

Chapter 1 : Secular Sexuality

In Sex and Secularism, she turns her attention to our assumptions about what it means to be modern, showing how entangled they are with attitudes about gender and sexuality. Writing on a topic that lends itself to intellectual complacency, she is a tonic: erudite, lucid, and original.

As I have studied it here, secularism is not an objective description of institutions and policies but rather a polemical term whose meanings change in the different contexts in which it is deployed. In this book I have tracked the changes in those meanings and the political uses to which the discourse of secularism has been put. The questions historians and others must ask are not what has secularism always meant and where can it be found, but instead what work does the appeal to secularism do in historically specific circumstances, how does it organize our perception, and with what effects and to what ends? The question to ask about gender is similar because the categories of male and female, masculine and feminine, are also mutable, defined within particular contexts of nation building, racial identities, religious teachings, and social and political movements. Gender and the sex and sexuality to which it refers “ and whose meanings it produces “ are mutable concepts because they refer to an intractable psychic dilemma: Appeals to timeless, natural, or biologically determined differences between men and women are attempts to assuage the anxiety that comes with this indeterminacy and to provide a model for social and political organization. Gender does not ascribe its social roles based on the imperatives of physical bodies; rather, it is a historically and culturally variable attempt to provide a grid of intelligibility for sex, and “ beyond sex “ for the intelligibility of systems of political rule. It is not that gender and politics as established entities come into contact and so influence one another. Rather, it is that the instability of each looks to the other for certainty: This book has tracked the mutually constitutive operations of gender and politics by examining the discourse of secularism from its nineteenth-century anticlerical origins to its current deployment in anti-Muslim campaigns. As the historical contexts and targets of secularists changed, so did representations of sexual difference. This was particularly true of the status and situation of women. Exactly how this constitutes equality “ and in what realms “ is rarely spelled out. Indeed, I have been arguing that this vision of sexual emancipation is not the realization of a universal freedom but is instead a historically specific creation: It is, moreover, a freedom that does not necessarily confer equality “ the asymmetry of the difference of sex continues both in the most intimate of relationships as well as in the marketplace of jobs and ideas. There are continuities and changes. There is also a persistent Christian dimension in this discourse. The changes have to do with the substantive content of those concepts: Always deprived of individual agency, she was first presented as the embodiment of wasteful sexuality, now as its unnatural repression. She is promiscuously aggressive in the nineteenth-century depictions, now more often described as the passive instrument of her terrorist fathers and brothers. The power of this discourse matters because of its influence on politicians and the media, as well as on ordinary people. The aim of this book has been to offer a more nuanced understanding of the operations of the discourse of secularism, a critique of its exaggerated claims and their political implications. What would we see that is now obscured? What difficulties and intransigencies would become apparent? First, of course, we would see that secularism is not an eternal set of principles but a polemical term put to work differently in different contexts. Next, gender would be understood as the insistent but ultimately vain attempt to resolve the enduring conundrum presented by the difference of sex. Its connection to politics would also become clear as the preferred solution to what Claude Lefort deemed the indeterminacy of representative government see chapter 3. My analysis of the history of the discourse of secularism shows how politics invokes gender and, reciprocally, how gender is secured by politics. Gender and politics have used each other to establish their legitimacy and to enforce their rules, justifying inequalities as natural phenomena “ inequalities that extend beyond gender to race, class, ethnicity, and religion. Untangling the operations of this interconnection in the discourse of secularism has been for me a critical project, and not only because it exposes the way certain claims about equality have served to perpetuate inequality. What is also at stake in insisting on the historicity of this discourse, and on the indeterminacy of the meanings of gender and democratic politics upon which it rests, is that those meanings

are perpetually and irresistibly open to change. In this way, critique allows us to think otherwise about the relationship of past to present and about the difficulties we face in acting to realize more just and egalitarian futures.

Religion, the Secular, and the Politics of Sexual Difference upsets this certainty by drawing on diverse voices and traditions in studies that historicize, question, and test the implicit links between secularism and expanded freedoms for women.

