

Responding To: Is It Wrong to Perform at Michfest?

By Cristan Williams

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Abstract

At its core, Thompson's argument -- and Vogel's -- is essentially based on gender identity and socialization. It contends that being assigned female at birth is a life experience that differs from that of being assigned male. "The internal struggles and social pressures are different," says Thompson. "We live in a patriarchy. That is still [...]"

Article

I At its core, Thompson's argument -- and Vogel's -- is essentially based on gender identity and socialization. It contends that being assigned female at birth is a life experience that differs from that of being assigned male. "The internal struggles and social pressures are different," says Thompson. "We live in a patriarchy. That is still true. And that has real, cultural effects." Syd Mutcher, another Michfest participant, agrees, saying that trans women are informed by their boyhoods and by male privilege, as well as by womanhood as they transition. "That is why I support the inclusion of trans women in most spaces but also hold a space that is based on the lived experience of being female since the day we were born," Mutcher says.

- The Advocate, Is It Wrong to Perform at Michfest?

That's a fallacy. The truth is that the acculturation experience of being trans differs from the experience of being a cis male who is MAAB. I've no idea what it's like to be a cismale. I know what it's like to be a trans kid - afraid, ashamed and gender dysphoric all the time. Is being in the closet about one's gender orientation the cismale experience? Is praying to not wake up in the morning if god wouldn't fix my body at just 5 years old the cismale experience? Is being part of a population in which 1 out of 2 are raped the cismale experience? The FAAB/MAAB narrative willfully obtuse and cruel.

I've also noticed that folks like Vogel take the pareidolia effect to new and strange heights. Should a transwoman be assertive, angry, opinionated, willful or have boundaries, such human traits are almost always seen as being evidence of some sort of lingering maleness and therefore affirms their MAAB/FAAB binary dogma. If a transwoman behaves/sounds/looks in some way stereotypically female, then the transwoman is guilty of a MAAB need to enforce patriarchal notions of femininity upon the female form, which is evidence of some sort of lingering maleness which therefore affirms their MAAB/FAAB binary dogma. This is how you play tennis without a net; their MAAB/FAAB binary beliefs are unfalsifiable, set in stone faith positions. The MAAB/FAAB experience is a rubric that's untouched by being trans (Why, you ask? What a male question! You're obviously a MAAB or a FAAB

enslaved to the patriarchy!).

The transwoman experience is the transwoman experience and the ciswoman experience is the ciswoman experience, to be sure! However, neither is the male experience and both are victims of rape culture, benevolent/aggressive sexism and BS cultural restrictions on how women are suppose to be. At its best, pretending that this isn't so in order to preserve the stereotypes of MAAB/FAAB dogma is bigotry; at its worst, it's lateral violence.

Michfest has a legacy of fostering an open-armed community among a multiplicity of types of women, from across the spectrum of femininity to masculinity. Yet its history is also marred by discrimination. In 1991, Nancy Burkholder was expelled from the festival after being asked if, and confirming that, she was a transsexual woman.

Oh, and here's what Nancy Burkholder herself had to say about her experience at Michfest.

TERMS

MAAB: male assigned at birth

FAAB: female assigned at birth

Gender: a generic term we use to refer to any/all aspects of gender orientation, gender identity and gender expression; the subjective result of the brain's neurology with the context of a society's culture.

Gender Orientation: one's subjective experience of one's physical sex.

Gender Identity: one's subjective experience of one's cultural sex.

Gender Expression: one's subjective experience of communicating gender orientation and identity.

Gender Dysphoria: the sometimes debilitating experience of having a gender orientation and/or identity that doesn't align with one's sex assigned at birth.

Transgender: (AKA: trans, trans*, TG) an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of people including transsexuals, crossdressers, drag kings and queens, as well as bigender and androgynous individuals.

Transgender, came into common usage during the 1970s, but was popularized as early as 1965 as a way to refer to transsexuals who wanted genital reconstructive surgery. Today, the term transgender is used to refer to individuals who are not cisgender.

Cisgender: (AKA: Cis, cissexual) is an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of people who are not transgender. For example, this term is used to refer to someone who was sexed male at birth, subjectively experiences their sex to be male, identifies as a male and expresses his identity in a manner consistent with a generally accepted cultural male gender role.

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