a Black family and community, from infancy, who is socially treated in many respects as a member of that community. Whether or not we want to call this person “Black,” it should be clear that they have a different relationship to Black social life than an adult opportunistically claiming Blackness. Once such cases are admitted, the experience objection cannot be a simple veto on transracial identity as such. It becomes a complicated, context-dependent judgement, precisely what the parity test predicts.

Experience matters, but the experience objection does not yet establish the asymmetry required to reject Tuvel’s analogy. If it is strengthened enough to exclude transracial identity claims categorically, it will, without further argument, exclude transgender identity claims too.

4.2. The Social-Understanding Objection

A second line of resistance insists that even if experience is not decisive, social meanings are. Tuvel notes that racial groupings are arbitrary from a genetic point of view (Tuvel, 2017, p. 266). Sealey grants that race is not biological in the strict sense but argues that there remains a “core” that is misrepresented in cases like Dolezal’s: A socially constituted core formed by the relationship between genetic ancestry and the cultural and social signification of that ancestry (Sealey, 2018, p. 23).

This is a sophisticated move, but it does not straightforwardly block the analogy with gender. Gender categories too are entangled with a relationship between bodily features and the social signification of those features. In other words, the objection is not that race has a core while gender does not; it is that race has a particular kind of core. However, if the core is “really about a relationship” between bodies and meanings, then gender has an obvious candidate for a similar relational core. Unless we can explain why one relational core is identity-defeating while the other is not, the objection does not yield the desired asymmetry.

Appeals to ancestry also do not deliver the clarity critics sometimes assume. The U.S. Census Bureau’s guidance on race explicitly treats race as a social construct and notes that racial categories and measurements have changed over time (United States Census Bureau, 2021). Genetic ancestry does not map neatly onto census racial categories, and genetic-testing results can complicate individuals’ self-understanding in unexpected ways (Bahrapour, 2018). On the empirical side, human population history itself is complex: There is no simple story in which “race” corresponds to cleanly separable biological lineages (Scerri et al., 2018).

Finally, there is a tendency to slide between descriptive and normative claims. The descriptive claim that many people will not recognise transracial identity claims as

legitimate may be true. The normative claim that therefore we ought not to recognise such claims does not follow. After all, the descriptive claim has also often been true of transgender identity claims. Appeals to what society currently understands cannot, by themselves, settle what society ought to understand, especially when we are already engaged in a project of conceptual and political change.

4.3. The Harm Objection

A third objection claims that transracial identity claims harm Black communities. The alleged harms are varied but may include appropriation of cultural symbols, diversion of attention, misrepresentation of Black experience, erosion of anti-racist solidarity, and the re-centring of Whiteness through the spectacle of choosing Blackness. Sealey, for example, worries that White self-identification as Black can frame Blackness as a matter of elective consumption, undermining the political significance of racialisation (Sealey, 2018).

These are serious moral and political concerns; however, as an argument against Tuvell's analogy they face a dilemma. Either the objection is targeted at particular ways of attempting racial transition (deceptive passing, opportunistic self-identification, instrumental use of Black institutions) or it is categorical. If it is targeted, then it does not rule out transracial identity claims as such; it yields standards for when such claims are harmful. If it is categorical, then it risks collapsing into an argument that any identity claim alleged to threaten group-based political projects should be rejected. That broader argument would then have to be applied to transgender identities as well, since transgender inclusion is also sometimes alleged to undermine feminist organising, women's political categories, or sex-based protections.

The more plausible route is to treat harm as context-sensitive and practice-sensitive. We can ask what harms are being produced, by which behaviours, and in which institutional settings? What norms of transparency, accountability, and community membership reduce those harms? And which norms are already accepted in the transgender context, especially in cases where inclusion decisions are highly context dependent?

Dembroff and Payton themselves leave "space for unique circumstances in which someone who has deeply invested in a Black community and been forthcoming about their racial history is nevertheless accepted within that community as Black" (Dembroff & Payton, 2020). If that is right, the harm objection cannot be a blanket rejection of transracial identity claims. It becomes, instead, a call for careful moral assessment of particular cases, precisely the kind of assessment that many transgender-inclusive frameworks already employ.

4.4. The Privilege Objection and 'Race And Method'

Finally, some critics argue that transracial identity claims are a wrongful exercise of White privilege. Botts frames the objection politically: A White person can "opt in" to Blackness when it seems desirable, without being subject to the full force of anti-Black racism, and can "opt out" when it becomes costly. On this view, transracial identification is not merely false; it is a form of domination, a way of taking what one wants from an oppressed group without bearing the group's burdens (Botts, 2018).

Again, the parity pressure is immediate. Privilege-based scepticism is also directed at transgender women, often via the thought that those assigned male at birth necessarily benefited from male privilege and therefore cannot count as women. Transgender-inclusive accounts typically respond by distinguishing between structural advantage and personal identity, and by attending to the ways transgender women are frequently subject to stigma, violence, and exclusion that undercut the simplistic privilege story (Bettcher, 2009; Serano, 2016). The general lesson is that privilege does not provide a clean criterion of category membership.