Marriage and the Weight of Tradition Introduction: Nevertheless, to a surprising extent the debate over gay rights has skirted the central issue: What, if anything, is wrong or immoral about being gay? Is there a rational basis for the still widely held prejudice against homosexuality, a basis which justifies discriminatory public policies? Does the practice of homosexuality constitute a real threat to anyone or do anyone real harm? I will argue here that there are no good secular grounds for claiming that homosexuality is either morally defective or socially harmful, and that those who advance such claims the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Sam Nunn, Pat Robertson, and a good percentage of the population at large hold a traditional, largely religious bias against gays that should not go unchallenged. By confronting this bias directly and exposing it as without secular foundation we can accelerate progress towards gay and lesbian equality. For those in the gay community, this undertaking might seem to belabor the obvious. They hardly need convincing that their sexual orientation is a natural, central aspect of their identity, not an immoral choice or a pathological aberration. Nor will declaring the normalcy of homosexuality seem particularly new or controversial to those already comfortable with their gay friends. But there is an argument to be made concerning freedom of conscience and the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Since anti-gay bias is largely justified by citing religious or quasi-religious beliefs, and has no rational basis in any substantive harm that homosexuality constitutes, public policy codifying this bias verges on the government establishment of religion. To impose that view via the law, without any rational secular purpose, would seem to violate the constitutional prohibition against government support of contentious religious and philosophical doctrines. That we can understand traditional opposition to gay equality as justified principally by debatable religious and philosophical views, and not in any moral or social threat, represents a recent evolution in our secular conception of sexuality. Forty years ago it was simply assumed, by many of us, that to be homosexual was to be depraved, deviant, or at the very least, sexually defective. Assuming this, we accepted government policy and social sanctions against homosexuality as reflecting an objective moral reality. But the realization is dawning that the traditional animus against gays may not be founded on any moral fact whatsoever, no more than sexism, anti-Semitism or apartheid. A clear distinction now exists between the growing secular consensus regarding homosexuality, which holds it to be harmless, and religious and sectarian views, which deem it pernicious. Yet existing and proposed laws limiting gay rights still incorporate these latter views, which means that the state actively supports discrimination based on the highly questionable assumption that being homosexual is inherently immoral, unnatural, or unhealthy. Such support should end, and it can end only by conforming the law to the secular recognition that homosexuality as well as bisexuality lies within the spectrum of normal human variation, morally on a par with heterosexuality. Many, of course, will continue to harbor anti-gay sentiments, but there will no longer exist any acceptable public justification for codifying private distastes in law or policy. Central to this argument is the notion that there exists in the United States as in many liberal democracies a specifically secular socio-political culture, a set of institutions and common values which find justification independent of any religious tradition. It is this culture, embodied in the fundamental freedoms and protections of the Constitution, which the state has a mandate to establish. Of course the values of this culture often do find support from religious perspectives, but it is not primarily for this reason that they win our allegiance. Rather, it is because the guarantees of privacy, free speech, equal protection, and due process secure us against the majoritarian imposition of any given religious or philosophical ideology that we hold the Constitution so dear. We are at liberty to practice the religion or non-religion of our choice precisely because we have a fundamentally secular arrangement that insures freedom of conscience. None of this suggests, however, as Stephen Carter has recently charged in his book *The Culture of Disbelief*, that secularism somehow bars religion from entering political discourse. Those who wish to make religious arguments concerning law,

policy, or candidates are of course free to do so, and they may well find listeners. Thus in what follows I have no brief against religious practice or expression, even in the political arena. Rather, the separation of church and state I defend works to protect religious and philosophical expression so that it, in turn, is free to affect legislative and judicial outcomes. But it is crucial that these outcomes, even when supported by religious arguments, have a sufficient secular rationale independent of such support. If they do not, then the state has allowed the establishment of doctrines which sooner or later will compromise the free public practice of religion itself, and which will end up restricting the rights of those who happen not to practice the doctrines. Challenges to the constitutionality of anti-gay statutes now underway will force the courts to address the issue of their rationale, a rationale which must reach beyond the mere expression of popular prejudice. As the secular ground has shifted regarding homosexuality, anti-gay laws have been left unfounded by anything other than religious and sectarian justifications which cannot pass constitutional muster; thus the time has come to sift these statutes out from public policy. Only when this is accomplished will we enjoy a truly secular state within which we are really free to believe as we wish, and within which gays and lesbians are really free to be who they are.

The Rhetoric of the Natural Since it is clear that any strictly religious basis for discrimination against homosexuals would run afoul of church-state separation, those who support such discrimination must dress their arguments in secular garb. Despite the oft-cited claim that we are a de facto Judeo-Christian nation, no one can cite biblical chapter and verse against gays and hope to be taken seriously, at least by those who shape the law. Unless, that is, the Christian Coalition succeeds in capturing a significant number of legislative seats. Nevertheless, religious ideologies still operate, transmuted into language which seems neutral with regard to matters of faith, and hence superficially more capable of supplying a rationale for public discrimination. This language might be called the "rhetoric of the natural," and the central claim is simply that homosexuality is unnatural, in some objective sense which merits moral condemnation. The term "unnatural," I believe, does exactly the same work as does "sinful" in explicitly religious contexts, but its claim is just as empty as for its religious counterpart. The rhetoric of the natural, of course, has always been with us as a means to single out, isolate, and scapegoat those among us who are sufficiently different to arouse suspicion or distaste. Those who fell from grace by virtue of acts which thwarted reproduction e. But, crucially, the moral judgment carried by the distinction remained. Those who fell on the wrong side of it were perhaps no longer sinful, but they remained morally blameworthy for being deviant, for their failure to meet the natural norm. They were, in effect, living crimes against nature, a nature endowed with a teleological order within which man played a proper, specified role. The rhetoric of the natural is evident today in laws which limit gay rights and criminalize gay sex, such as the military restrictions on homosexuals and state anti-sodomy ordinances. The military code of conduct outlaws "unnatural carnal copulation" anal and oral sex and the term "unnatural" crops up in many existing and proposed statutes and personal views with the same discriminatory, condemnatory intent. But is this sense of "unnatural" truly secular, that is, uncontaminated by religious or philosophical views not pertinent to maintaining the civil order? Clearly, the ancient natural law conception of nature as teleological, and of humankind serving its purpose by restricting sex to those acts that may result in reproduction, is now a contentious matter of quasi-theological or philosophical debate, even though it may once have been widely accepted. So while not categorically religious, such a disputed notion can hardly function any longer as the secular basis for what we mean by "unnatural". Given this, what other meaning can we discover which still carries the moral opprobrium that so obviously motivates anti-sodomy laws and anti-gay referenda? It seems there is none to be found, beyond the slightly critical use of the word to describe something that differs from the expected norm e. The current secular conception of nature is that of science, which is explicitly agnostic about natural purpose and intention. Science cannot prove or disprove the hypothesis that nature has a final goal or end "in mind," so it puts the question aside as undecidable. We may not infer, at least for public purposes, that nature wants us to fill the heavens with our kind, or that sex acts which cannot result in pregnancy thwart any design or intent, and are therefore unnatural. On the scientific view, everything in nature, including sodomy, is literally and unavoidably natural, while the unnatural is simply the non-natural or the supernatural, should these exist. Recent studies which suggest that there may be definite genetic predispositions to sexual orientation reinforce this point. Nor is homosexuality any longer

