Twitter Thread by Eliza Mondegreen

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How I became a 21st-century heretic/social pariah—and you can, too!

A thread on questioning gender ideology.

Something didn't seem right to me. I had that feeling astronomers must have when they're scanning the skies for black holes, looking for the point around which everything behaves strangely.

When I looked at trans activism, everything around it behaved strangely.

Maybe it started with "transwomen are women." Whenever I asked what that meant, I found a great many people who either didn't know or didn't care what it meant and yet thought it was a very important thing for people to say they believe.

That wasn't reassuring.

Or maybe it started when I first heard that abortion was no longer a women's issue. This was news to me. I thought back to my unplanned pregnancy: one of the parties involved in that debacle could have walked away, but I didn't have that option. That mattered.

The week I went through with my abortion, Purvi Patel appealed her 20-year sentence for inducing a miscarriage after the state had backed her into a corner. That mattered. No man has ever been backed into a corner in that way.

If abortion isn't a women's issue, what is?

Why strip meaning from language? Why not create a new language for trans identities? Why would only women's words do?

Why does anyone's 'truth' require my silence? Why does "respecting trans lives" mean women must defer—in our speech, our perceptions, our very self-conception?

That hobble-skirt of language troubled me. I found myself wondering what my words would cost me. There's a difference between speaking carefully out of the desire to be understood and speaking cautiously out of fear of the consequences. I found myself speaking cautiously.

But there was no way to talk about why sex matters without causing offense—to trans activists, that is. This language of menstruators and gestators certainly offended me. There was no acceptable way to talk about women as a coherent sex class.

The arbitrariness of it all troubled me. You could never find your footing. You never knew what you could say without courting censure. What a massive tax on women's energy and attention! Didn't women have more important issues to contend with?

Watching fellow progressives show more concern about policing women's speech than protecting women's rights troubled me. In too many countries, corpses have greater rights to bodily integrity than women and girls. What purpose does taking words out of our mouths serve?

Never mind that I'd never read a more thorough catalog of sexist stereotypes than trans accounts of what it means to "be a woman." The vain, masochistically submissive, giggly airheads they fetishized (or fled) had nothing to do with women *&* everything to do with objectification.

(Besides, hadn't I heard plenty of men say "I'm a lesbian trapped in a man's body" before?)

And if gender is fluid and can change over time, why would we ever carry out untested and often irreversible medical procedures on kids at younger and younger ages?

What does changing everything about yourself have to do with 'authenticity'?

Why is trans activism such an effective instrument of division within the Left and destruction of women's rights, yet such a poor vehicle for delivering actual services and protections that trans people need?

Why slam Rachel Dolezal but celebrate Caitlin Jenner on the cover of Vogue? And how did exploring that question in a dry academic article—as Rebecca Tuvel attempted to do—"enact violence and harm"?

(And what is it about women asking questions?)

You get the picture: I was asking for trouble.

Still, I thought there might be something everybody else knew that I didn't. I hadn't bought into the new orthodoxy, but I was deeply affected by it: I wondered if my questions and doubts were signs that something was wrong with me.

Asking questions wasn't getting me anywhere: either I was already supposed to know the answers or else I needed to accept that I wasn't able to understand and proceed regardless of that regrettable but insurmountable personal deficit. That was what I couldn't tolerate.

So I decided to look into gender identity on my own. At the time, it didn't seem like a momentous decision. I simply tugged on one of those loose threads that had been bothering me. But as I wound that thread between my fingers, the whole garment unraveled.

At a certain point I realized I had exited polite society. I had somehow violated the rules of some contract I didn't remember signing when I joined progressive circles. But what does unquestioning submission to *anything* have to do with progressivism?

I became one of those strange dark spots in the night sky: everything around me behaved strangely. My progressive track record no longer counted. My intentions didn't matter. My clearest speech got recast as an attempt to deceive good people into sympathizing w/ a heinous agenda.

It's hard to accept. While I'm anonymous online (my job wouldn't survive an online mob), I've been open about my concerns in real life. I've lost friends. Even my silences have become suspect.

And yet I can't see what I did wrong. My most serious crime would seem to be asking that first question—from that act, everything follows—and I'm not willing to apologize for that.