Tuvel presses a parallel reply in the racial case: It is difficult to see how giving up being White and becoming Black is an exercise of White privilege; rather, it looks like the renunciation of White privilege, if privilege is understood as an unequal system of advantages conferred onto Whites (Tuvel, 2017, p. 271). Sealey replies that rejecting privilege from a position of privilege can still affirm that privilege, because the privilege lies in having the option to say “yes” or “no” (Sealey, 2018, p. 25).

However, if we amend the terms of Sealey’s reply, it generates an uncomfortable implication for transgender identity. One could argue, by precisely the same structure, that it is a wrongful exercise of male privilege for a natal male to cross into the gender category, woman. If “the privilege lies in having the option” to renounce maleness, then transgender women would be excluded by the very style of reasoning used to exclude White-to-Black transracial claimants.

To avoid that implication, the privilege objection must locate a relevant difference between racial privilege and male privilege. One plausible candidate is the asymmetry of passing and of social uptake: Natal males who wish to transition to women often face more barriers to being read as women than natal females who wish to transition to men. If that is right, then in gender the privileged group may have less ability to “opt in” convincingly to the underprivileged category, whereas in some racial contexts (especially the Black–White U.S. context) the worry is that the privileged group may more easily claim entry into the oppressed category. That might be a defensible disanalogy; however, it is not the disanalogy the privilege objection typically provides. It requires additional argument about the normative role of “ease of passing” and about which contexts should treat passing as relevant.

The limits of privilege-based explanations become clearer once we move beyond the Black–White U.S. context. Not every alleged case of racial transition can be explained as a straightforward exercise of dominant-group privilege of the kind critics attribute to the Dolezal case. If privilege is not a uniform mechanism, then privilege-talk cannot by itself supply the principled asymmetry needed to reject transracial identity claims while retaining transgender ones. The objection has to be reformulated at the level of general criteria, about which histories, social positions, and practices should matter for recognition, and it has to do so without generating parallel exclusions in the gender case.

Botts also raises a methodological worry about Tuvel’s reliance on self-identification, illustrated with fanciful counterexamples (such as identifying as a centaur) meant to show that self-identification cannot by itself create category membership (Botts, 2018). The illustration is rhetorically effective but philosophically blunt.⁴ It conflates social categories

⁴ Tuvel (2018) answers Botts’s “centaurism” reductio by stressing that her argument concerns actual human social kinds and requires (at minimum) that it be possible, in principle, for someone to be treated as a

which have membership conditions that partly depend on social recognition and role with natural-kind-like categories which have membership conditions that do not. Nobody thinks that centaur is a social category with boundaries that are shaped by collective practices. Race and gender, by contrast, are paradigmatic social categories: Their meanings, boundaries, and institutional uses are historically contingent, politically contested, and (as both critics and defenders of trans identities emphasise) subject to revision.

Once we see that, the method objection has to be reformulated. The real issue is not whether self-identification magically makes one a member of a category. The real issue is which social categories ought to be responsive to self-identification, in which contexts, and under what norms. In contemporary discourse, it is frequently argued that gender identity avowals warrant automatic interpersonal authority. For those who hold this position, the challenge is to demonstrate why a parity of reasoning does not mandate the same authority for transracial claims, avoiding a mere appeal to intuition.

5. Conclusion

The standard objections to transracial identity claims – experience, social understanding, harm, and privilege – express serious moral anxieties. They also often reflect justified anger at histories of exploitation and racial domination. However, when these objections are offered as reasons to deny the transgender–transracial analogy, they routinely fail to deliver the required asymmetry. Each can be stated with equal coherence against transgender identity claims. When that happens, the objection is not a refutation of transracial identity claims in particular; it is a more general scepticism about identity claims, one that many proponents of transgender inclusion would not accept.

This conclusion does not force us to accept every transracial claim. The upshot is methodological: If we want to reject transracial identity claims while affirming transgender ones, we need to articulate a better difference. Perhaps the difference will involve the distinctive political role of racial categories in tracking intergenerational injustice. Perhaps it will involve the ways racial identities are constituted through family histories, state violence, and global colonial projects. Perhaps it will involve a specific account of what kinds of conceptual engineering are justified for race and for gender. Any of these directions might succeed. What is not yet shown, at least by the responses discussed here, is that the analogy fails. Unless a principled disanalogy is identified, the intellectually responsible position must treat the two cases as structurally parallel. In that event, consistency points to two coherent paths: either one rejects both transgender and transracial identity claims as category errors (or as lacking the relevant kind of justification), or one accepts that comparable considerations can, in principle, support recognition of both, subject to whatever further norms of sincerity, social uptake, and institutional purpose one takes to govern such recognition.

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member of the relevant category – something that fails for centaurs. [Lamey \(2025\)](#) makes the same methodological point in responding to “otherkin/elf” extensions: cases that presuppose non-existent kinds or radical cross-species differences do not straightforwardly transfer to debates about race and sex/gender, and I invoke this only to diagnose the form of the *reductio*, not to settle the underlying metaphysics.

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