deemed unnatural in the sense of being a biological or mental illness, at least by the leading medical, psychiatric, and legal associations. Gays, therefore, are just as much a part of the natural landscape as straights. Nevertheless, some scholars still attempt to use the natural law tradition to justify anti-gay sentiments. Sex, obviously, is "meant" for reproduction, so practices like sodomy which cannot result in pregnancy fail to meet this natural standard, and we feel this failure or should feel it, he argues as shame. This is simply the problem of the naturalistic fallacy: As Hume pointed out long ago, there is no necessary link between what we find to be the case and what we ought to do. Instead, they simply express moral disapproval based on quasi-religious views or controversial philosophical opinions which, according to the Establishment Clause, may not serve as the sole foundation or motive for law. Generally, the federal and state governments are constitutionally barred from supporting positions on matters of conscience about which reasonable people disagree, and any view which declares homosexuality to be unnatural or specially shameful--because teleologically flawed, morally depraved, or biologically defective--is essentially a matter of conscience, and thus not an issue the state should take sides on. Like science, our liberal democracy is enjoined to be agnostic about such matters. Unless it can be shown, independent of religious and natural law arguments, that homosexual acts and partnerships constitute a real threat to social welfare, statutes prohibiting them or denying them equal protection are without a rational secular basis. The Harm in Being Gay It is obvious that much of the resistance to gay rights is rooted in traditional religious beliefs as well as the superficially more secular motive to keep sexual behavior within "natural" limits. But many would argue that, religion and philosophy aside, homosexual behavior still constitutes a real threat to both individuals and society, that to permit its unchecked expression would corrupt our youth, undermine the efficiency of our armed forces, and spell doom for the nuclear family. If laws may not discriminate on the basis of religion, they may still discourage and penalize what society determines are real harms. The question, simply put, is whether there exists a rational basis for, or a legitimate state interest in, anti-gay discrimination. In deciding whether homosexual conduct causes harm, we must, of course, ignore arguments which take the conduct per se to be immoral, perverse, unnatural, etc. Rather, since there is nothing intrinsically wrong about homosexuality from a secular perspective, we must consider the consequences of such conduct for the individuals who engage in it and for the wider social network of which they are a part. Do adult consensual homosexual acts and same-sex partnerships have harmful consequences which justify discrimination against gays in schools, the workplace, the military, and in marriage? The acts themselves, anal and oral sex, are of course not proprietarily homosexual, so their negative consequences if any apply to heterosexual as well as homosexual partners. There are no "high risk groups," only higher risk behavior. Since only a vanishingly small minority seriously propose enforcing anti-sodomy statutes against heterosexuals, it can be assumed that the consequences of sodomy--that it frustrates procreation and possibly increases the chance of acquiring AIDS--are the concern of the parties involved, not the state. What goes on in the bedroom between heterosexuals, including sodomy, generally does not warrant government intrusion beyond the now standard public admonitions to practice safe sex. If such is the case then it is not the sexual behavior per se that is at issue in anti-sodomy laws, but the sex of the partners. Do anal and oral sex, when engaged in by homosexual couples, have adverse consequences for individual and social welfare which are absent when engaged in by heterosexual couples? Is there some objective harm, which does not attach to heterosexual sodomy, which justifies banning or suppressing homosexual relations? Here we have reached the heart of the matter, since it is indeed the case that anti-sodomy statutes, when they are enforced, are enforced selectively against homosexuals. One might suppose, then, that such selectivity reflects some serious threat posed by homosexual sex that could be precisely articulated. But what could this possibly be? The answer is, of course, that prejudicial attitudes about homosexuality aside, there is no objective personal or social harm which attaches to gay sex or to gay relationships. In fact, all the pain and anguish of growing up gay, all the risks and disadvantages presently attached to living a gay life, are a result of anti-gay bias, not anything intrinsic to being gay. Anti-sodomy statutes are selectively enforced against homosexuals and bills limiting gay rights are proposed not because gays pose any objective harm, but because of the entrenched belief that something is wrong about being homosexual. The consequential harm of homosexual behavior, or of homosexual partnerships, is simply and

only a function of homophobia and heterosexism, and that harm is mostly visited upon homosexuals, not upon those to whom they supposedly pose a threat. Church and State In upholding the constitutionality of a Georgia anti-sodomy statute in the notorious *Bowers v. Hardwick* decision, the Supreme Court majority did not try to establish that homosexual sodomy causes substantial harm, a task which would have presented them serious difficulties. Rather, they appealed to the "presumed belief of a majority of the electorate in Georgia that homosexual sodomy is immoral and unacceptable" and to the "ancient roots" of this belief. What excluded homosexual sex from protection under the right to privacy, in the opinion of the court, was simply the traditional assumption that something is wrong or immoral about it. Since this assumption has no foundation in any objective harm constituted by gay sex, what criminalizes gay sex, it turns out, is simply traditional, long-standing homophobia and heterosexism. The legitimacy of secular legislation depends instead on whether the State can advance some justification for its law beyond its conformity to religious doctrine" my emphasis. Blackmun went on to claim that no such justification--for instance in some demonstrable harm of homosexual sodomy--existed, hence gay sex should be constitutionally protected under the right to privacy. Since there no longer exists any secular justification for the traditional moral prohibition against homosexuality, the Georgia statute in effect imposes a religious doctrine on its citizens. The only tangible harm specially attached to homosexual sodomy--its criminalization-- thus results from an unconstitutional importing of traditional religious bias into the secular arena. Of course it is unlikely that the court will come to this conclusion soon, given that prejudice against homosexuality is still a widespread cultural phenomenon, not the special grievance of a particular religious group although those on the religious right seem far more likely to be homophobic.

Chapter 3 : Darrel Ray - Wikipedia

An interview between Judith Butler and Joan Wallach Scott can be found here.. As I have studied it here, secularism is not an objective description of institutions and policies but rather a polemical term whose meanings change in the different contexts in which it is deployed.

This can refer to reducing ties between a government and a state religion , replacing laws based on scripture such as Halakha , Dominionism , and Sharia law with civil laws, and eliminating discrimination on the basis of religion. This is said to add to democracy by protecting the rights of religious minorities. He specified two distinct powers: Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University , have argued that the separation of church and state is but one possible strategy to be deployed by secular governments. What all secular governments, from the democratic to the authoritarian, share is a concern about the relationship between the church and the state. Each secular government may find its own unique policy prescriptions for dealing with that concern separation being one of those possible policies; French models, in which the state carefully monitors and regulates the church, being another. He argued that government must treat all citizens and all religions equally and that it can restrict actions but not the religious intent behind them. Secular states also existed in the Islamic world during the Middle Ages see Islam and secularism. According to the terminology of Barry Kosmin, described earlier in this article. The most significant forces of religious fundamentalism in the contemporary world are Christian fundamentalism and Islamic fundamentalism. At the same time, one significant stream of secularism has come from religious minorities who see governmental and political secularism as integral to the preservation of equal rights. Countries with state religion in northern Europe have a high degree of political secularism with systems build upon Protestant and democratic ideology. For example, the monarchy of Denmark have a constitutional right for the freedom of religion, freedom of speech and it is illegal to discriminate individually upon religion, ethnic origins etc. One of the most wellknown countries with a religious political system is the Islamic republic of Iran. Secular society[edit] In studies of religion, modern democracies are generally recognized as secular. This is due to the near-complete freedom of religion beliefs on religion generally are not subject to legal or social sanctions , and the lack of authority of religious leaders over political decisions. Nevertheless, it has been claimed that surveys done by Pew Research Center show Americans as generally being more comfortable with religion playing a major role in public life, while in Europe the impact of the church on public life is declining. Abrams , Peter L. Munby , among others. Some societies become increasingly secular as the result of social processes, rather than through the actions of a dedicated secular movement; this process is known as secularization. Berger maintained that the modern world can no longer be described as being secular or becoming increasingly secular, instead it can best be described as being pluralistic. Secularism is a code of duty pertaining to this life, founded on considerations purely human, and intended mainly for those who find theology indefinite or inadequate, unreliable or unbelievable. Its essential principles are three: Whether there be other good or not, the good of the present life is good, and it is good to seek that good. In this he disagreed with Charles Bradlaugh , and the disagreement split the secularist movement between those who argued that anti-religious movements and activism was not necessary or desirable and those who argued that it was. Contemporary ethical debate in the West is often described as "secular. Commentators on the right and the left routinely equate it with Stalinism, Nazism and Socialism, among other dreaded isms. In the United States, of late, another false equation has emerged. That would be the groundless association of secularism with atheism. The religious right has profitably promulgated this misconception at least since the s. This is a common understanding of what secularism stands for among many of its activists throughout the world. However, many scholars of Christianity and conservative politicians seem to interpret secularism more often than not, as an antithesis of religion and an attempt to push religion out of society and replace it with atheism or a void of values, nihilism. This dual aspect as noted above in "Secular ethics" has created difficulties in political discourse on the subject. In the latter Rawls holds the idea of an overlapping consensus as one of three main ideas of political liberalism. He argues that the term secularism cannot apply; But what is a secular argument? Some think of any argument

that is reflective and critical, publicly intelligible and rational, as a secular argument; [Secular concepts and reasoning of this kind belong to first philosophy and moral doctrine , and fall outside the domain of the political. His work has been highly influential on scholars in political philosophy and his term, overlapping consensus, seems to have for many parts replaced secularism among them. However, there is no shortage of discussion and coverage of the topic it involves. It is just called overlapping consensus, pluralism , multiculturalism or expressed in some other way. It covers secularism in a global context and starts with this sentence: List of secularist organizations Groups such as the National Secular Society United Kingdom and Americans United campaign for secularism are often supported by Humanists. In it raised a petition at the Scottish Parliament to have the Education Scotland Act changed so that parents will have to make a positive choice to opt into Religious Observance. Another secularist organization is the Secular Coalition for America. The Secular Coalition for America lobbies and advocates for separation of church and state as well as the acceptance and inclusion of Secular Americans in American life and public policy. While Secular Coalition for America is linked to many secular humanistic organizations and many secular humanists support it, as with the Secular Society, some non-humanists support it. Local organizations work to raise the profile of secularism in their communities and tend to include secularists, freethinkers, atheists, agnostics, and humanists under their organizational umbrella. Student organizations, such as the Toronto Secular Alliance , try to popularize nontheism and secularism on campus. The Secular Student Alliance is an educational nonprofit that organizes and aids such high school and college secular student groups.

Chapter 4 : Secularism, Sexual Difference and Religious Liberty - CornellCast

A collegiate website advises young women on how to have a "happy hook-up." Get "clear consent and mutual agreement to engage in sexual acts," the article recommends.

Gary Calton for the Observer Gender inequality is increasing. According to a new study by the World Economic Forum, it will now take years to close the global gender gap, up from its previous estimate of 83 years. Could the retreat of secularism be partly to blame? One long-held assumption is that gender equality is an enduring principle of secularism, characterized by the separation of the political from the religious and the public from the private. Yet the famed gender historian Joan Wallach Scott, in her new book, *Sex and Secularism*, claims the opposite is true. Secularism, she adds, has served to account for this fact. More troubling, Scott affirms that secularism has most often been used to justify the claims of white, western and Christian racial and religious superiority in the present as well the past. Strangely, the biggest threat to gender equality in the modern era, according to her argument, has been neither the Catholic church, Protestant fundamentalism, fascist movements, etc, but secularism. The traditional view sees secularism as a long and gradual historical march to greater equality between men and women that began with the French Revolution and continues on today. Her book aims to dismantle such arguments by showing just how sexist the history of the secular west has been. By focusing on debates about the self-congratulatory benefits of secularism Scott offers a history of it that precludes any necessary relationship to gender equality. Her approach leads to several excellent observations about the origins of modern gender inequality. The repudiation of religion during this time, Scott argues, was predicated on idealized distinctions between what belongs in the public sphere men, markets, politics, and bureaucracy and the private sphere women, family, religion and sexual intimacy. Plenty of feminists throughout the 19th century and 20th century linked their emancipation with secularization But the lessons to be drawn from this are not spelled out. She asserts in passing throughout the book that there are forms of genuine equality outside the confines of secularism, presumably in religious traditions, but she remains mute on whether she endorses them. More importantly, Scott does not explain why today, self-identified religious communities are more supportive of legal inequality than secular ones. We know all too well that there is sexism in the west, but by not discussing what the anti-secularists say about women, she makes the secularists out to be the villains of the story. *Sex and Secularism* claims to solely be concerned with critiquing discourse around secularism, not the political and legal reality of secularism. The fact is that plenty of feminists throughout the 19th century and 20th century linked their emancipation with secularization or at least emancipation from traditionalist churches. Perhaps it is because Scott is a historian of France, where she believes oppression of Muslim women in the name of secular values is Islamophobic to the core. But whatever the reason, Scott believes that the secular west as a whole is in a clash with Islam due to its inability to imagine gender equality and religious freedom outside the confines of secularism. Scott is interested in knowing: A rather dismal one, she believes, in which such equality is inseparable from a conception of sexual emancipation in service of global capitalism: But unless an alternative arrangement proves more beneficial to closing the gender gap, the best bet is to reform secularism, both in terms of public discourse and legal initiatives like those that marginalize women in France so as to remedy the sexism and abuses of power Scott has so brilliantly pointed out.

Chapter 5 : Secularism - Wikipedia

In the process, this discourse of secularism singles out "and in Scott's terms, reifies" "sexual desire as the defining universal feature of the human" (). In both of these moments of secularism, then, women, sex, and gender do not play minor, supporting roles.

Of course, the fact that it does not work ought to tell us something. It means the hook-up culture rests on an inadequate conception of human nature. People are trying to live out a worldview that does not fit who they really are. In practice, non-Christians will always bump up against some point of contradiction between their secular worldview and their real-life experience. That contradiction provides an opening to make the case that the secular worldview is flawed. It fails to explain human life and experience. Young people like Melissa are trying to live out a worldview that does not match their true nature—and it is tearing them apart with its pain and heartache. The biblical rejection of homosexuality makes more sense when we understand the implicit worldview—which is, once again, a dehumanizing dualism. Think of it this way: The male sexual and reproductive anatomy is obviously designed for a relationship with a female, and vice versa. Homosexual practice overrides that clear design built into the structure of our bodies. As a result, it expresses a profound disrespect for our physical anatomy. Essentially it says that anatomy has no intrinsic purpose but is just a mechanistic system of glands and organs that one can use any way one chooses. As a result, homosexual practice requires individuals to contradict their own biology. Some Christians propose that God creates some people as homosexuals. He has engineered their minds and emotions for attraction to the same-sex and yet created their physiology to be in direct opposition to that attraction. Already the acceptance of same-sex relationships is leading to a full-blown postmodern conception of sexuality as fluid and changing over time. In *Saving Leonardo* I quote a psychotherapist addressing the problem faced by individuals who had come out of the closet as homosexual, but were later attracted to heterosexual relationships again. So what am I, they asked. Instead we are moving to a postmodern view that gender is something I can choose, independent of biology. The implication is that I might have been straight yesterday, but I can be homosexual today, and maybe bisexual tomorrow. In fact, human nature itself is thought of as a social construction, something we make up as we go along. We can call this view liberalism, employing a definition by the self-described liberal philosopher Peter Berkowitz: For example, they thought heterosexual marriage was rooted in human nature. It was the way humans were created to function. By contrast, liberalism denies that there is any fixed or universal human nature. Humans are an accidental configuration of matter, a product of blind evolutionary forces. Marriage is a social behavior that evolved because it was adaptive at some point in evolutionary history. It is not intrinsic to human nature, however. In fact, there is no human nature. Therefore we are free to redefine marriage at will. This rejection of human nature has ever-widening implications. The cutting-edge issue today is transgenderism, a movement that rejects the distinction between male and female itself as a social construction—and an oppressive one at that. Several universities now offer separate bathrooms, housing, and sports teams for transgender students who do not identify themselves as either male or female. The *New York Times* reports that some schools no longer require students to check male or female on their health forms. The concept of gender has become fluid, free-floating, completely detached from physical anatomy. This is typically presented as liberating—a way to create your own identity instead of accepting one that has been culturally assigned. A few years ago, California passed a law requiring schools to permit transgender students to use the restroom or locker room of their preferred gender, regardless of their anatomical sex. The law is being used to impose a postmodern concept of the person that denies any intrinsic dignity to the unique biological capabilities inherent in being male or female. Physical anatomy is treated as insignificant, inconsequential, and completely irrelevant to gender identity. It also endangers human rights. Rights are based on the recognition that there are certain nonnegotiable givens in human nature, prior to the state, which the state is obligated to respect. But if human nature itself is merely a social construction, something we make up as we go along, including our psychosexual identity, then there is nothing in the individual that is given, which the state is obligated to respect—and thus no basis for inalienable human

rights. Yet the biblical worldview actually affirms a much higher view of the body than the secular utilitarian view. It offers the radically positive affirmation that the material world was created by God, that it will ultimately be made whole by God, and that God was actually incarnated made flesh in a human body. In the ancient world, these biblical claims were so astonishing that the Gnostics rejected them. They taught that Jesus was really an avatar who only appeared to have a human body. They could not accept the idea of a Creator who actually likes matter because He created itâ€”a God who affirms our material, biological, sexual nature. Today, in an unexpected twist of history, it is once again Christianity that is defending a high and holistic view of the human person. Most churches, sadly, do not communicate a high view of the person. Only by digging beneath the surface and refocusing on the worldview level can we show young people why secular views of sexuality are harmful and alienating. A worldview focus gives us the tools to craft a positive approach that expresses love and concern for people caught in destructive life patterns. She is also the author of the bestselling, award-winning *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity*. Pearcey currently teaches at Rivendell Sanctuary. Jacques Barzun, *Darwin, Marx, Wagner: Critique of a Heritage* New York: Little, Brown, and Company, , Roger Lundin, *The Culture of Interpretation*: Eerdmans, , Christian Research Institute Our Mission: To provide Christians worldwide with carefully researched information and well-reasoned answers that encourage them in their faith and equip them to intelligently represent it to people influenced by ideas and teachings that assault or undermine orthodox, biblical Christianity. Do you like what you are seeing? Your partnership is essential.

Chapter 6 : Christianity vs Humanism Comparison Chart

Secular Sexuality is a weekly call-in show live from Austin, Texas every Thursday at 7pm CT. Call us at We talk about sex from a secular perspective.

Shall we start the interview? I am wondering whether you could describe the decision to work on a book on sex and secularism. What led up to that decision? Christianity was present everywhere in French society national holidays, state support for churches considered part of the national heritage. It was Islam that was taken to be at odds with this heritage. I was increasingly aware that this was an argument being made more generally about Islam in many Western European nations and among many feminists. The argument was that Western secularism guaranteed gender equality, while Islam subordinated women. I was particularly struck by the way it worked to demonize Islam – a patriarchal religion, to be sure, but no more so than Catholicism or Orthodox Judaism or many forms of Protestantism. It also struck me that the association of gender equality with secular nation-states was at odds with the historical work of second wave feminism, which demonstrated again and again that democracy was not democracy for women. In this book you return to France where you show that secularism did not imply the emancipation of women. Can you explain your point about the relation between secularism, progress, and feminism? What I show in this book is that gender inequality was built in to the conceptualization of modern western nation-states – and not only in France. This followed from the way in which the progress of civilization was defined in terms of clear differences between public and private, the political and the domestic, reason and religion, men and women. Historical progress was equated with a sharpened differentiation of spheres. And gender difference was attributed to nature. Still the principles of equality and progress enunciated in the discourse of secularism opened the possibility for women to claim another kind of equality, one that did not involve subordination or unequal treatment. So, while the regulation of religion by secular nation states in the name of modernity rested on notions of gender inequality, ideals of democracy and equality made it possible for feminists to think otherwise. Sex and Secularism acknowledges that possibility, but it is not a history of feminist claims for rights. Instead, it asks why the ideals associated with modern secular nation-states have been so difficult to extend to women and, I add, to non-whites as well. How have racialized notions of gender underwritten many forms of inequalities of power? To answer these questions, I suggest following psychoanalytic theory that the difference of sex is a puzzle that resists all final resolution and working with the writing of the French political theorist, Claude Lefort that democracy introduces indeterminacy and uncertainty into the sphere of political representation who embodies the nation in the way the king embodied it? The solution to the indeterminacy of sex and of politics is their mutual constitution: The entanglement of the two has made change difficult, but the resistance of both politics and gender to ultimate stabilization gives them a history and opens the possibilities for change. You also engage the history of feminism in the United States separating secularism from the steps taken to achieve sexual equality. How was it for you to work across the continents? Would you describe that work as comparative or transhistorical? How would you describe the sense of secularism you work with in this book in relation to the work of Talal Asad and Saba Mahmood? Can you elaborate on their meaning for you? His insistence that secularism is a discourse that works to establish its own meanings is crucial I think. Her explorations of the agency of women in pietistic sects in Cairo led me to think differently about what counts as agency and emancipation; and her work on national sovereignty and minority religions in her last book, brought a whole new perspective on the ways colonial powers set in place forms of governance that were then continued by post-colonial nations. Many of the scholars in religion who work on secularization assume it to be a process by which religious belief is gradually replaced with non-religious belief. Charles Taylor and others have argued that religious values continue in the public sphere and even that they provide important moral resources for public thinking – a position that Habermas partly shares. Others, like Asad and Mahmood, consider secularism to be a form of power that comes to organize political life and to allocate differential values to different religions, giving clear priority to Christianity. Islam seems to be a religion that must be defined, managed, and rendered private. Here I agree with Asad and Mahmood: For that reason imperialist

powers often sent missionaries to convert the natives in the colonies; at home, they wanted to retain the moral influences of Christianity in otherwise secular educational curriculums. The question of women – or better to say of the difference of sex – enables us to see how inequalities are naturalized and how they then become foundational for secularist discourses. I argue in the book that gender inequality a racialized gender inequality becomes the matrix for other inequalities, a way of justifying asymmetries of power as natural and thus outside of human control. Many self-defined secularists fear that any critique of secularism will usher in an epoch of religious values, if not religious fundamentalism. How do you account for the anxiety that those critics bring to this intellectual debate? I think this comes first, from the tendency of these intellectuals to accept the emancipatory story secularism has told about itself and, with it, the binary between religion and secularism – as if you can only have one without the other, as if the one religion can only be a threat to the other the secular. It assumes that religious values are necessarily antithetical to politics, despite the long history of the influence of some forms of religious expression on campaigns for social justice. The US Civil Rights movement as one important example. By accepting the binary – religious vs. I am wondering whether you might tell us how your approach to both gender and race has changed in this new book. For instance, you are clear that secularists have identified feminist goals as not only compatible with secularism, but supported and realized only through secularism. And yet, you show that the very distinction between secularism and religion one that secularism itself produces, creates a very different picture. Indeed, discourses of secularism, understood as the basis for state power – if not an operation of sovereignty – create the opportunity to stabilize the meanings of feminine and masculine in various hierarchical forms. Can you tell us how this works a in terms of secular power and b the distinction that secularism makes between itself and religion? And can you help us understand the difference it makes to your discussion to understand that gender is always racialized? I think the most important argument of the book is the one you cite – about the instabilities of both gender the difference of sex is an unsolvable enigma and of democratic politics there is no sure way to embody the abstractions of nation, individual, citizen, representative. This came to justify colonial civilizing missions and, today, justifies discrimination against Muslims in many western countries. The importance of the argument about the mutual constitution of gender and politics, allows us also to historicize gender, to see attributions of meaning to differences of sex as politically motivated attempts to resolve the uncertainties of both gender and politics, to ask how the one uses the other to establish meaning and legitimize relationships of power.

Chapter 7 : Sex and Secularism | Reading Religion

Through taking up sexuality as a prism, I attempt to look through the eyes of the organizations and explore how Dutch NGOs, FBOs, and semi-government organizations experience the mentioned encounter of secularity, secularism, religion, and sexuality.

To see the four reviews, follow the link here. I appreciate these comments, the time it took to write them, and the questions they raise about Sex and Secularism. My aim in this response is not to cover all the ground that they do, but to address some of the issues raised and not raised by the authors. Tim Crane wants us to remember that the ideal of secularism like the ideal of democracy is better in principle than in practice. Whatever our reservations about the historical uses and abuses of secularism, he thinks we ought to embrace it as an aspiration—a reminder of where we ought to be. Has secularism or, for that matter, democracy always meant the same thing, even in the abstract? My point in the book was to examine the ways in which not just the practice, but the very discourse and so the principle of secularism has long carried with it a presumption of gender inequality that has not yet gone away. Although Crane refers to secularism and women in his piece and he clearly is in favor of gender equality, most of his discussion focuses on the definition of secularism in relation to freedom of religion. I see this as symptomatic of my point, which is that secularism, taken as a discourse, has relied on prevailing inequalities of gender, referring them to a presumed natural difference between the sexes. Crane himself does not presume these inequalities, but nothing in his defense of a fixed secular ideal addresses them. They clarify and elaborate the major points of the book and run with them in new and useful directions. Although certainly inspired by my work in French history, I want to insist that this is not a book only about France—which itself has never entirely shed its Christian influences lately invoked by Nicolas Sarkozy among others, including Emmanuel Macron. I have been repeatedly surprised that in the reception to the book, what I take to be my most original theoretical contribution has gone largely unremarked. That has to do with the examination of the relationship between gender inequality and the emergence of western democratic nation-states. I suggest in chapters three and five especially, that gender and politics are interconnected, each looking to the other for its legitimation. Following Freud and Claude Lefort, I point out that the difference of the sexes, on the one hand, and democratic politics, on the other, are both characterized by an irresolvable indeterminacy. Freud tells us that there is no ultimate explanation for the difference of the sexes and Lefort tells us that, after the fall of absolutism, there is no concrete embodiment for democratic politics. As a result, I argue, gender and politics look to one another for certainty: I think this insight goes beyond secularism—it redefines gender not as the prevailing relationship between women and men, but as the impossible and therefore always vulnerable attempt to secure meaning where none exists. And it understands politics as deeply invested in policing that meaning because the difference of sex provides a way of thinking about and justifying asymmetries of difference more generally. In this way, contrary to what is often said about the ahistoricity of psychoanalytic theory, psychoanalysis allows me to historicize gender and to specify its relationship to political power. Here is how I put it on the last page of the book: Gender and politics have used each other to establish their legitimacy and to enforce their rules, justifying inequalities as natural phenomena—inequalities that extend beyond gender to race, class, ethnicity, and religion. Untangling the operations of this interconnection in the discourse of secularism has been for me a critical project, and not only because it exposes the way certain claims about equality have served to perpetuate inequality. What is also at stake in insisting on the historicity of this discourse, and on the indeterminacy of the meanings of gender and democratic politics upon which it rests, is that those meanings are perpetually and irresistibly open to change. Perhaps because secularism is in the title of the book, the point about the mutual constitution of gender and politics has not drawn the attention I hoped it would. Perhaps, too, the sheer abundance of historical material has overwhelmed my attempts to theorize gender and politics. Or, perhaps that theorizing is most relevant to historians as it happens, none of the commentators in this forum are historians—they are an anthropologist, a literary scholar, a philosopher, and a sociologist.

Secularism and Sexuality: The Case for Gay Equality. Although fewer and fewer people need convincing that gay rights are legitimate, many individuals and several states' laws still harbor considerable bias against homosexuals. This paper constructs a church-state separation argument against any.

Questions God Humanists usually do not believe that God even exists. Humanists believe mankind is the highest entity. He is perfect in wisdom, power, might, and love. He is to be worshipped. We love Him because He first loved us. How is my worship life? Do I live day-to-day talking with and praising and serving God? Or do I basically ignore Him, as a humanist would? Do I get as close to the humanist behavior as possible without "crossing a line"? He may have been an interesting teacher, but when he died, he stayed dead like any other man. Jesus Christ is God, come in the flesh. He was born of the Virgin Mary. He lived a perfect, sinless life. He died on the cross to pay for our sins. He rose from the dead to prove He had conquered sin, death, and hell. When we repent of our sins and receive Him as Savior and Lord, He comes to live in our lives, giving us His peace, joy, righteousness, purpose for living, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life. Have I personally received the Lord Jesus Christ into my life? Or do I basically ignore Him as a humanist would do? Creation Acts and talks as if evolution is a scientific fact and that anyone who disagrees is ignorant. Evolution is the only way he knows of to explain the existence of life, since he denies the existence of God. Acts and talks in light of the truly scientific evidence as well as Biblical revelation that God is the Creator. Do I talk about creation freely? The Bible Considers the Bible of little interest. Believes the Bible to be the work of men perhaps with a religious ax to grind. Certainly does not accept it as the Word of God. Reverences the Bible as the Word of God. How much time do I spend reading and studying the Bible? Do I treat it like a humanist? Self-Esteem Sees man as basically good. Thinks that people should feel good about themselves regardless of their behavior. Tries to deal with guilt by positive self-talk. Realizes that man has a sin nature and tends to do evil things. Believes that God has made each person very unique and special and for His glory. Realizes that God has a great purpose for each of us. Believes that through repentance and faith in Christ we can have our sin forgiven and be made into new creatures. Or do I realize that my value is based on Who Christ is and what He has done for me? Sanctity of Life Since man is a merely highly evolved animal, some human life is not so special. Supports abortion, euthanasia, and even infanticide in some cases. Since man is created in the image of God and for the purposes of God, all life is precious. Abortion, euthanasia, and infanticide are considered to be horrific sins. Have I grown complacent about the existence of abortion in our country? Do I take a stand against these evils against human life? Tendency to rationalize that all behavior that I wish to do is acceptable. All of us have sinned. But we can be forgiven and cleansed in Christ. God declares me to be forgiven and gives me His righteousness as a gift when I agree with Him about my sin. When I sin, do I rationalize it away? Or do I confess it to God and receive His forgiveness? Goals Since this physical life is all there is, my goal is to get as much happiness and gain as many things as I can before time runs out and I cease to exist. Lives in light of Eternity. Makes decisions on the basis of what will bring God the most glory. Realizes that this life is ultimately very brief compared to eternity. What do I do differently that proves that I am interested in bringing God glory? What do I do that proves I am thinking in terms of eternity? Realizes that sex is a gift from God, who created us as sexual beings. Realizes that, when used as God intended i. But also realizes that when used in ways God did not intend that it can lead to great harm. Am I absolutely and totally committed to reserving sex for marriage? Have I made arrangements to stay out of situations that could lead to sexual temptations? Do I really believe what God has said about sex? Other sexual behaviors are perversions of that picture. Have humanists gradually persuaded me that some sexual activities are acceptable even though God says they are sinful? There is no absolute right and wrong. Everything depends on the situation. Believes that God has established some things as absolutely right and others as absolutely wrong. If God says that certain behavior is sin, it is wrong for us to convince ourselves that the behavior is really ok. Do I resist the temptation for me to rationalize behavior that God says is wrong? Do I assume that because other people that are supposed to be Christians are doing it that it must be ok? Tolerance Believes that values, morals, and ethics are determined by

each person for him or herself. Believes that values, morals, and ethics are determined by God and revealed in His Word, the Bible and given to us for our benefit. Therefore, to tell someone else that their behavior is wrong may be one of the greatest blessings we can give them. Christians certainly believe that we should all be very tolerant of other people, allowing them the freedom to believe and worship as they see fit. Do I know what the Bible teaches about the major issues of our day? Am I willing to take an unpopular stand because it is right? Many secular humanists would affirm the legitimacy of same-sex marriages or civil unions. Many would deny the importance of fathers, encouraging "single parenting by choice. For example, humanists often support the right of a child to an abortion without parental consent. Christians see the traditional family unit father, mother, and children as created by God to represent our relationship with Him. Christians believe that, with some exceptions e. Christians believe children are to be responsible to and submissive to their parents unless the parent is requiring the child to commit sin. Of course, Christians recognize the importance of foster parents and stepparents in family units. Do I recognize my parents or foster parents as my primary caregivers, supporters, and authorities? Do I try to appeal to others in an attempt to bypass their authority?

Chapter 9 : Sex, Lies, and Secularism - Christian Research Institute

Sex and Secularism acknowledges that possibility, but it is not a history of feminist claims for rights. Instead, it asks why the ideals associated with modern secular nation-states have been so difficult to extend to women (and, I add, to non-whites as well).